Paul's Use of the Old Testament in Romans 9:1-9: An Intertextual and Theological Exegesis

by

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Abstract

The first chapter of this investigation finds that, as with many passages in the Pauline corpus, Romans 9 is in need of what may be called an intertextual exegesis, emphasizing the ability of quotation and allusion to refer to broad original contexts and to suggest additional associations. The intertextual exegesis of this study involves: (1) detailed attention to the broad original contexts of Paul's quotations and allusions to the OT; (2) a comparison of the wording of Paul's quotations and allusions to the wording of the source text(s) in the textual tradition; (3) an examination of relevant interpretive traditions surrounding the OT passages Paul quotes or alludes to; and (4) an exegesis of the Pauline context that incorporates the insights gained from the previous three analytical foci, yielding an exegesis of Paul's rhetoric that is thoroughly informed by his use of the OT.

Chapter one also defines key terms for the investigation. We then go on to consider the place of intertextuality in NT studies and this investigation, essentially concluding that there are different types of intertextuality and that a minimal intertextual theory is compatible with and beneficial for historical biblical criticism. The primary contribution of intertextuality to the study of Paul's use of the OT is found to be its approach to quotation and allusion and its stress on the interpretive significance of allusions. We adopt Richard Hays' criteria for detecting and interpreting allusions with some expansions indicated in the notes. And finally, we argue that it is plausible to investigate Paul's scriptural allusions as intentional pointers to their original contexts.

Chapter two covers introductory issues related to Romans 9-11. We argue that Paul addressed a concrete situation in Rome, writing to a mixed church of a minority of Jews and a majority of Gentiles that was marked by some tension and conflict between the two groups. As for Paul himself, he was preparing to take his mission to Spain, for which he desired support from Rome. He had been embroiled in conflict over Jew/Gentile issues throughout his career and criticism of him seems to have reached Rome. Moreover, his gospel mission, which prioritized Jews, had been generally rejected by Jews. Paul had multiple purposes in Romans 9-11, but his main ones were to (1) procure support for his gospel and upcoming mission to Spain by (2)

unifying the Jews and Gentiles of the Roman church with one another behind that gospel and accompanying missionary practice. The main theme of Romans 9-11 is the faithfulness of God to his word/promises to Israel. Moreover, the chapters are an authentic unity that form the climax of the epistle's theological argument (chs. 1-11). The chapters are found to have a basic threefold logical structure that is also chiastic, while their literary character has been fashioned by Paul's Jewish-Christian-prophetic-apocalyptic orientation yielding an oscillating argumentation, the structure of an OT lament psalm, and a presentation in the manner of Jewish homiletic-midrashic tradition. Romans 9 itself also has its own complementary logical, chiastic, and midrashic structures. We have also considered some important hermeneutical issues relevant to Romans 9-11 that often have not been addressed directly. Furthermore, we have argued that Paul's argument in Romans 9-11 is consistent. Finally, we have selectively reviewed literature relevant to Paul's use of the OT in Romans 9-11 and found that 9:1-9 has never been exposed to the type of investigation we provide in this study.

Chapter three examines Paul's use of the OT in Romans 9:1-5. Paul alludes to Exodus 32:32 in Romans 9:3, an allusion that has been recognized by most interpreters but never before fully explored for its relevance to Paul's argument in Romans 9-11. The allusion functions as a pointer to Exodus 32:32 and its context, Exodus 32-34, providing a foundational orientation in Paul's introductory section for approaching the argument of Romans 9-11. Paul's use of Exodus 32-34 is of enormous weight for his argument, holding significance for a number of exegetical details as well as broader themes and rhetorical movements. The similarity in theme and subject matter between the old and new contexts is striking. Both are concerned with the apostasy and hard-heartedness of Israel, the resulting divine judgment and loss of election along with all its promises, the ensuing tremendous grief, the faithfulness of God to his covenant word and his great mercy, and the restoration of Israel to election and blessing in a "new" covenant established primarily with the Covenant Mediator and mediated to the people only through connection with him and the glory of God shining through him. Indeed, it appears that Paul has gone to the scriptural paradigm of the fall and restoration of Israel to typologically understand and express the present stage of salvation history and the outworking of the eschatological

fulfillment of the covenant promises of God. Thus, Romans 9-11 should be understood in terms of the mediation of the election-bestowing glory of God through Paul's gospel and ministry. We have also discovered that Jewish and Christian interpretive traditions surrounding Exodus 32:32 and its broader context treat themes that are highly relevant to Paul's argument in Romans 9-11. His scriptural allusion in 9:3 is the main point of 9:1-5, an intense expression of grief over the accursed state of ethnic Israel which introduces the problem he must address in Romans 9-11.

Chapter four examines Paul's use of the OT in Romans 9:6-9. Paul quotes Genesis 21:12 as the primary text of the sustained scriptural argument of 9:6-29, and a conflated form of Genesis 18:10, 14, which functions as the secondary text. Thus, Genesis 18-21 is the centerpiece of Paul's argument. Genesis 21:12 stands out as the main ground for Paul's assertion of God's faithfulness in 9:6a, and Romans 9:6-29 may legitimately be called a midrash on Gen 21:12 directed toward the faithfulness of God's word in the face of the rejection of ethnic Israel and calling of the Church vis-à-vis the Abrahamic covenant and the fulfillment of its promises. Paul's main argument in Romans 9 in support of the thesis statement of 9:6a is summed up succinctly by Genesis 21:12 and may be stated thus: the word of God to Israel has not failed because the true Israel is not constituted by ethnicity, but by faith in Christ.

Our investigation has discovered that Genesis 21 and 18-19 are far more significant for Paul's argument in Romans 9-11 than has been previously recognized. Through them, Paul draws his audience into the Scriptures of Israel and casts their eschatological present into the biblical story of Abraham, Isaac, and Ishmael. Provoked to overwhelming grief at the accursed state of Israel and faced with a challenge to the faithfulness of God's word, Paul has gone to the Scriptures and found there the pattern for his own response and the content of his own teaching. Indeed, the broad contours of Paul's argument in Romans 9-11 are anticipated by the story of Abraham in Gen 18-21. We have also found that many of the themes Paul deals with in Romans 9 are also present in ancient Jewish interpretive traditions surrounding Genesis 18 and 21.

The final chapter (ch. five) seeks to draw conclusions concerning the significance of Paul's use of the OT in Romans 9:1-9 for the exegesis and theology of Romans and for Pauline intertextuality. We argue that Paul's interpretive activity

reveals that the issue of who are the true people of God is central to chapters 9-11 and helps us to see that the same issue lies behind the previous chapters of the epistle. Paul argues from Scripture that God's covenant people are none other than the Church of Jews and Gentiles, identified by God's call in his free mercy on the basis of promise and faith.

We have also found that covenant is central to Paul's argument in Romans 9-11 as well as to Romans and Pauline theology in general. Relatedly, Paul has a fundamental corporate perspective in Romans 9-11. Moreover, his argument concerns both Jews and Gentiles from the very beginning, and he considered unbelieving ethnic Israel to be anathema.

Recognizing the limited data we have to work with, chapter five further considers implications of our investigation for understanding Paul's use of the OT in general. We have found that Paul's citations generally use the LXX, and that he can communicate his understanding of the biblical text by intentional conflation.

We have found Paul's interpretive practices to be at home in a first century Jewish context. But for the most part, Paul breaks new ground in his bold and brilliant interpretive activity. We have seen concepts of corporate solidarity and covenant at work in Paul's approach to Scripture, and this supports the contention that Paul's hermeneutic was ecclesiocentric. Typology appears to be the most fundamental interpretive strategy Paul employed, and to a degree that has seldom been fathomed. Additionally, analogy plays a role in his utilization of sacred texts. Moreover, Paul views the OT from an eschatological perspective that also escalates the significance of its application. Furthermore, Paul was concerned for the larger story of the narratives he alluded to, and was inclined to make Pentateuchal narratives foundational to his argumentation. He also was given to anticipating the next or otherwise later stage of an argument through his allusions to the OT.

Finally, chapter five argues that Paul generally used the OT contextually and in accordance with its original intention. His OT quotations and allusions function as pointers to their broad original contexts. It is now time for standard exegetical procedure to include substantial attention to intertextuality. Indeed, it remains for a study of the sort we have conducted to be done in the rest of Romans 9, and then beyond that, for Romans 9-11 as a whole and the Pauline corpus.

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References and Abbreviations

Translations from ancient literature are by the author unless otherwise noted. The first footnote reference to a work (other than a commentary) in any chapter provides the name of the author(s), the full title of the work, and if applicable, the page number(s) referred to. Subsequent references to the same work in the same chapter generally provide the author's/authors' last name(s), an abbreviated form of the title, and if applicable, the page number(s) referred to. References to dictionary articles may either follow this same pattern of reference or give the dictionary abbreviation in place of the title of the article. Commentaries are referred to by the author's last name (except in cases where fuller reference is necessary to identify a specific author), and if applicable, page number(s). When an author's name is in possessive form, the location of the reference is included in parentheses. Full details of all references may be found in the bibliography. Abbreviations of Philo's works follow those given in C. D. Yonge, trans., *The Works of Philo: New Updated Edition Complete and Unabridged in One Volume*. Other abbreviations follow those given in Patrick H. Alexander et al., eds, *The SBL Handbook of Style: For Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies*, published in 1999. The following abbreviations are either not found in this source or are to replace the corresponding abbreviations it provides:

CBSC	Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges
ConNT	*Coniectanea neotestamentica*
corr.	corrected
DNTB	*Dictionary of New Testament Background*
ed(s).	editor(s), edited by, edition
enl.	enlarged
JSJSup	Journal for the Study of Judaism Supplement Series
LAB	*Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* / Pseudo Philo

Chapter One

Introduction

Orientation to the Investigation

Romans 9 is in need of a fresh exegetical analysis sensitive to recent developments in the study of Paul's use of Scripture. These developments derive, in part, from literary criticism and center around the concepts of intertextuality, citation, allusion, and echo. Richard Hays' *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* has been particularly influential in stimulating attention to the "meaning-effects" that result from Paul's scriptural citations, allusions, and echoes.[1] Hays' basic method involves

[1] Hays' influence may be seen in Craig A. Evans and James A. Sanders, eds., *Paul and the Scriptures of Israel.* This was the first volume in the Studies In Scripture In Early Judaism And Christianity series, and according to editor Craig A. Evans, Hays' *Echoes of Scripture* and reviews of it, "provided the thread that ties the . . . collection together" (Evans, "Preface", 7). "To a great extent the volume revolves around the significant, and in some ways novel, observations and suggestions recently put forward by Richard B. Hays" (Evans, " 'It is not as though the Word of God has Failed': An Introduction to Paul and the Scriptures of Israel," 16). Hays himself identifies the major theoretical influences on his working method as John Hollander, from whom he gets his approach to intertextual allusions in the New Testament (see John Hollander, *The Figure of Echo: A Mode of Allusion in Milton and After*), Thomas M. Green, from whom he gets his analytic framework for characterizing the relation between Scripture and Paul's reading of Scripture (see Thomas M. Green, *The Light in Troy: Imitation and Discovery in Renaissance Poetry*), and Michael Fishbane, who has worked with intertextuality in the Old Testament (see Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*, and "Inner Biblical Exegesis: Types and Strategies of Interpretation in Ancient Israel"). The term "intertextuality" was coined by Julia Kristeva; see her *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*. For an introduction to and additional sources on intertextuality, see Jonathan Culler, *The Pursuit of Signs: Semiotics, Literature, Deconstruction*, 100-18; Jay Clayton and Eric Rothstein, "Figures in the Corpus: Theories of Influence and Intertextuality;" Udo J. Hebel, *Intertextuality, Allusion, and Quotation: An International Bibliography of Critical Studies;* J. Still and M. Worton, "Introduction." The two most helpful introductions to intertextuality are those of Hebel in his preface and introduction, and Clayton and Rothstein. For intertextuality in relation to biblical studies see Timothy K. Beal, "Intertextuality"; Spike Draisma, ed., *Intertextuality in Biblical Writings: Essays in Honour of Bas van Iersel;* Thomas R. Hatina, "Intertextuality and Historical Criticism in New Testament Studies: Is There a Relationship?"; K. D. Litwak, "Echoes of Scripture? A Critical Survey of Recent Works on Paul's Use of the Old Testament," 261-75, 285f.; Sylvia C. Keesmaat, *Paul and his Story: (Re)interpreting the Exodus Tradition*, 48-52; Douglas C. Mohrmann, "Semantic Collisions at the Intertextual Crossroads : A Diachronic and Synchronic Study of Romans 9:30-10:13," 5-25; Steve Moyise, "Intertextuality and the Study of the Old Testament in the New Testament"; Gail R. O'Day, "Intertextuality"; Shiu-Lun Shum, *Paul's Use of Isaiah in Romans: A Comparative Study of Paul's Letter to the Romans and the Sybilline and Qumran Sectarian Texts*, 11-16; Anthony C. Thiselton, *New Horizons in Hermeneutics*, 27-28, 35-42, 47-51, 80-84, 92-103, 114-132, and especially 471-514; R. W. Wall, "Intertextuality, Biblical"; George W. Buchanan, *Introduction to Intertextuality*. For a readable treatment of the literary milieu from which intertextuality emerged as it relates to biblical

investigating the broader literary and theological contexts of Paul's scriptural citations and allusions in order to determine their significance for the meaning of Paul's discourse.[2] The recent focus on "the metaphorical significations produced when a literary text echoes voices from earlier texts"[3] has opened up new opportunities for approaching Paul's writings.

Hays has drawn attention to the dearth of critical reflection on the actual meaning of Old Testament citations and allusions in Paul. He points out that the great majority of critical studies of Paul's use of the Old Testament have concentrated

> on essential technical tasks of scholarship. The Pauline quotations and allusions have been cataloged, their introductory formulas classified, their relation to various Old Testament text-traditions examined, their exegetical methods compared to the methods of other interpreters within ancient Christianity and Judaism. The achievements of such inquiries are by no means to be disparaged: they have, as it were, unpacked and laid out the pieces of the puzzle. But how are the pieces to be assembled? Most of the "unpacking" of the Pauline citations was complete more than a generation ago, yet we still lack a satisfying account of Paul's letters as "hermeneutical events," discourse in which Paul is engaged in the act of reinterpreting Scripture to address the concerns of his communities.[4]

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scholarship see Stephen D. Moore, *Poststructuralism and the New Testament: Derrida and Foucault at the Foot of the Cross*; see also Kevin Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning in This Text?: The Bible, the Reader, and the Morality of Literary Knowledge*.

[2] Hays, *Echoes*, xi, states that he approaches the task of interpretation by reading Paul's letters "as literary texts shaped by complex intertextual relations with Scripture." The aim of *Echoes* "is to undertake a reading of selected passages in Paul's letters, attending carefully to the scriptural echoes that sound there. . . . It is . . . an attempt to probe the complex significations created by a representative sampling of Paul's intertextual reflections" (ibid, xii). William Scott Green, "Doing the Text's Work for It: Richard Hays on Paul's Use of Scripture," 60, describes Hays' method in the following way: "The demonstrations [which make up the bulk of Hays' *Echoes*] usually work by noting a verbal correspondence between an epistle and a biblical text, which then leads to a more elaborate examination of the larger literary and theological context of the biblical text and a demonstration of the new meaning that results when that context is applied to Paul's circumstances." Roy E. Ciampa, *The Presence and Function of Scripture in Galatians 1-2*, 18, puts it this way: "In practice it [Hays' study] normally involves investigating the original literary context of Old Testament citations with a view to seeing how or if there are further allusions or echoes from the Old Testament context that may be of significance for the meaning of the New Testament passage."

[3] Richard B. Hays and Joel B. Green, "The Use of the Old Testament by New Testament Writers," 230.

[4] Hays, *Echoes*, 9.

This situation has led Roy Ciampa to observe, "It is remarkable that most of the methods usually applied in the study of Paul's use of the Old Testament are not equipped to deal with the question of the significance of any particular usage within its literary context or for the broader understanding of the document in which it was found."[5] This lack of attention to questions of the semantic significance of Pauline (and other) scriptural usage also explains the present surge in explorations of the meaning-effects generated by New Testament use of the Old.[6] Indeed, Hays has called for such studies: "What we need are studies that will attend not just to exegetical techniques and backgrounds, but also to the meaning-effects produced by Paul's allusions and intertextual juxtapositions."[7] It is just such a study that I am proposing for Romans 9:1-9.

This investigation began as a comprehensive analysis of Paul's use of Scripture in the whole of Romans 9 which at once attends to the meaning and function of Scripture within the chapter and incorporates the results of such analysis into a thorough exegesis of the passage. Romans 9 is an excellent candidate for such study for a number of reasons. First, it suffers from the same neglect of attention to Old Testament semantic and rhetorical significance as is generally true in Pauline studies.[8]

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[5] Ciampa, *The Presence and Function of Scripture*, 3.

[6] In addition to Ciampa's study, other examples of the recent surge in attention to meaning-effects include Frank Thielman, "Unexpected Mercy: Echoes of a Biblical Motif in Romans 9-11"; Scott J. Hafemann, *Paul, Moses, and the History of Israel: The Letter/Spirit Contrast and the Argument from Scripture in 2 Corinthians 3*; David L. Mathewson, "The Meaning and Function of the Old Testament in Revelation 21.1-22.5"; G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation*; Keesmaat, *Paul and his Story*; Timothy W. Berkley, *From a Broken Covenant to Circumcision of the Heart: Pauline Intertextual Exegesis in Romans 2:17-29*; Mohrmann, "Semantic Collisions"; J. Ross Wagner, *Heralds of the Good News: Isaiah and Paul "in Concert" in the Letter to the Romans*; and various studies found in C.A. Evans and J.A. Sanders, eds., *Paul and the Scriptures of Israel*; C.A. Evans and W. R. Stegner, eds., *The Gospels and the Scriptures of Israel;* C. A. Evans and J. A. Sanders, eds., *Early Christian Interpretation of the Scriptures of Israel: Investigations and Proposals.*

[7] Richard B. Hays, "Crucified with Christ," 335 n. 53. I was alerted to this reference by Ciampa, *The Presence and Function of Scripture*, 3.

[8] See the review of literature on the use of the Old Testament in Romans 9-11 in ch. 2 below. Hays himself has considered the book of Romans in chapter 2 of *Echoes*, where he claims to take a different approach to understanding the epistle, attracting the comments of Craig A. Evans, "Listening for Echoes of Interpreted Scripture," 48, who calls Hays' analysis "truly stimulating and insightful" and insists, "Future studies will have to review the arguments of this chapter carefully." Several reviewers agree that Hays' method is in fact somewhat novel and welcome his contribution. (See the reviews found in *Paul and the Scriptures of Israel.)* But Hays' treatment of Romans 9 is necessarily brief and far from comprehensive, and no one since him has attempted a comprehensive analysis along similar lines.

Yet second, it is well known for its concentration of scriptural citations and allusions,[9] rendering it particularly suitable for observing Paul's use of Scripture as it has been traditionally studied,[10] and providing ample opportunity for study of resultant meaning-effects from various OT passages. Third, Romans 9 is a highly charged passage theologically, which stands at the center of several contentious debates that deserve consideration from the perspective of a study of the semantic effects of Paul's use of Scripture as they impact exegesis.[11] Fourth, there is much disagreement over

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[9] See e.g., James W. Aageson, "Paul's Use of Scripture: A Comparative Study of Biblical Interpretation in Early Palestinian Judaism and the New Testament with Special Reference to Romans 9-11," 4; Dunn, 520; Fitzmyer, 542; Brian S. Rosner, *Paul, Scripture and Ethics: A Study of 1 Corinthians 5-7*, 190-91; Moisés Silva, "Old Testament in Paul," 634. Romans 9-11 is said to contain nearly a third of Paul's scriptural citations (Rosner, ibid), while Hübner lists at least 45 citations and allusions in chapter 9 alone (Hans Hübner, *Gottes Ich und Israel: Zum Schriftgebrauch des Paulus in Römer 9-11*, 149-154).

[10] Hays, *Echoes*, 9-10, provides a concise and helpful overview of the traditional issues addressed by critical scholarship: "The questions that scholars have traditionally asked about Paul's use of the Old Testament have been either answered in full or played out to a dead end. These questions may be grouped into five categories:
1. Questions of textual criticism: what form of the Old Testament text was known and used by Paul?
2. Questions of incidence of citation: which Old Testament books and passages does Paul quote?
3. Questions of sources and historical background: what sort of interpretive community tradition, if any, does Paul represent? Included here are the many recent efforts to demonstrate in detail that Paul's exegesis is midrashic, that it represents the exegetical methods and traditions of pharisaic (nascent rabbinic) Judaism. Also to be placed in this category are investigations of Paul's use of early Christian exegetical traditions and testimonies.
4. Questions of theological legitimacy: does Paul use the Old Testament with exegetical-theological integrity, or does he rifle it for prooftexts and twist its meaning? There is, of course, a long and inconclusive history of polemic and apology on this issue. At the nerve center of this debate is the question of whether Paul's understanding of the role of Torah within the faith of Israel represents an aberrant caricature of Judaism.
5. Questions of biblical inspiration and authority: what doctrine of the origin and normative claim of Scripture did Paul hold?
In practice, of course, these questions overlap one another; taken together, they provide a fair sketch of the scope of the discussion." Hays' judgment that the traditional questions concerning Paul's use of Scripture "have been either answered in full or played out to a dead end" should not be taken to mean that these questions no longer need to be addressed, since his own work has contributed fresh insights into these well-worn issues. Hays has correctly refocused attention on "Paul as interpreter of Scripture." Armed with a new perspective, scholarly research on these old questions may yet yield more satisfying answers.

[11] James W. Aageson, "Scripture and Structure in the Development of the Argument in Romans 9-11," 265-66, lists the following concepts which have been related to Pauline theology and the development of Romans 9-11: "predestination and human responsibility, the righteousness of God, the historical and eschatological Israel, the relation between Jews and Gentiles, Paul's historical understanding, and salvation." Indeed, Rom 9 itself is a *locus classicus* for consideration of the doctrines of election and predestination. We should add that Paul's conception of the Law is also frequently associated with Rom 9; cf. p. 50 in ch. 2 below. See also the calls for intertextual research to be done in passages like Rom 9 mentioned below.

the theme and literary placement of Romans 9-11 within the epistle,[12] and an exegesis of Romans 9 informed by an intertextual investigation can throw fresh light on these long debated questions. Finally, Romans 9 has not received much recent, detailed attention on its own despite its presence in one of the most important sections in all of Paul's writings.[13]

However, as my research progressed it became clear that a detailed study of every scriptural allusion in the whole of Romans 9, as is being proposed here for only vv. 1-9, would be impossible given the parameters of this investigation. Hays himself has called for "the detailed exegesis of particular texts" as the only way of testing intertextual research and methodology.[14] It is my conviction that intensive research on Paul's use of Scripture in specific texts combined with rigorous exegesis of those texts is necessary to fully grasp the meaning of what he has written. Therefore we must limit the scope of the present investigation to the first nine verses of Romans 9 lest we shortchange the exegetical insight to be gained from Paul's interpretive activity.

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[12] See the treatment of introductory issues related to Rom 9-11 in chapter 2 below.

[13] On the importance of Rom 9-11 in Pauline studies, see p. 50 in ch. 2 below. There has only been one scholarly monograph on Rom 9 written in a major research language in this century: John Piper, *The Justification of God: An Exegetical and Theological Study of Romans 9:1-23.* As the title indicates, even this monograph only focuses on the first twenty-three verses of the chapter. The only other scholarly monograph on the chapter in this century that I am aware of is J. R. Wiskerke, *Geroepen Volk: Een studie over Rom. 9:10-29*, a work that is hardly known; I have seen it listed only in Fitzmyer's bibliography on 9:6-13 in his Romans commentary (Fitzmyer, 564). The lack of recent detailed attention to Rom 9 on its own is probably due to its obvious connection to chs. 10 and 11 coupled with a move away from atomistic theologically oriented research in critical biblical scholarship. Nevertheless, as we will argue below, there is certainly value in focusing on part of the whole. Indeed, it is our conviction that a lack of concentrated focus on Romans 9 has prevented a thorough investigation of Paul's use of Scripture in that chapter, impoverishing our understanding of both ch. 9 and chs. 10-11. Cf. the comments of G. K. Beale in his review of Piper's study, where he claims that the only writer to publish an entire book on an exegesis of Rom 9 prior to Piper (missing Wiskerke's contribution mentioned above) was J. Morison, An *Exposition of the Ninth Chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Romans*.

[14] Richard B. Hays, "On the Rebound: A Response to Critiques of *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*," 78f. Here Hays was responding to the critique of his work by J. A. Sanders, "Paul and Theological History," 52-57, which emphasized the need for attention to the history of interpretation prior to Paul of the texts he echoed. To give Hays' words their proper context, we should note that he writes, "I am concerned only that his [Sanders'] emphasis on categories such as 'process' and 'history' might lead to an underestimation of the dramatic discontinuities introduced by Paul's revisionary readings of Scripture, and to a simultaneous underestimation of the metaphorical aspects of his reading strategies. The test of such concerns, of course, can be conducted only in the detailed exegesis of particular texts; consequently, I gladly anticipate the continuation of this collegial discussion."

Although Romans 9-11 is clearly one unit, it is equally as clear that there are subsections within that unity,[15] as is true of any significant literary passage. By exegeting a part (Rom 9:1-9) with sensitivity to the whole (both chs. 9 and 9-11), we should in turn be able to more clearly define the part's relation to the whole and vice versa, thus advancing our exegesis of both. Indeed, lack of concentrated focus on a part can prevent a full understanding of that part, thereby impoverishing our understanding of not only the part, but of the whole as well (precisely because of their unity!). As John Piper has said, "would it not mean an end to all careful scholarship if it were not possible to focus on one tree *without* losing sight of the forest?"[16] Furthermore, neither Romans 9:1-9 nor 9-11 can be separated from the epistle so that we must consider both in the broader context of the whole book.

Romans 9:1-9 is especially fitting for the proposed analysis because its OT background has received even less attention than that of some other parts of the chapter and because it holds special import for understanding the whole of Romans 9-11 as the introduction and beginning stage of Paul's discourse that sets the course of his argument. Indeed, the programmatic statement that stands over all of Romans 9-11 (i.e., 9:6a) is found in these verses, as is both a second similarly programmatic statement standing subordinately over much of the same material (i.e., 9:6b) and what is probably the most discussed verse in the New Testament (9:5). An investigation of Paul's use of Scripture in these verses sharply attuned to the resulting meaning-effects has potential to help move Pauline studies forward. For as Scott Hafemann concludes in his survey of modern research on the life and letters of Paul:

> [A]t the heart of the debate concerning the Law and the role of justification in Paul's thought is the question of Paul's understanding of redemptive history (cf. Gal 3-4; 2 Cor 3:7-18; Rom 3:21-16; 9-11), which itself can only be solved by a renewed study of Paul's use and understanding of the OT within the larger question of the relationship of Paul and his gospel to Israel as the old covenant people of God . . . . Such a study is only now beginning to be undertaken . . . . The future of Pauline studies at this juncture in its history is dependent on just

[15] A look at any modern commentary would demonstrate this by the universal practice of separating the passage into sections.

[16] Piper, *Justification*, 16; emphasis his.

> these kinds of studies if we are to move forward in our understanding of Paul as he understood himself: the Jewish apostle to the Gentiles, whose message came from the history of his people, their Scriptures, and the history of Israel's Messiah.[17]

Thus, this study is part of a broader vision for what we would call an intertextual exegesis of Romans 9, and beyond that, of Romans 9-11 as a whole.[18] Indeed, if our method proves viable, then it may hold promise for exegesis of Paul's epistles in general and merit consideration for application to the rest of the NT. Our analysis of Romans 9:1-9 will serve both to illustrate this method and to make headway into the intertextual exegesis of Romans 9. This investigation might best be described as a detailed exegesis of Romans 9:1-9 in the context of a comprehensive analysis of Paul's use of Scripture there. Our approach can be pictured as the exegete looking at Romans 9 through the lens of Paul's use of Scripture which in turn affects every aspect of analysis—exegesis, theology, structure, relationship to epistolary context, etc.[19] Such an investigation will necessarily have implications for the ongoing debate concerning Paul's use of the Old Testament. Hence, the goal of this study is to contribute to our understanding of 3 areas of investigation germane to New Testament studies: (1) the exegesis of Romans 9; (2) the theological issues associated with Romans 9; and (3) Paul's use of Scripture.

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[17] Scott J. Hafemann, "Paul and His Interpreters," 678. The entire final paragraph of Hafemann's article is a powerful and incisive reflection on the present state of Pauline scholarship, concluding, as can be seen in the quotation, that studies like the present investigation are what is required to move Pauline research forward. Cf. Richard Hays' similar call for studies that attend to Paul's exegesis of Scripture to move our understanding of Pauline theology forward referred to in ch. 5 below, p. 351; D. Moody Smith, "The Pauline Literature," 285-87, who considers Paul's use of the OT to be essential to a number of important issues involved in evaluating his theology, and Rom 9-11 to be the best place to examine his use of the OT.

[18] Berkley, *Broken Covenant*, also uses the term "intertextual exegesis," but he uses it of *Paul's* exegesis of Scripture rather than exegesis of Paul based upon his exegesis of the OT as we do.

[19] Of course we acknowledge that this is in fact a form of the proverbial hermeneutical circle, for analyzing Paul's use of Scripture is itself an act of exegesis. Nevertheless, we press on convinced that the act of interpretation must continue, and that to begin anywhere in the circle is a valuable move.

Methodology

Introduction and Emphasis

Scholars have often been remiss about examining the original contexts of Paul's scriptural citations and allusions. Not infrequently we find claims that Paul disregarded the original contexts of his citations or engaged in atomistic exegesis without an accompanying *detailed* analysis of the Old Testament text.[20] To be sure, there may sometimes be general comments made about the Old Testament passage in its original context which aim to show Paul disregarded it. But these are often too general to be helpful.[21]

An example of this phenomenon can be seen in J. W. Aageson's often cited and generally commendable study, "Paul's Use of Scripture: A Comparative Study of Biblical Interpretation in Early Palestinian Judaism and the New Testament with Special Reference to Romans 9-11." Although he allows for the functional, referential role of some of Paul's citations in certain blocks of material, outside of that material he claims "that there appears to be little or no direct evidence that the larger scriptural contexts were thematically important for Paul."[22] His prime example is Paul's citation of Psalm 18:50[23] in Romans 15:9. He explains that Paul

> uses the passage to substantiate the claim that Christ became a servant to the circumcised in order to confirm the promises to the patriarchs and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God. The scriptural verse, however, is part of a statement of praise that concludes a psalm in which the king has given thanks for his victory in battle. There does

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[20] E.g., Richard Longenecker, "'Who is the Prophet Talking About?': Some Reflections on the New Testament's Use of the Old," 383-84; Christopher Stanley, *Paul and the Language of Scripture: Citation Technique in the Pauline Epistles and Contemporary Literature*, 78; Aageson, "Paul's Use of Scripture," 111-12. G. K. Beale, "Did Jesus and His Followers Preach the Right Doctrine from the Wrong Texts?" 390, estimates that ". . . many scholars in this field affirm that the New Testament writers often employ a non-contextual exegetical method."

[21] Probably more often, the original scriptural contexts are all but ignored without comment on the issue, and Paul's discourse is analyzed with minimal attention to Paul's use of Scripture. It may be considered mainly for its rhetorical effect.

[22] Aageson, "Paul's Use of Scripture," 111.

[23] Aageson is apparently referring to the MT versification.

> not appear to be any thematic material in this psalm which would enhance Paul's discussion. Rather, the use of this scriptural passage by Paul hinges on the presence of the word ἔθνη (LXX) which serves as a linking term in Romans 15:9-12. Hence, the use of Psalm 18:50 has probably been suggested to Paul by the verbal and thematic connection and not by the larger scriptural context of the passage.[24]

It is interesting, then, to find that Richard Hays' treatment of the same passage demonstrates that the context of the psalm does in fact play an important role for Paul and his argument.[25] Indeed, for Hays, Psalm 18:49 (Eng.; 17:50 LXX; 18:50 MT) is one of Paul's "clinchers" that he has saved for his climactic concluding summary of the letter's themes. It embodies "his vision for a church composed of Jews and Gentiles glorifying God together,"[26] and on it (along with the other citations in Rom 15:7-13) Paul rests his case for his gospel of God's righteousness as promised in Scripture. Hays correctly warns us,

> Even here, where the significance of the passages for Paul's case is evident, we will miss important intertextual echoes if we ignore the loci from which the quotations originate. Both of the psalm passages refer not only to Gentiles, but also God's mercy (*eleos;* Ps. 17:51 LXX, Ps. 116:2 LXX), the attribute for which the Gentiles are said in Rom. 15:9 to glorify God. In neither instance does Paul quote the part of the text that mentions mercy, but the appearance of the word in these passages is hardly a case of blind luck. Paul has presumably selected these passages precisely because they bring references to God's mercy into conjunction with references to praise of God among the Gentiles.[27]

But the significance of Psalm 18's slightly broader context has not yet been exhausted. Hays goes on to point out other themes voiced in Psalm 18:50 (Eng.) which are related to other themes in Romans, such as "Christ" and "seed," and which form "a satisfying *inclusio* with the letter's opening proclamation about God's son,

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[24] Aageson, "Paul's Use of Scripture," 111-12.

[25] See Hays, *Echoes*, 70-72.

[26] Ibid, 71.

[27] Ibid, 71-72.

who was promised in holy texts, 'who came from the seed [*spermatos*] of David, . . . Jesus Messiah [*Christou*],' who commissioned Paul to preach the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles (Rom. 1:3-5)."[28]

This example should serve as a warning against giving insufficient attention to the original contexts of Paul's citations and allusions. What we need are not general descriptions of Old Testament contexts, but detailed exegesis of the relevant Old Testament texts which can then serve as the basis for a judgment about their significance for Paul in any single instance. Only then will we be able to make sound appraisals of the importance of broad scriptural contexts for Paul, and go on to assess his use of Scripture and its importance for understanding his discourse. Only then can we begin to take Paul seriously as an interpreter of Scripture. Otherwise, we may miss important clues to the meaning of Paul's rhetoric. Moreover, only when our Old Testament exegesis is set forth in some significant way, rather than in a very general summary, can we expect our analysis of Paul's use of Scripture to be readily accessible to the scrutiny of others.

Therefore, this study will place great emphasis on analyzing the original Old Testament contexts of Paul's citations and allusions. In so doing, it follows the lead of such distinguished studies as those of Dodd and Hays. In his classic book, *According to the Scriptures,* C. H. Dodd forcefully argued that the New Testament authors employed a contextual method of exegesis which operated flexibly "upon intelligible and consistent principles."[29] Old Testament passages

> were understood as *wholes*, and particular verses or sentences were quoted from rather as pointers to the whole context than as constituting testimonies in and for themselves. At the same time, detached sentences could be adduced to illustrate or elucidate the meaning of the main section under consideration. But in the fundamental passages it is the *total context* that is in view, and is the basis of the argument.[30]

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[28] Ibid, 72. Whether Paul remained true to the original intention of Ps 18 is a separate but related issue, as Aageson seems to acknowledge for Paul's general practice ("Paul's Use of Scripture," 113). A decision on this issue would seem to be tied to how we judge Paul, whether by modern critical standards, or his own first century context and Jewish-Christian presuppositions; see our concluding chapter (5) below.

[29] C.H. Dodd, *According to the Scriptures: The Sub-structure of New Testament Theology*, 126. Cf. pp. 108-09: a "coherent and flexible method of biblical exegesis."

[30] Ibid, 126; emphasis in original. I would concur with the general tenor of Dodd's (ibid, 109) judgment

Dodd's formulation adumbrated developments in literary criticism concerning the concepts of "quotation" and "allusion" to transpire some twenty to thirty-plus years later in the wake of the intertextual fervor sparked by Julia Kristeva.[31]

Most literary scholars now emphasize a relational and genealogical understanding of quotation. Its distinctive quality is

> its very ability to refer the reader to other texts, to make him or her aware of the text's relations to points of reference outside itself. . . . quotations open up a deeper dimension . . . . They do not only refer to their original contexts, but also represent them in the quoting text . . . . This quasi-metonymical presence of the quoted text in the quoting text is, however, not restricted to the words of the quotation, but goes beyond the limits of the quotation and attains suggestive power . . . . The quotational element evokes the quoted text as a whole and, possibly its author, the latter's *oeuvre*, or the literary period in which it was written.[32]

Similarly, a new perspective on allusion emerged in the 1970's and 1980's which equated allusion with direct, overt reference. Many scholars have come to regard allusions not "as casual references without any major impact on the meaning of the text, but rather as particularly intentional elements within the text's artistic structure."[33] Just as with quotation, the relational quality of allusion has been stressed. "[T]he crucial feature of an allusion, no matter whether a literary allusion in the conventional sense or any other allusion to a person or event, is its effect to denote a specific relation between a text and an identifiable point of reference and its potential to connote additional associations."[34]

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that, "The various scriptures are acutely interpreted along lines already discernible within the Old Testament canon itself or in pre-Christian Judaism—in many cases, I believe, lines which start from their first, historical, intention—and these lines are carried forward to fresh results."

[31] For a helpful introduction to the concept of intertextuality and the accompanying developments in the areas of "quotation" and "allusion," which simultaneously sets the specifics in a historical literary setting, see Udo J. Hebel's preface and introduction to his *Intertextuality, Allusion, and Quotation: An International Bibliography of Critical Studies.* My discussion of these issues is heavily indebted to Hebel's treatment.

[32] Udo J. Hebel, *Intertextuality, Allusion, and Quotation,* 4.

[33] Ibid, 7.

[34] Ibid, 8.

Enter Richard Hays with his influential study, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*. Although Dodd has been heavily criticized,[35] Hays has confirmed some of his basic insights,[36] albeit in a nuanced manner which advances Dodd's outlook to a higher level of sophistication via an intertextual literary approach. Hays' approach is to read Paul's letters "as literary texts shaped by complex intertextual relations with Scripture."[37] Intertextuality, for Hays, is "the imbedding of fragments of an earlier text within a later one."[38] He takes his cue for analyzing Paul's intertextual activity from John Hollander's *The Figure of Echo,* which accords a central place to the literary figure of transumption, or metalepsis. Hays explains:

> When a literary echo links the text in which it occurs to an earlier text, the figurative effect of the echo can lie in the unstated or suppressed (transumed) points of resonance between the two texts. . . . Hollander sums up in a compact formula the demand that this sort of effect places

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[35] See especially Albert C. Sundberg, Jr., "On Testimonies." More recently Philipp Vielhauer ("Paulus und das Alte Testament," 202-04) and Dietrich-Alex Koch (*Die Schrift als Zeuge des Evangeliums: Untersuchungen zur Verwendung und zum Verständnis der Schrift bei Paulus*) have leveled criticism against Dodd's work. But convincing defences of Dodd have been brought forward by I. Howard Marshall, "An Assessment of Recent Developments," 197-203, (especially against Sundberg), and Richard Bell, *Provoked to Jealousy: The Origin and Purpose of the Jealousy Motif in Romans 9-11*, 205-09 (especially against Koch). Criticisms of Dodd's conception of traditional textual fields tend to falter on a misunderstanding of his position (and this applies to Vielhauer as well as any). Dodd's portrait of "the Bible of the early Church" is not offered as exhaustive or restrictive (see both Marshall [especially], 201, and Bell, 206) on this point. Dodd's own words should caution us from caricaturing his position: "It is not pretended that this is an exhaustive list of scriptures in which the early Church found testimonies to the facts declared in the *kerygma*, but I believe that these passages have qualified, after a somewhat searching examination, for a position in any such list" (*According to the Scriptures*, 108). Therefore, Stanley's comment that "Koch's observation that only a small percentage of Paul's citations (15 out of 93, by Koch's count) comes from those passages that Dodd designates 'the Bible of the early church' is also damaging," (Christopher Stanley, *Paul and the Language of Scripture: Citation Technique in the Pauline Epistles and Contemporary Literature*, 72 n. 25) is incorrect. What would need to be shown is that a significant proportion of the Scriptures Dodd identifies are not in fact quoted by Paul. But Ellis has shown that Dodd's list is well represented in Paul (E. Earle Ellis, *Paul's Use of the Old Testament*, 105-06). Dodd may have been unwise to speak of "the Bible of the early Church," since the analogy could suggest his list to be exhaustive. Be that as it may, the notion of traditional text-plots which drew the early church to certain types of Scriptures makes eminent sense. Perhaps it would be better, even if anachronistic, to speak of "the red letter Bible of the early Church."

[36] Other scholars who follow Dodd in one way or another include G. K. Beale, "Did Jesus and His Followers Preach the Right Doctrine from the Wrong Texts?" 390-01 (and see Beale's note 10 for a list of a number of other scholars who support Dodd); Bell, *Provoked to Jealousy*, 205-09; Ellis, *Paul's Use*, 104-07; Barnabas Lindars, *New Testament Apologetic: The Doctrinal Significance of the Old Testament Quotations*, 14-17; and see our previous note.

[37] Hays, *Echoes*, xi.

[38] Ibid, 14.

> upon criticism: "the interpretation of a metalepsis entails the recovery of the transumed material." Allusive echo functions to suggest to the reader that text B should be understood in light of a broad interplay with text A, encompassing aspects of A beyond those explicitly echoed. . . . Metalepsis . . . places the reader within a field of whispered or unstated correspondences.[39]

It is this phenomenon of matalepsis which Hays finds consistently at work in Paul's writing, and which means that, "We will have great difficulty understanding Paul, the pious first-century Jew, unless we seek to situate his discourse appropriately within what Hollander calls the 'cave of resonant signification' that enveloped him: Scripture."[40] There is also, then, a historical dimension to such interpretation. So historical knowledge is to inform and constrain the interpreter's reading, even as the interpreter's readings have historical implications.

Procedure

Hays offers no precise method for analyzing echoes, but beckons us to tune our ears to Paul's echoes of Scripture by examining their original contexts and assessing their significance for the meaning of Paul's epistles. Although we do not necessarily affirm all the specifics of either Dodd's or Hays' formulations, it is this basic insight, consonant with recent intertextual literary approaches to quotation and allusion, which helps form the foundation for the method of this study.[41] The specifics of that method will now be delineated.

Rather than always use the awkward combination of "quotations and allusions," etc., we will often simply use the term allusion. This anticipates some of our later discussion of definitions which will conclude that allusion is the broader term and encompasses quotation. Hopefully, this practice will make the discussion a

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[39] Ibid, 20.

[40] Ibid, 21.

[41] We echo A. T. Hanson's (*Studies in Paul's Technique and Theology*, 193) stance when he writes, ". . . the constant tenor of our argument has been that we cannot understand Paul's interpretation of Scripture unless we examine the context from which his citations are taken." For a valuable recent survey of the historical development of intertextual method from foundational works to the present, see Berkley, *Broken Covenant*, 17-47.

little smoother. With a view toward exegeting the text of Romans, we will analyze Paul's use of the OT under four headings:[42]

(1) *The Old Testament Context.* Here we will exegete the broad context of Paul's allusion in the Hebrew text.[43] Although Paul uses the LXX[44] far more often than the Hebrew, we choose the Hebrew text for our primary analysis because it stands at the genesis of the textual tradition. Familiarity with the Hebrew will put us in the best position to assess all that developed from it, and will give us the broadest possible view through which to understand Paul's scriptural interpretation. When I say the broad Old Testament context, I mean the very broad context. We will not restrict ourselves to just a few verses surrounding the specific allusion, but will concern ourselves with the passage in which it is found, and that passage in its own literary and theological context. We will attempt to render ourselves as fit as possible to analyze Paul's use of the Old Testament and to make judgments about its significance for the exegesis of Romans 9.

(2) *Textual Comparison.* Paul's citations and allusions will be compared to the known textual traditions of the Old Testament passage such as the MT, LXX, Targums, and early Jewish translations to determine what, if any, known text Paul used, and identify any implications to be drawn from the textual form of the allusion. Due to the instability of both the Hebrew text and the LXX in Paul's day, we will be cautious about concluding that Paul altered the text.[45] Nevertheless, in light of

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[42] The following methodological approach has been especially derived and adapted from G. K. Beale, lecture notes from the course, NT 293— "Old Testament in the New" at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in the Fall term of 1994; Richard Hays and Joel Green, "The Use of the Old Testament by New Testament Writers"; and Klyne Snodgrass, "The Use of the Old Testament in the New." Cf. also S. Lewis Johnson, *The Old Testament in the New*, who evidences a specific method but does not discuss it. Beale has largely adopted Johnson's method.

[43] By speaking of *the* Hebrew text, I do not mean to imply that there was a single Hebrew text in Paul's day. The phrase is a general one used out of convenience. As is customary, the starting point of our work will be the MT.

[44] As with the Hebrew, I do not mean to imply that there was a fixed Greek translation in Paul's day. Following Stanley, Tov, and others, we will use the terms "LXX" and "Septuagint" to refer to the collection of Greek translations in all their textual diversity, and "Old Greek" to specifically refer to the original LXX translation of each book. Cf. the practice of Wagner, *Heralds*, who uses the term "LXX" to refer to what we have called the Old Greek; see esp. Wagner's pp. 16f. n. 60 and 344 n. 6.

[45] On the history of the Hebrew text, see Martin Jan Mulder, "The Transmission of the Biblical Text." On the Septuagint, see Emmanuel Tov, "The Septuagint." For an especially understandable account of these issues, see Ellis R. Brotzman, *Old Testament Textual Criticism: A Practical Introduction*, 37-62

Christopher Stanley's findings that ancient authors commonly gave free renderings of their sources according to the accepted literary standards of the day,[46] we will not hesitate to consider this option.[47] The very form of Paul's citations and allusions can suggest his understanding of the biblical text and what he was trying to communicate to his audience.

The comparison of versions can help us in another way. Since every translation is also an interpretation, the various Old Testament translations can alert us to various traditions of interpretation within ancient Judaism. This leads us to the next analytical heading.

(3) *Interpretive Traditions.* Here we are seeking to understand how the Scripture alluded to was interpreted and used in Judaism. This can help tell us if and how Paul was adopting, refuting, ignoring, or otherwise interacting with related Jewish exegetical traditions. It will also set Paul's scriptural interpretation in its proper historical and cultural context. As a Jew, Paul's understanding and sense of Scripture was forged by Jewish training and instruction. He viewed Scripture through the lenses of his Jewish background. As Brian Rosner comments, "He did not receive his Bible in a vacuum."[48] Therefore, we must attend to interpretive traditions that

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for the Hebrew text, and 72-80 for the LXX. For a helpful summary of the issues with special concern for Paul, see Stanley, *Paul and the Language*, 37-51. Stanley identifies four consequences of the latest understanding of the biblical text for our analysis of ancient citation techniques on pages 47-51, the first consequence being echoed above.

[46] Stanley, *Paul and the Language*; he reviews the work of a number of scholars who have maintained that Paul actively shaped the wording of his scriptural quotations on pp. 18-28. For a concise summary of his work as it bears specifically on this issue, see his "The Social Environment of the 'Free' Biblical Quotations in the New Testament."

[47] Stanley, "The Social Environment," 19, claims that "fully 60% of the apostle Paul's nearly one hundred biblical quotations were adapted in some way to suit their present context." Of course, offering free or interpretive renderings in no way diminishes Paul's respect for the Scriptures as the authoritative word of God.

[48] Rosner, *Paul, Scripture and Ethics*, 57. See Rosner's discussion on pages 56-58 for an expansion of this point, where he draws attention to modern theories of hermeneutics which emphasize that ". . . there is never any understanding which is not in some way shaped by our preunderstandings. There is, in short, no unmediated understanding. We arrive at an understanding of ourselves and our world indirectly, through the mediation of cultural, linguistic and religious signs, symbols and forms that permeate our everyday lives and which provide the tacit background which both predisposes and orients our lives" (56). These points are over-made by poststuctural theorists and radical reader-response critics who would allow for no objective meaning, only for a limiting social and subjective construction of reality.

could have influenced Paul. C. A. Evans makes a similar point in his criticism of Richard Hays, arguing that ". . . it would be more accurate to speak of the echoes of interpreted Scripture in the letters of Paul."[49]

At the same time, the lenses of Judaism were not the only lenses Paul wore. Hays' rejoinder to Evans is instructive. He acknowledges the importance of attending to Jewish interpretive traditions, but declares, "I continue to insist, however, that the work of interpretation must include careful attention to the manner in which Paul puts his own distinctive spin on the inherited traditions."[50] There is both continuity and discontinuity between Paul and Judaism. The Christ event ensured that much. While Paul is influenced heavily by his past, he is not restricted by it, and may (and does) interact with the biblical text from a distinctive perspective as well as a Jewish one. He is free to engage in a fresh encounter with the biblical text, and is not limited to an encounter with interpreted Scripture. Nevertheless, the fact that I need to argue for a degree of freedom for Paul from his Jewish milieu highlights the importance of paying attention to his Jewish context.

In addition to tracing the Jewish exegetical history of Paul's allusions, we will also examine their interpretation and use in early Christianity as reflected in the rest of the New Testament.[51] Since Paul shared a common faith with his fellow Christians, our understanding of his use of Scripture can be enlightened by their use of the same Scripture. Just as there was an exegetical history of various passages in Judaism, there may also have been Christian traditions of interpretation that could have influenced Paul.

A final word should be addressed to the use of rabbinic materials that were

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[49] Evans, "Listening for Echoes," 50. Cf. James A. Sanders' similar criticism of Hays in "Paul and Theological History." He provides several questions which describe well the types of concerns that govern this section: "How did the very same First Testament passages and concepts 'echo' in Jewish literature prior to Paul? What flexibility or fluidity of application of the older world in the stream of newer words is evident from inception in the Tanak down to Paul? And by what hermeneutic did the tradent in each case effect changes to the older concept by means of the newer?" (56-57). Such concerns also help distinguish the method of Hays' student, J. Ross Wagner, from Hays in his recent intertextual investigation of Romans (see *Heralds*, 15).

[50] Hays, "On the Rebound," 73.

[51] We could have included data from the rest of the New Testament under the next category, *New Testament Context*, but have placed it here because the next analytic heading refers more precisely to the more immediate NT context of the Book of Romans, Romans 9-11, and Paul's writings.

codified after the New Testament era.[52] The problem of how useful these materials are in view of their chronological distance from the first century is well known.[53] But it is commonly pointed out that these writings may well reflect ancient traditions stretching back to New Testament times and earlier. Parallels with the New Testament may often reveal dependence on a common tradition rather than literary dependence, which is impossible in the case of Paul depending on the Talmud, for example, and highly unlikely in the case of rabbinic dependence on Paul when the fact of increasing hostility between Christianity and Judaism from Paul's day onward is taken into account. Therefore, we will exercise caution in appealing to late rabbinic sources, but remain open to their echoing of common tradition, especially in cases of striking parallels to Paul's scriptural use. Reference to rabbinic literature does not in itself suggest a direct connection to Paul.

(4) *The New Testament Context.* Finally, we will address the New Testament context of Paul's Old Testament allusions. This is where we will address how Paul has actually used the Old Testament. We will seek to integrate all we have discovered into our exegesis of Romans 9 even as we relate our exegesis of Romans 9 to Paul's scriptural use, observing the dynamic interaction between Paul and sacred text, old context and new. Here Paul's use of the same or similar passages elsewhere will enter in, as well as the broad literary and theological context of Romans. Four aspects of the New Testament context stand out for special mention. Although we identify them here, we will not necessarily distinguish them in our treatments of New Testament context throughout the study because of their close overlap and disproportionate space requirements.

We will address the question of Paul's *hermeneutical approach* to the Old Testament text, attempting to identify any presuppositions at work behind Paul's interpretation.[54] We will also want to ascertain just how Paul uses the Old Testament

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[52] See Michael Knowles, *Jeremiah in Matthew's Gospel: The Rejected Prophet Motif in Matthaean Redaction*, 166, for this language. Knowles has a good discussion of this problem as it relates to Matthew (166-170), but which is applicable generally. The method he proposes for evaluating talmudic, midrashic, and targumic materials appears basically sound, though we do not share his commitment to focusing primarily on what is dissimilar.

[53] See Samuel Sandmel's landmark essay, "Parallelomania." Berkley, *Broken Covenant*, 17-47, highlights this issue among others in his methodological history.

[54] Descriptions of the New Testament authors' presuppositions have been given by scholars such as G.

text, whether analogically, as direct fulfillment of prophecy, or some other way or combination of ways.[55] A second emphasis under New Testament context is the analysis of the *rhetorical significance* of Paul's Old Testament usage. Although I regard this as standard procedure in New Testament exegesis, it has recently been claimed that many studies on the use of the Old Testament in the New have ignored this aspect of the topic.[56] If this is true, then our attention to rhetorical matters should help to correct this imbalance, and shed light on how Paul's biblical allusion furthers his persuasive strategy.[57] This is mainly an exegetical question that addresses how the Old Testament quotation formally functions in Paul's argument, its logic, and its persuasive power.

Intimately related is the central matter of the *semantic significance* of Paul's

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K. Beale, "Jesus and His Followers," 391-398; E. Earle Ellis, "Biblical Interpretation in the New Testament Church," 710-24; idem, "How the New Testament Uses the Old," 209-14; Richard Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period*, 93-95; Klyne Snodgrass, "The Use," 36-41. Although descriptions are not identical, at least four presuppositions are commonly identified: 1. Corporate solidarity or representation (the "reciprocal relationship between the individual and the community" [Snodgrass, "The Use," 37] in which the individual represents and is identified with the community and vice versa); 2. Correspondence in history or typology (God works consistently throughout history so that the past corresponds and adumbrates the future); 3. eschatological fulfillment (The Church is living in the last days in which Christ has inaugurated the age to come and brought beginning fulfillment of Old Testament promises); 4. Christological interpretation (Christ is the fulfillment of the Scriptures and the key to their interpretation). Hays tries his own hand at describing Paul's hermeneutical presuppositions in *Echoes*, 154-173, which have some overlap with the four just listed. It is helpful to be aware of such presuppositions as possible avenues for understanding Paul as an interpreter of Scripture. Less helpful, but still important are other Jewish exegetical methods operative in the first century, most notably, the so-called seven rules of Hillel. For these see the works listed above by Ellis, "Biblical Interpretation," 700-02; Longenecker, 34-35; and Snodgrass, 43.

[55] G. K. Beale has described seven uses of the Old Testament in Revelation, which can be used to think about the various ways Paul uses the Old testament. He lists usages as, 1. Literary prototype; 2. Thematic; 3. Analogical; 4. Universalization; 5. Indirect fulfillment; 6. Inverted; 7. Stylistic. See his *The Book of Revelation*, 86-96, and "The Use of the Old Testament in Revelation," 263-273.

[56] Christopher D. Stanley, "The Rhetoric of Quotations: An Essay on Method." Whether or not Stanley is correct in this questionable assertion, he underestimates the importance of hermeneutical and semantic analysis of New Testament Scripture use, and recommends what I regard as an unbalanced approach which gives too much weight to rhetorical matters. All of these matters deserve attention, although I think Hays has persuasively argued for an emphasis on meaning-effects. Stanley overlooks the fact that semantic and rhetorical significance are intertwined, that meaning is foundational to rhetorical effect, and that hermeneutic activity contributes to both. Moreover, rhetorical analysis should serve the end of determining Paul's meaning.

[57] Ibid, 58. If Stanley's claim is correct, it could be because some studies on the use of the Old Testament in the New have a narrower focus than exegesis of specific texts. Commentaries, which are more exegetically focused, typically give attention to matters rhetorical, but not much detailed attention to the meaning-effects of Paul's Scripture use. Again, if Stanley is correct, then the present study's exegetical focus would distinguish it from many recent studies.

use of the Old Testament. I regard this too as an acutely exegetical question, one which has often been ignored in exegetical treatments of Paul's epistles. The focus will be on describing the meaning-effects generated by Paul's Scripture use, that is, the ramifications of Paul's interpretive activity for his message. How does Paul's allusion affect the meaning of his discourse? What difference does the connection of old context and new context make to exegesis?

The last aspect of New Testament Context we must mention is the *theological significance* of Paul's use of the Old Testament text. This simply refers to the theological implications effected by Paul's scriptural interpretation and presentation. What theology is reflected in Paul's understanding of Scripture? How does that translate into his discourse? What theological significance do the meaning-effects of Paul's allusion yield?

Definitions

Having outlined the emphasis and methodological procedure of this investigation, it is now time to turn to the basic methodological issue of defining terms. Stanley Porter has recently charged that the vast majority of studies of the Old Testament in the New do not bother to define their terms.[58] So we will try to avoid this methodological flaw which is apparently common to many studies in this field. This is not as easy as it sounds, however, as evidenced by the uncertainty in literary studies over definitions of quotation and allusion,[59] the two terms Porter regards as most in need of definition.[60]

The difficulty is exacerbated by the fact that we are dealing with ancient literature, produced in "a culture of high residual orality"[61] which did not employ

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[58] Stanley Porter, "The Use of the Old Testament in the New Testament: A Brief Comment on Method and Terminology," 81.

[59] Hebel, *Intertextuality, Allusion, and Quotation*, x, 4.

[60] Porter, "The Use of the Old," 95. The difficulty of precise definition is highlighted by the fact that the definitions Porter suggests are not very precise themselves. This should alert us to the likelihood that the kind of precision that Porter (who is a grammarian after all) demands is not to be had in this sloppy business of interpreting ancient texts.

[61] Paul J. Achtemeier, "*Omni Verbum Sonat:* The New Testament and the Oral Environment of Late Western Antiquity," 3. While Achtemeier's thesis provides an important corrective to the naive

quotation marks or other modern means of indicating borrowed material. Nor did the ancients have the same literary standards as modern authors and scholars living in the age of the footnote.[62] They clearly did not have the same concept of citation that we do. So how do we define "quotation" and "allusion" when working with such materials when modern theorists cannot even agree, even with abundant punctuation markers available?

Unfortunately, there are no absolute or thoroughly precise definitions available. The issues are complicated and varied, and we cannot enter into a full treatment of them here.[63] The best that investigators can do is to clearly, even if not

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assumptions that have dominated New Testament scholarship as if the sensual experience of texts was virtually the same in the ancient world as in our modern era, the recent fashionable focus on orality sparked by this programmatic article seems somewhat misguided in that many of the insights claimed by an oral approach to interpreting ancient texts appear to be of no greater practical value than the traditional approach (cf. Hays' critical remarks on the value of the term "midrash" referred to in note 209 of ch. 4 below). For example, it is in vogue to maintain that an appreciation of the oral character of the NT documents helps us to interpret them by paying attention to such oral structuring techniques as repetition, parallelism, thematic statements, inclusio, and chiasm. But these are the very type of *textual* signals that standard exegesis has long taken notice of! Certainly it is important to recognize the oral environment that shaped the NT literature, but we must admit that the practical value for exegesis is often minimal. Moreover, one can make too much of the impact of the oral environment of late antiquity resulting in the obfuscation of our understanding of that environment. This is the case, e.g., with those who would suggest that the physical difficulty of handling and reading ancient scrolls severely limited interaction with the Scriptures in the churches to such a degree that we must assume that the early Christians, especially Gentiles, were scripturally ignorant (see e.g., Christopher D. Stanley, " 'Pearls Before Swine': Did Paul's Audiences Understand His Biblical Quotations?"). Ironically, an appreciation of the high residual orality of late Western antiquity as it operated in a culture that "nevertheless communicated significantly by means of literary creations" (Achtemeier, ibid) helps us to understand that ancient readers and audiences would have been sufficiently accustomed to the demands of interacting with written texts so as to be capable of achieving the highest levels of textual awareness and proficiency; cf. John D. Harvey, *Listening to the Text: Oral Patterning in Paul's Letters*, 59. On issues of literacy and orality, see further now Harry Y. Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church: A History of Early Christian Texts*; Harvey, *Listening to the Text* (Wagner, *Heralds*, 20 n. 70, also mentions the recent study of Alan Millard, *Reading and Writing in the Time of Jesus*). On issues of orality related specifically to Rom 9-11, see Mohrmann, "Semantic Collisions," 176-208, who also cites a number of studies related to orality. Cf. note 121 below.

[62] See Stanley, *Paul and the Language*, and "The Social Environment." Cf. Roger Nicole, "The New Testament Use of the Old Testament," who reminds us of our cumbersome punctuation rules and catalogs the various modern literary devices used in scholarly literature: quotation marks, ellipsis marks, brackets, and footnotes (20-21).

[63] Hebel, *Intertextuality, Allusion, and Quotation*, provides a convenient description of some of the issues: "whether only literal quotations should be considered true quotations or whether more or less faithful reproductions might not also be acceptable . . . whether only those elements reproduced from other texts should be analyzed as quotations that are marked as such by quotation marks, by italicization, or by any other way of indicating their secondary quality [such as introductory formulae] or whether so-called cryptic quotations . . . might not also be regarded as quotations . . . whether only textual elements 'of a certain length should be treated as quotations . . . " (3).

precisely, define their own usage of the terms. We concur with Moisés Silva's judgment that ". . . there is little to be gained by attempting to formulate a definitive criterion to decide this question, "[64] and with Christopher Stanley say, "To attempt to establish any hard and fast guidelines would be to misrepresent the broad diversity that characterizes Paul's repeated appeals to the biblical text."[65]

As Stanley's comment suggests, our own definitions cannot be too precise without distorting the issues. The down side of this is that it leaves room for subjectivity. But it seems that the danger of distortion from too much precision is greater than the danger of distortion through ambiguity.[66] We will take some of Porter's advice by defining quotation more broadly than in most monographs on New Testament use of the Old, as is typical of commentary discussion. This is a more author-oriented approach, since we are interested in Paul's use of the Old Testament. So "quotation" or "citation" will refer to the reproduction of an earlier text. The number of words cannot be specified since theoretically an author can quote just one word, just as is true today.[67] Each case will need to be examined individually and judged against its context and what we deem to be Paul's intention based on our exegesis of the text.[68] There is also merit to the reader-oriented approach,[69] for quotation is often (but not always), connected to an intention to communicate to the reader that one is quoting. This is largely the case today when quotation marks are usually used. So we may distinguish between "formal quotations," which are those

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[64] Moisés Silva, "Old Testament in Paul," 634.

[65] Stanley, *Paul and the Language*, 36.

[66] Although the well known differences between various lists of Pauline citations illustrates the difficulty of definition and the ambiguity over precise terminology that exists among scholars, the overall agreement between the lists testifies to a fundamental agreement in understanding of citation.

[67] Cf. Christina Ruse and Marilyn Hopton, *The Cassell Dictionary of Literary and Language Terms*, 243, who define quotation partly as "a word, phrase, passage, stanza etc. reproduced from another literary work or speech . . . ."

[68] Cf. Ellis, *Paul's Use*, 11, who also takes into account "the intention of the apostle as judged from the context" when determining quotations. His remark about the difference between quotation and allusion sums up well the common view of those who study Paul's Scripture use: "The gradation from quotation to allusion is so imperceptible that it is almost impossible to draw any certain line" (11).

[69] See Stanley, *Paul and the Language*, 34, for the language of author/reader-oriented as applied to quotation.

citations accompanied by a citation formula (e.g. καθὼς γέγραπται), and "informal quotations" which have no direct indication that they are quotations. Yet another category of quotation (some categories may overlap) is "exact" or "direct quotation" which refers to citation that reproduces the wording of a prior text precisely. A "loose quotation" would be one that substantially reproduces the wording of a prior text, but differs in some respect(s). The basic terms "quotation" and "citation" are general, and can refer to any of these more specific designations.

"Allusion" will be used in two main ways in this investigation, one more broad and the other more narrow. In its broad sense, "allusion" will refer to any intentional reference to a text, person, event etc. On this definition, allusion encompasses quotation, and can refer to it.[70] To quote is to allude, but to allude is not necessarily to quote. In its narrower sense, "allusion" will refer to informal, intentional reference to a text, person, event, etc. other than quotation.[71] On this definition, there has been no attempt by the author to substantially reproduce an earlier text, though a reference is intended. Although the dual meaning of "allusion" could result in some ambiguity, the context of the study should make the sense of the word clear in any specific instance, especially when it is important for the discussion.

There is a danger in using the terms citation and allusion. The labels tend to have a heuristic value that shapes one's interpretation of Paul's use of the Old Testament.[72] Quotation is thought to be more significant than allusion, and therefore attracts more attention and interpretive significance. But given our definition of allusion, which recognizes its close affinity with citation, and our intertextual approach to these two concepts, which emphasizes their ability to invoke broad original contexts and suggest additional associations, it should be clear that the present investigation attaches no such a priori valuations on quotation over against allusion. Each specific case of quotation and allusion must be judged on its own merits as to its interpretive significance and its relevance for our understanding of

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[70] This is in line with the recent definitions of allusion alluded to earlier, which regard allusion as the broader concept. For a description of this debate see Hebel, *Intertextuality, Quotation, and Allusion*, 4-7.

[71] Cf. Porter, "The Use of the Old Testament," 95.

[72] Ibid, 92.

Paul's use of the Old Testament.[73] As Moisés Silva has noted, ". . . it is possible that a particular quotation, though explicit and verbatim, may play only an illustrative role and thus will not tell us very much about Paul's fundamental conceptions. Conversely, some of the apostle's arguments that do not contain any apparent citations reflect a very deep insight into, and dependence upon, OT themes."[74]

Four other terms deserve definition. "Echo" will denote allusion without reference to conscious intention.[75] The term itself is to be considered neutral with respect to conscious intention, and will neither affirm nor deny intentionality in and of itself. "Meaning-effects" refers simply to the intended effect that Paul's use of the Old Testament has on the meaning of his discourse.[76] Like Richard Hays, we will be working with a minimal definition of "intertextuality": "the imbedding of fragments of an earlier text within a later one."[77] And finally, the related term "intertextual" will be used to mean "of the relationship between texts."

The Place of Intertextuality in New Testament Studies and This Investigation

The mention of intertextuality raises a larger issue that merits consideration, namely, the place of the literary concept of intertextuality in the study of the New Testament's use of the Old. Over the past decade and a half there has been a steady, if

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[73] It is true that formal citations do often have a greater rhetorical impact through an implicit invocation of divine authority, but this is not always the case. Moreover, although rhetorical form is related to the meaning of the text, it is not identical with it.

[74] Silva, "Old Testament," 630; cf. Moyise, "Intertextuality," 17; G. R. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, 135.

[75] Cf. Hays, *Echoes*, 29; Hollander, *The Figure of Echo*, 64; Michael Thompson, *Clothed with Christ: The Example and Teaching of Jesus in Romans 12.1-15.13*, 30.

[76] This is not a socio-pragmatic literary definition of the term (on which see briefly, Thiselton, *New Horizons*, 11-13), but a decidedly author-oriented one. I do not believe that Hays ever explicitly defines "meaning-effects," and his attempt to hold competing hermeneutical theories together in creative tension exacerbates the ambiguity. It would be consistent with the definition offered above to take account of the reader by saying that "meaning-effects" refers to the effect Paul intended for his use of the OT to have upon the ideal reader's understanding of the meaning of his discourse.

[77] Hays, *Echoes*, 14. The present investigation's appropriation of this definition does not limit the concept of "fragments of an earlier text" to verbal reproduction, but takes it in its broadest sense to include any invocation of an earlier text. For the characterization of Hays' definition as minimal, see Green, "Doing the Text's Work." For Hays' defense of his definition, see "On the Rebound," 79-81. See below for more on the concept of intertextuality as it relates to biblical scholarship.

trickling, stream of voices raising concerns over the naive adoption of the term "intertextuality" by biblical scholars.[78] Some would like to see the term dropped from biblical studies,[79] while others would prefer to see it used in a way consonant with its poststructuralist roots.[80] Perhaps the most forceful and focused statement has been made by Thomas Hatina, who argues that intertextuality is inimical to historical criticism due to its poststructuralist ideological origin, its conception of text as infinite and inseparable from the reader, and its opposition to the notion of influence.[81]

Hatina sounds a sharp note of warning which should be heeded by every biblical scholar who studies the New Testament's use of Scripture. The term "intertextuality" ought not to be used naively without thought for its conceptual background. There is a danger of investigators merely jumping on the bandwagon of what Ellen van Wolde has called "trendy intertexuality" and using the term only "as a modern literary theoretical coat of veneer over the old comparative approach."[82] Hatina is surely correct to conclude that intertextuality, *as a poststructuralist concept*, is incompatible with New Testament historical criticism. And he has correctly observed, as others before him, that most biblical scholars use the term in a way that is foreign to its poststructuralist formulation. Nevertheless, Hatina's implicit insistence on abandoning the term goes too far in my opinion, and underestimates the complexity of the literary landscape.

Although Hatina shows awareness of the fact that literary critics disagree

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[78] Ellen van Wolde, "Trendy Intertextuality?"; Green, "Doing the Text's Work;" Porter, "The Use of the Old Testament," 84-85; Thomas R. Hatina, "Intertextuality and Historical Criticism in New Testament Studies: Is There a Relationship?". Cf. Moyise, "Intertextuality," 16; Mohrmann, "Semantic Collisions," 1f.; Moore, *Poststructuralism and the New Testament*, 123.

[79] Seemingly, Porter, "The Use of the Old Testament," especially 84 n. 17; and certainly Hatina, "Intertextuality and Historical Criticism." Berkley, *Broken Covenant*, 49, has "chosen to forego the term 'intertextuality' since"—in his judgment—"that term more and more often suggests an interest in the larger literary and epistemological theories." And Shum, *Paul's Use of Isaiah*, 15f., only partially adopts an intertextual approach, identifying more with what he calls "a *modified* source-influence approach" (emphasis his). He admits that it could also be called "a modified intertextual approach," but fears the ire of " 'orthodox' intertextualists" (p. 15 n. 47). Like many others, both Berkley and Shum appear to misunderstand the variety in intertextual theory (see below).

[80] Wolde, "Trendy Intertextuality?"; Green, "Doing the Text's Work."

[81] Hatina, "Intertextuality and Historical Criticism." Hatina's article is also relevant for our consideration since this study stands in the historical-critical tradition.

[82] Wolde, "Trendy Intertextuality," 43.

among themselves over the theory and practice of intertextuality, he does not seem to grasp the probable implication that a non-postructuralist theory of intertextuality has been mediated to some biblical scholars through literary criticism.[83] Poststructuralist intertextuality is not the only type of intertextuality practiced by literary critics.[84] Therefore, it seems entirely appropriate for biblical scholars to adopt non-poststructuralist notions of intertextuality which are better suited to their realm of inquiry. Furthermore, there is no reason why a concept borrowed from literary criticism needs to maintain its pure literary critical associations anyway. New Testament scholars have a distinctive interest, and the Bible is a unique literary work. It only makes sense that biblical scholars should adapt literary critical concepts to their own specific context, discarding what is unhelpful, and employing what is useful. Of course, scholars should not simultaneously operate on mutually exclusive theories, but they can and should adapt helpful language and amenable aspects of even hostile theories, as long as they are clear about the issues and terminology. In my judgment, the main contribution of Hatina's article is to underscore the importance of biblical scholars understanding the theoretical issues at stake (and Hatina describes these well), and making their own stance on the issues clear, especially the issues of author, meaning, and text.

Even more to the point for our discussion than some of the above observations, is the relationship of intertextuality to recent developments in quotation

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[83] This seems to be the case with Richard Hays, who Hatina makes an example of, but who has followed the non-poststructuralist, intertextual approach of literary scholar John Hollander.

[84] The term "intertextuality" has in fact been unstable in meaning (Clayton and Rothstein, "Figures," 18). Many literary critics consider intertextuality as an enlargement of the older theory of influence which also encompasses *inter alia* unconscious textual aspects (Ibid, 3-4). Susan Stanford Friedman argues an emphasis "on the agency of authors represents a characteristically American redefinition of intertextuality, not a naive misunderstanding of French theory" (Ibid, 29). According to Friedman, "The multiplicity of meanings on 'this side of the Atlantic' has been symptomatic of a tendency in American intertextual criticism to ignore or refuse the 'death of the author' as a precondition of intertextual readings" ("Weavings: Intertextuality and the (Re)Birth of the Author," 155). Hebel documents that certain approaches to intertextuality soon began to emphasize its importance for the meaning of individual texts, a development which attracted heavy criticism from poststructuralists (*Intertextuality, Quotation, and Allusion*, 12). He concludes, ". . . it appears safe to contend from today's point of view that an interpretive approach to intertextuality will prove to be the more fruitful perspective for scholars of literature . . ." (13). Hebel does warn that the original formulation of intertextuality should not be forgotten. I would agree, with the additional qualification that it should nevertheless be discarded.

and allusion discussed earlier.[85] Intertextuality has become an umbrella term which incorporates these two concepts.[86] Udo Hebel credits intertextuality with "resuscitating an area of literary scholarship that had been paralyzed by basically well-intentioned, but ultimately inconsequential, searches for yet another biblical or classical allusion or quotation in yet another text."[87] Many older studies on influence and allusion apparently focused on identifying these aspects without much consideration of their interpretive and semantic significance.[88] This would appear to be mirrored by the almost exclusive focus on technical aspects of Paul's Scripture use which Hays claims to have reigned in Pauline scholarship,[89] and the recent widespread interest in deeper questions of interpretive significance. The developments in quotation and allusion studies have occurred under the influence of intertextuality, so that we may speak of an intertextual approach to quotation and allusion, which is, however, not inherently dependent on poststructuralist ideology. Again, these developments emphasize the ability of citation and allusion to refer to broad original contexts and to suggest additional associations. This, along with an emphasis on allusive interpretive significance, I take to be the primary contribution of intertextuality to the study of Paul's use of the Old Testament.[90]

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[85] See pages 10-11 especially.

[86] Hebel, *Intertextuality, Quotation, and Allusion*, 1, 4, 13.

[87] Ibid, 1.

[88] Ibid, 1, 6. Clayton and Rothstein, "Figures," 5-6.

[89] E.g. Hays, *Echoes*, 9.

[90] Thus, Hatina's ("Intertextuality and Historical Criticism," 36) assertion that Hays' use of intertextuality does not contribute to his "enlightened case study of Job 13:16 in Phil. 1:19," is incorrect. Hays has clearly been influenced by an intertextual approach to quotation, allusion, and echo. It is true that one could take a similar approach to Hays' without recourse to intertextuality by working from Dodd's insights. But Hays has surely benefited from his familiarity with literary criticism, and represents a more sophisticated approach than some who had taken a roughly similar approach, such as A.T. Hanson. Moreover, the new approach to quotation and allusion has been mediated broadly into biblical scholarship via the intertextual fervor of recent years. Ironically, Mohrmann, "Semantic Collisions," 5-25 (see esp. p. 23), appears to deduce practically the opposite of our view with respect to the significance of intertextuality for exegesis. Rather than seizing upon its evocative power, he suggests that attention should focus on what aspects of a source context are represented and which are ignored in the new context, thus respecting the selectivity of the new author/text. Mohrmann has surely based his method on ideas found in certain streams of intertextual theory, but he has thus (perhaps unintentionally) distanced himself from the now dominant intertextual approach to quotation and allusion in literary criticism (and is it not precisely quotation and allusion that we are mostly dealing with in Paul's epistles generally and in Rom 9-11 in particular?) and from the factor that has proved so

Thus, the present study will retain the language of intertextuality. But it should be noted that, along with Richard Hays, we do not regard use of the *term* as necessary for our work.[91] Rather, it is the intertextual *approach* to allusion that is foundational to the methodology of this investigation.[92]

Before leaving the topic of intertextuality it remains for us to identify our position on some of the key issues it raises. This study is located in the tradition of historical biblical criticism.[93] I assume the traditional notions of text and authorship. I assume that an author can create stable meaning through language, that meaning can be expressed through established forms, that the author's intention determines meaning, and that the text can adequately mediate an author's intended meaning.[94] I

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compelling in Hays' programmatic intertextual research. In contrast to Mohrmann, we embrace an intertextual approach to quotation and allusion that recognizes the tendency of quotations and allusions to represent their original contexts in the new context. Of course, this may not be regarded as some sort of law that applies to every allusion without question. But it strikes us as in keeping with Paul's rhetorical and interpretive practice, and therefore particularly suitable for analyzing his discourse. These competing methodologies undoubtedly rest on differing understandings of a host of critical questions relating to the likelihood of Paul intending his allusions as pointers to their original contexts (on which see below). Suffice it to say that methodologically, Mohrmann's approach seems likely to blind the interpreter to Paul's own sophisticated interpretive activity and to important data for understanding his rhetoric. It runs counter to the findings of a number of recent studies of Paul's use of the OT. Nonetheless, Mohrmann's method is laudable for its interest in a historical approach to intertextuality. However, the best way to achieve a historically relevant intertextuality in my opinion is to adopt a minimalist theory of intertextuality and to subsume it into a traditional historical-critical exegetical methodology. It would seem that in contrast to the minimalist appropriation of intertextuality shared by the present investigation, Hays, and the more fruitful studies of biblical intertextuality, Mohrmann's approach represents more of a midway intertextual theory.

[91] Hays, "On the Rebound," 81.

[92] This does not mean that our methodology is solely dependent on intertextual definitions of quotation and allusion. As mentioned earlier, C. H. Dodd anticipated such an approach without any connection to intertextuality, and within the framework of traditional historical criticism. But we do participate in what can now be called an intertextual approach to these issues. These new definitions do not appear to us to be inherently dependent on poststructuralist ideology, as evidenced by their similarity to Dodd's approach.

[93] This type of approach is represented well by the guidebooks of Douglas Stuart, *Old Testament Exegesis: A Primer for Students and Pastors*; Gordon Fee, *New Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors*; and Osborne, *Hermeneutical Spiral*. By "historical criticism" I do not mean a method which assumes a closed universe or is primarily concerned about reconstructing the history behind the text. Rather, I use the term loosely to designate a standard approach to exegesis that seeks to understand the text in its historical context and draws on a wide range of critical methodologies which aid this goal, whether they are historically oriented or not. For the more technical definition of "historical criticism" and the "historical critical method" see Richard N. Soulen, *Handbook of Biblical Criticism*, 78.

[94] The classic modern statement of what has been called "hermeneutic realism," and the related concepts of validity in interpretation and unchanging, determinate textual meaning has been put

also assume that we can usually arrive at adequate knowledge of the author's intention through historical critical inquiry.[95]

Criteria for Detecting and Interpreting Scriptural Allusions

If we want to gain knowledge of Paul's intended meaning in Romans 9 and in his use of the Old Testament, sound methodological criteria are necessary. The well-known pitfall of "parallelomania,"[96] which exaggerates parallels and facilely assumes dependence based on similarity, lies potentially on the path of any investigation of this sort. Richard Hays has provided what has become an almost standard list of criteria "for testing claims about the presence and meaning of scriptural echoes in Paul,"[97] which will serve as the basic criteria of this investigation:

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forward by E. D. Hirsch, *Validity in Interpretation.* For a compelling case in favor of these same concepts in a more nuanced statement which seeks to avoid the criticisms leveled against Hirsch's theory, see Kevin Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning in This Text?: The Bible, the Reader, and the Morality of Literary Knowledge.* This persuasive thesis treats poststructuralism at length in its defense of author, text, and meaning. Cf. Osborne, *Hermeneutical Spiral*, 366-415; Thiselton, *New Horizons*; Francis Watson, *Text and Truth: Redefining Biblical Theology*, 95-126; and more generally, idem, *Text, Church and World: Biblical Interpretation in Theological Perspective.* For a lively exchange over these issues vis-à-vis NT use of the OT, see Steve Moyise, "The Old Testament in the New: a Reply to Greg Beale" and G. K. Beale, "Questions of Authorial Intent, Epistemology, and Presuppositions and Their Bearing on the Study of the Old Testament in the New: a Rejoinder to Steve Moyise."

[95] For a defense of this position, see Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning in This Text?*.

[96] See Sandmel, "Parallelomania."

[97] Hays, *Echoes*, 29. See also Ciampa, *The Presence and Function of Scripture*, 24-25; Thompson, *Clothed with Christ*, 30-36; Knowles, *Jeremiah in Matthew's Gospel*, 163-64; Rosner, *Paul, Scripture and Ethics*, 18-19; Keesmaat, *Paul and his Story*, 52; Berkley, *Broken Covenant*, 49f., 60-66; Shum, *Paul's Use of Isaiah*, 5-11; Wagner, *Heralds*, 11-13; Mohrmann, "Semantic Collisions," 25f. (cf. pp. 6f.). Ciampa and Knowles adopt Hays' list outright, and Keesmaat and Mohrmann do so with minimal modification; others adopt certain of Hays' criteria, and all these studies acknowledge dependence on his discussion. Thompson is notable for the most thorough and rigorous discussion of the issues. Stanley Porter, "The Use of the Old Testament," 82-84, has recently charged that Hays' list really only provides three criteria for actually determining echoes, all of which are problematic. But Porter's analysis is itself flawed on several counts. First, he seems to misunderstand what Hays is doing when he says that Hays develops his seven tests to enable one to define the concept of echo. That is not Hays' concern. Rather, he is proposing "criteria for testing claims about the presence and meaning of scriptural echoes in Paul" (Hays, *Echoes*, 29). Second, Porter treats these criteria as though they should be precise and determinative when they are not meant to be, and surely cannot be (cf. Wagner, *Heralds*, 11 n. 44). He ignores Hays' caveats, such as, "Precision in such judgment calls is unattainable, because exegesis is a modest imaginative craft, not an exact science," and the fact that Hays frames these tests as rules of thumb rather than scientifically accurate laws. Moreover, Hays' comment on the nature of exegesis is exactly right; it is more art than science. The very nature of our craft means it is a matter of probabilities and involves some inexactitude and subjectivity. Perhaps Porter's work as a grammarian encourages him to demand precise criteria for an area in which there cannot be. In general, we can say

> (1) *Availability*. Was the proposed source of the echo available to the author and/or original readers?[98] . . .
>
> (2) *Volume*. The volume of an echo is determined primarily by the degree of explicit repetition of words or syntactical patterns, but other factors may also be relevant: how distinctive or prominent is the precursor text within Scripture, and how much rhetorical stress does the echo receive in Paul's discourse?[99] . . .

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that Porter misunderstands and misrepresents Hays' criteria, and demands a level of precision impossible to attain. Further interaction with Porter's criticisms of specific criteria will be provided at appropriate points below.

[98] Porter's ("The Use of the Old Testament," 83) comments on this criterion overlook its author-oriented aspect which Hays emphasizes and is self-evidently necessary— if a Scripture was not available to Paul, then he could not have alluded to something he did not know. But even his focus on the reader-oriented aspect of this criterion overlooks an obvious point: if Paul's audience had no way of knowing a particular Scripture, then that affects whether he would in fact allude to it. The issue is not determinative, just one among many considerations that contributes to the probability level of an individual echo. Hays, *Echoes*, 28, had already stated that, "Claims about intertextual meaning effects are strongest where it can credibly be demonstrated that they occur within the literary structure of the text and that they can plausibly be ascribed to the intention of the author and the competence of the original readers." Porter might have more validly objected to the mootness of the criterion that Hays himself refers to, since Scripture was available to both Paul and his readers. But it is necessary to retain the criterion for methodological purity. Berkley, ibid, 65, may be safe to disregard this criterion, but he is unwise to relegate the criteria of Historical Plausibility and History of Interpretation to unimportance. I find it surprising that Shum, ibid, 7, actually suggests that Paul may not have been familiar with all of Scripture. As far as I know, he is the only scholar to criticize Hays' criterion of availability on this basis (although he does not completely reject it; he just questions its pervasive workability and urges caution in its use). His comments on this criterion already manifest a deficient approach to the historical prolegomena to assessing Paul's use of the OT that is more fully evidenced in his discussion of how much prophetic literature first century Jews knew (pp. 21-33; see our note 115 below and cf. in general our treatment below of the likelihood of Paul intending his scriptural allusions as pointers to their original contexts.). This deficiency taints much of his discussion of criteria for detecting allusions/echoes, rendering it relatively unhelpful, despite his effort to improve upon Hays' criteria.

[99] Porter's critique of this criterion ("The Use of the Old Testament," 83) is odd. He seems to quibble with Hays' right to use this metaphor for verbal coherence, which is exactly how it is defined along with other criteria that contribute to this test Hays labels "volume." Obviously Hays has the right to define his terms any way he likes, and should be allowed to include verbal coherence in what he calls "volume." We would also add formal agreement to this criterion, meaning the degree of similarity in structure or number of elements. On this see Thompson, *Clothed with Christ*, 32; cf. Berkley's "common linear development" (Berkley, *Broken Covenant*, 64). Berkley, ibid, 61f., is right to add what he calls "vocabulary clusters" as a criterion, which refers to "several significant vocabulary correspondences . . . between the Pauline text and an OT context." The important observation Berkley makes here in my opinion is that the presence of common vocabulary in the broader OT context—not just the verse alluded to—also heightens the likelihood that an allusion is present. He does not say whether this principle also applies to the broader Pauline context, but it certainly should. We can simplify all of this by saying that our criterion of volume includes verbal coherence between the broader contexts of the OT and NT beyond the specific locus of a given proposed allusion. This may be identified as "contextual verbal coherence," and cannot serve to lessen certainty of the likelihood of a proposed allusion, but only to strengthen it according to the degree to which it is present. Berkley, ibid, 62f., is also right to add what he calls "links with other texts" as a criterion, which refers to "[t]he presence of vocabulary links with other OT passages which also meet the criteria of exegetical use [by

> (3) *Recurrence*. How often does Paul elsewhere cite or allude to the same scriptural passage? . . . Where such evidence exists that Paul considered a passage of particular importance, proposed echoes from the same context should be given additional credence.[100]
>
> (4) *Thematic Coherence*. How well does the alleged echo fit into the line of argument that Paul is developing? Is its meaning effect consonant with other quotations in the same letter or elsewhere in the Pauline corpus? Do the images and ideas of the proposed precursor text illuminate Paul's argument?[101] . . .
>
> (5) *Historical Plausibility.* Could Paul have intended the alleged meaning effect? Could his readers have understood it? (We should always bear in mind, of course, that Paul might have written things that were not readily intelligible to his actual readers.) . . .
>
> (6) *History of Interpretation.* Have other readers, both critical and pre-critical, heard the same echoes? . . . this criterion should rarely be used as a negative test to exclude proposed echoes that commend

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Paul] . . . ." We include this in our criterion of volume as a confirmatory (but not disconfirmatory) test which observes common vocabulary between a given proposed allusion and other OT passages judged to be allusions in the broader Pauline context.

[100] Porter, "The Use of the Old Testament," 83, is correct to say that this test cannot determine a specific echo. But again, it does contribute to an overall judgment of the relative probability of a specific echo. This test should not be used negatively, however, but is only valuable in alerting us to a greater probability that Paul echoed a particular passage, unless it can be shown a particular passage was actually unimportant to Paul. We would broaden this criterion to include contextual allusive density, which refers to the density of allusion in the broad Pauline context. The degree to which Paul alludes to the Old Testament in a given epistolary context can contribute to the general, relative probability of whether he does so in any specific case. In other words, if Paul is engaged in arguing from Scripture, he is more likely to allude to Scripture in other parts of the argument. The relevance for Romans 9 is obvious. Paul is developing an argument from Scripture there. Therefore, the tenor of the argument raises the general probability that Paul will allude to Scripture.

[101] Porter, "The Use of the Old Testament," 83, again appears to misunderstand Hays when he claims that Hays admits that this test, as well as the remaining ones, "are less criteria for determining echoes than they are attempts to establish the interpretation of these echoes." First, Hays only attaches a comment along these lines to this test, not the last four. Secondly, what Hays actually says is, "This test begins to move beyond simple identification of echoes to the problem of how to interpret them" (Hays, *Echoes*, 30). But surely this is not an exclusive statement, but an inclusive one. Neither does it even indicate a greater emphasis on interpretation over identification. Porter's comments here reveal a false assumption that an interpretive test cannot also be one which identifies. In fact, he seems to miss a basic principle which lies behind this list of criteria: the interpretation of echoes contributes to identifying their presence. Although one must posit the existence of an echo in order to test it in this way, such testing is valid, serving as a heuristic experiment analogous to scientific methods which assume a hypothesis in order to test it. As we will note below, this is actually one of the most effective tests. Is this not what Sandmel had in mind when he encouraged the detailed study of parallels?: "it is in the detailed study rather than in the abstract statement that there can emerge persuasive bases for judgment" (Sandmel, "Parallelomania," 2). Porter's comments do remind us that there is always a measure of subjectivity in exegesis. Despite his claim, Berkley's (*Broken Covenant*, 63) corresponding criterion of "explication" does not really go farther in its method, but only in its stated intent of trying to determine if an OT passage "has helped shape Paul's argument." Thus, the data one works with in both cases is the same, and certainly Hays and those using his criterion would be interested and able to identify shaping of Paul's argument by OT background.

> themselves on other grounds.
>
> (7) *Satisfaction.* With or without clear confirmation from the other criteria here, does the proposed reading make sense? Does it illuminate the surrounding discourse? Does it produce for the reader a satisfying account of the effect of intertextual relations?[102]

Hays' caveat with respect to these tests bears repeating: "There are always only shades of certainty when these criteria are applied to particular texts."[103] We should not regard them as scientifically precise laws that will guide us into all truth, but as rules of thumb whose "value lies in assisting the judgment of relative probability."[104] Neither should we regard the application of these criteria as an objective mechanical process which discretely runs through each test and determines its specific contribution to the whole. But keeping with the conviction that exegesis is more an art than a science, these criteria should be understood to work together in mutually illuminating harmony, at once this one making its presence felt, then that one, affecting the voice of both, while yet another presents its claims, entering into conversation with the others, yielding a sense of probability which serves as the basis of judgment.

This should not be taken to mean that these tests cannot be distinguished or that they are all of equal importance. Indeed, two in particular stand out as especially weighty. The most important tests for us are "volume," (especially its aspects of verbal, syntactical, and structural coherence) and "thematic coherence." These two tests will bear the bulk of methodological weight in identifying and interpreting allusions in our study. I will not necessarily use these criteria explicitly in my treatments of individual texts, but they are to be understood as implicitly undergirding my judgments.[105] As Hays points out, "To run through this series of criteria for each of the texts that I treat would be wearisome."[106] Still, we might draw upon any of the

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[102] Hays, *Echoes*, 29-31. Unlike Hays (33), who does not restrict his study to Paul's intention, the present study does limit its interpretation of Paul's scriptural echoes either to what Paul intended by them or to what those echoes can tell us about Paul's intention.

[103] Hays, *Echoes*, 32.

[104] Thompson, *Clothed with Christ*, 36.

[105] Hays, *Echoes*, 29.

[106] Ibid, 32.

criteria as they become relevant to the discussion. Upon applying these criteria to a proposed allusion we may then appraise it as either clear, probable, possible, or improbable,[107] although we will not necessarily explicitly employ these designations.

It is important to remember that it is only in the context of detailed exegesis that these tests can be applied with any real success. Indeed, the most important control for the interpretive activity of the researcher in relation to seeking to determine Paul's authorial intention is coherence with the text of Romans 9:1-9, first in its immediate context and then in its broad context.[108] In order to avoid offering imaginative misreadings of Paul that amount to little more than ingenious eisegesis founded upon our own creativity, we must anchor our exegesis in the coherence of our proposals concerning Old Testament background to the text of Romans. However, as Ross Wagner has well said, "There is, finally, no 'scientific' method of interpretation that can guarantee that the coherence—or incoherence—we find is not

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[107] This scale is largely adapted from Beale, *Revelation*, 78. See also Thompson's scale, *Clothed with Christ*, 36. Beale gives only three categories of allusion, but very helpfully defines them, unlike Thompson. They are: 1. Clear allusion ("the wording is almost identical to the OT source, shares some common core meaning, and could not likely have come from anywhere else"); 2. Probable allusion ("though the wording is not as close, it still contains an idea or wording that is uniquely traceable to the OT text or exhibits a structure of ideas uniquely traceable to the OT passage"); 3. Possible allusion ("the language is only generally similar to the purported source, echoing either its wording or concepts"). He adds that "a reasonable explanation of authorial motive should be given if a proposed OT allusion is to be accepted as clear or probable." These criteria focus on what we have identified as our two main tests: verbal agreement (i.e. volume) and thematic agreement. I would consider Beale's requirement for authorial motive to be implicit in our criterion of thematic coherence.

[108] Such coherence is vital to numbers 2 and 4, and typically to number 7 also, in Hays' list of criteria adopted above. This is not to suggest that Paul's other epistles are unimportant for the modern researcher's interpretive activity. Even though Paul's original audience would not have had access to his other epistles, we have no way of knowing what knowledge Paul might have assumed his audience, which participated in the same general Christian movement and contained some who knew Paul personally, to possess. Since we have access to Paul's thought more generally through the collection of his writings, it behooves us to consider any material that might help us to ascertain Paul's original intention in Romans. Nevertheless, we cannot claim that any material that was not available to Paul's original audience in some way is essential to understand his original intention if he is to be taken as a skilled communicator. Still, such material can nonetheless be extremely helpful for determining Paul's original intention. We can illustrate this by imagining that we were to find authentic original notes made by Paul containing extensive explanation of his planned argumentation in Romans that he made as he prepared what he wanted to actually include in the epistle. Such a document would obviously be very valuable to us for interpreting Romans. But as material that Paul would not have intended his audience to have access to, it could not be considered absolutely essential to understanding him if his communication was completely successful. Cf. note 114 below in this ch. and the discussion of the use of Paul's other epistles in ch. 2 below. It should be kept in mind that this investigation is sharply focused on exegeting Paul, that is to say, discovering the original intention of what he has written in Rom 9:1-9. Consequently, the original readers come into view only occasionally in the exegesis. They receive attention mostly insofar as their situation bears on Paul's intention given that their identity and circumstances would surely condition Paul's communication to them.

at least partially constructed by the interpreter."[109] The best that we can do is to try and take account of our own presuppositions and preunderstanding in order to give the text priority and attempt to understand it on its own terms.[110] Of course, the internal consistency of our argumentation also serves as a control, as does interaction with previous scholarship. Ultimately, submission of one's work to the scrutiny of other interpreters must stand as the final safeguard for intertextual exegesis.[111]

The Possibility of Paul Intending His Scriptural Allusions as Pointers to Their Broad Old Testament Contexts

Finally, we must address the issue of whether it is reasonable to suppose that Paul intended his readers[112] to benefit from the original contexts of his biblical citations or to even pick up his unmarked allusions.[113] It is sometimes said that Paul

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[109] Wagner, *Heralds*, 32f. n. 113.

[110] See Osborne, *Hermeneutical Spiral*, 411-15, for a sketch of controls for both exegesis in general and also for specifically working with one's presuppositions in exegesis.

[111] Cf. Wagner, *Heralds*, 33 n. 113: "The only safeguard against solipsism is to continually test our interpretation against the text and to submit our readings to the judgment of other interpreters" (continuing the comments quoted above).

[112] Use of the term "reader" does not imply that the majority of Paul's original audience actually read the letter, though some surely did. We recognize that most of the original audience probably heard the letter read rather than reading it themselves. But we use the term "reader" as a general designation for those who read or heard the letter. With this said, it should be added that it is possible that many of the original recipients of Romans literally read the letter in addition to hearing it. We simply do not know what the early church's ability and practice was in this regard.

[113] The following discussion of this question is indebted to G. K. Beale, *Revelation*, 82-83, and Ciampa, *The Presence and Function of Scripture*, 256-270. Ciampa has been especially influential and suggestive for my own thought. Those who are inclined to believe that first century Gentile Christians were incapable of picking up scriptural allusions ought to read Ciampa's compelling argument (which is specifically fitted to Paul's Galatian churches) to the contrary. Christopher D. Stanley is probably one of the most outspoken critics of the type of view we argue for here. He has recently argued at length that Paul's actual original audiences probably did not understand his biblical quotations: " 'Pearls Before Swine': Did Paul's Audiences Understand His Biblical Quotations?" He makes his argument by way of identifying and discussing what he regards to be ten questionable assumptions traditionally made by scholars. The basic essence of the present chapter of this investigation was written before I became aware of Stanley's article. Yet it anticipates many of his objections and I think successfully either answers them or incorporates them, providing what I believe to be a nuanced understanding of Paul's referential allusions. Beyond this, a few comments are in order. First, Stanley actually acknowledges that Paul assumed his readers to be "Christians who are (a) broadly familiar with the Greek text of the Jewish Scriptures, (b) able to recognize immediately how specific quotations fit into the developing argument of his letter, and (c) willing to accept his quotations as valid renderings of the authoritative text" (143). Therefore, Stanley's article actually provides some implicit support for

would not have so intended because of the lack of scriptural resources among his original readers. While some might not even allow the question because it is thought too reader-oriented, I think it is a fair question because it does relate to Paul's intention. The validity of the question rests on the assumption that Paul meant to be understood. If this is a fair supposition, it is unlikely that Paul would have made understanding his discourse dependent on recovering inaccessible material.[114] Let me say up front that contemplation of this question necessarily involves much conjecture due to the nature of the question. This consideration alone should keep us from making our estimation of first century reader competence determinative for our assessment of Paul's use of the Old Testament.

As an objection to ascribing much interpretive value to Paul's scriptural allusions beyond their epistolary contexts the issue is usually framed in terms of "Paul's predominantly Gentile readers," since his Jewish-Christian readership can be expected to have known the Scriptures well, and to have been sensitive to Paul's scriptural allusions.[115] The intimate knowledge of the Scriptures possessed by ancient

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our argument that Paul probably intended his scriptural allusions as pointers to their original contexts! He mainly contests Paul's assumptions—and especially those of scholars who have followed him—about his audiences. (Nevertheless, this seems to be an overconfident and unwise move given the obvious probability that Paul was in a much better position to judge the reader competence of his first century Christian audiences than we are.) Second, we might mention some broad defects in Stanley's argument. For one, he often seems to argue from silence. For another, he generally fails to take account of community dynamics that would undoubtedly surround the use of Scripture and Paul's epistles in the early churches, making for a significantly heightened biblical literacy. For still another, he underestimates the commitment of the early Christian movement to the Scriptures. And for yet another, he gives too much attention to Paul's audience for determining the meaning of his quotations rather than focusing on Paul as the author, especially since he acknowledges that Paul generally expected his audiences to understand his quotations.

[114] This is, of course, possible however, as both Hays, *Echoes*, 30, and Ciampa, *The Presence and Function of Scripture*, 268, point out, although it would seem that this would reflect poorly on Paul's skill as a communicator. Chris Baldick, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, 6, notes that although the technique of allusion assumes the reader shares certain knowledge with the author, "some poets . . . allude to areas of quite specialized knowledge." This possibility alone demands that we at least investigate the data as this study proposes, the results of which can help us determine what Paul in fact did. It should also be noted that the present discussion assumes that the actual scriptural knowledge of first century Christians in general and Roman Christians in particular would have affected Paul's perception of his audiences' scriptural competence. It is obviously *possible* that Paul misjudged the reader competence of his original audience. But all that really matters for determining Paul's intention is what he assumed about his audience, not what was actually the case. Nevertheless, we pursue the historical question of what was likely to be the case because the historical reality almost surely impacted Paul's assumptions.

[115] Surprisingly, Shum, *Paul's Use of Isaiah*, 21-33, questions whether first century Jews really knew the prophetic literature well and concludes that "the Prophets were probably known to the first century ordinary Jews simply in a fragmentary and selective way" (33). Such a judgment is extremely rare in

Jews is well attested. According to Josephus, Moses

> appointed the Law to be the most excellent and necessary form of instruction, ordaining, not that it should be heard once for all or twice or on several occasions, but that every week men should desert their other occupations and assemble to listen to the Law and to obtain a thorough and accurate knowledge of it . . . . should anyone of our nation be questioned about the laws, he would repeat them all more readily than his own name. The result, then, of our thorough grounding in the laws from the first dawn of intelligence is that we have them, as it were, engraven on our souls."[116]

Philo speaks similarly:

> All peoples are tenacious of their own customs, but the Jewish nation is particularly so. For as they maintain that their Laws are God-given oracles and have been educated in this doctrine from their childhood, they bear images of the Commandments imprinted on their souls. Accordingly, as they contemplate the clear shapes and forms of the Commandments, they meditate on them with constant admiration.[117]

As one might gather from both authors' comments, scriptural instruction took place in both home and synagogue.[118] First century Jews heard the Torah at least weekly in the

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study of the OT in the New, and for good reason. Shum's analysis is thoroughly flawed. We cannot provide a full-scale critique here. But we can make some broad overlapping observations. Methodologically, Shum's analysis falters on its almost exclusive focus on finding explicit statements such as that the Prophets were well known, etc. But finding such incidental references is hardly to be relied upon for our main perception of ancient knowledge of the Prophets or of Scripture in general. Many other considerations should inform a judgment about scriptural literacy among Jewish people such as the character of first century Judaism and the texts it produced, rich as they are in scriptural veneration and allusion. Historically, Shum's analysis fails for any number of inappropriate judgments. One example should suffice. In his reading of Luke 4:14-30 (pp. 22f.), an important text for him, he anachronistically relies on a text from the Talmud (*Meg*. 24a) to establish an *unalterable* custom of synagogal Scripture reading in the first century! Finally, Shum's logic is consistently suspect, and this runs through both his methodology and historical analysis as well. He is often minimalistic in his logical deductions from the data he considers, yet at other times he takes unwarranted leaps in logic.

[116] *C. Ap*. 2.175, 178; Thackeray's translation. Cf. *C. Ap*. 2.204; *Ant*. 4.211; Rom 2:17-20.

[117] *Leg.*, 210-211, Smallwood's translation. Cf. *Leg*. 115. Even allowing for apologetic intent, both Josephus and Philo represent strong first century evidence for the importance assigned to Scripture by ancient Jews and to a resulting familiarity with the Bible. Cf. also T. Levi 13:2.

[118] 4 Macc 18:10-19 represents scriptural instruction as a feature of an ideal Jewish household, and Philo, *Hyp*. 7.14, tells of Jewish men passing on synagogue instruction to their households. John M. G. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora: From Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE-117 CE)*, 425, speaks of "the seriousness with which Diaspora communities treated instruction in the law, both in the

synagogue.[119] Charles Perrot paints a vivid picture of the character of these Sabbath gatherings in which "the text of Moses was seen in its brightest colours, being understood partly through the 'prism' of the prophetic texts and then, by means of the homily, through the aid of all the other 'Writings', the better to express the Word of God. Finally, the whole Bible was called upon, and the synagogue transformed into a sort of immense 'living concordance' of the sacred text."[120] It is not surprising, then, that first century Jews were trained from childhood to quote the Bible from memory.[121] At this point, I think it is safe to say that it is probable that Paul would have expected some of his audience to recognize his allusions and recall their contexts, for there were a significant number of Jewish Christians in the Roman Church.[122]

But what of Paul's Gentile readers? Were they not scriptural illiterates

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home and in the weekly Sabbath gatherings." For further treatment of Jewish instruction of the young, see ibid, 412-13; John T. Townsend, "Education: Greco-Roman Period"; D. F. Watson, "Education: Jewish and Greco-Roman," 311-13, who provides a recent bibliography.

[119] Acts 15:21; A. Demsky, "Part One: The Biblical Period," 20, and M. Bar-Ilan, "Part Two: Scribes and Books in the Late Second Commonwealth and Rabbinic Period," 32, both in Aaron Demsky and Meir Bar-Ilan, "Writing in Ancient Israel and Early Judaism"; Charles Perrot, "The Reading of the Bible in the Ancient Synagogue," 137, and 149-59 where he treats Bible reading before 70 C.E.; Donald D. Binder, *Into the Temple Courts: The Place of Synagogues in the Second Temple Period*, 399-404, who regards the scriptural-educational role of the synagogue to be so well attested as to require no defense.

[120] Perrot, "The Reading of the Bible," 153.

[121] Stanley, "Social Environment," 20. Although widespread literacy among early Christians is not a necessary assumption of the approach taken in this study, it is also worth noting Beale's position that "it is generally acknowledged that the majority of both pagan Greeks and Jews in the Greco-Roman world learned to read in childhood (whether Greek or Hebrew, and, in addition, Latin), and this even extended in varying degrees to slaves" (Beale, 83). On this point, see Townsend, "Education," and the accompanying bibliography. However, this previously standard view has been challenged recently, most notably by William Harris (whose bibliography has itself been recognized as a contribution), *Ancient Literacy*, and scholarly opinion has shifted to a vastly lower estimation of the extent of ancient literacy. But even Harris admits that early Christian writings represent a change in the value placed on the written word, and Harry Y. Gamble, "Literacy and Book Culture," 646 (note also the recent bibliography he provides on pp. 647f.), notes that early Christians "were strongly exposed to texts and participated in book culture to an unusual degree." This is only to be expected from a movement that issued forth from Judaism, which had long regarded the Bible as the word of God and valued the fellowship of the community of faith. Indeed, it appears that literacy was much higher among Jews than society at large (see Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 7), a significant fact that must be taken into account when assessing the potential literacy of a congregation with a substantial number of Jews such as in Rome. On issues of literacy and orality, see note 61 above.

[122] See our treatment of the recipients of Romans in chapter two below. It is doubtful that any Christian churches of the first century would have been bereft of Jewish members, since the movement began and spread as a Jewish movement.

incapable of understanding Paul's interpretive use of Scripture? Ciampa suggests otherwise: "there tends to be an assumed and over-confident pessimism with regard to how much Scripture a Gentile Christian could be expected to detect. But being a Gentile and former idolater does not necessarily mean that one is not formed by Scripture and sensitive to its presence in religious discourse."[123] He argues convincingly that Gentile God-fearers were considered idolaters, even though they "may well have accepted many Jewish customs and been well-taught in the Scriptures," because they had not fully converted.[124]

Gentile God-fearers may have been very familiar with Scripture through contact with the synagogue. According to Shaye Cohen,

> Many gentiles, both men and women, converted to Judaism during the last centuries B. C. E. and the first two centuries C. E. Even more numerous, however, were those gentiles who accepted certain aspects of Judaism but did not convert to it. In polytheistic fashion they added the God of Israel to their pantheon and did not deny the pagan gods. Throughout the Roman empire various practices of Judaism found favor with large segments of the populace. In Rome many gentiles observed the Sabbath, the fasts, and the food laws; in Alexandria many gentiles observed the Jewish holidays; in Asia Minor many gentiles attended synagogue on the Sabbath. Although these gentiles observed any number of Jewish practices and venerated in one form or another the God of the Jews, they did not see themselves as Jews and were not seen by others as Jews.[125]

And John Barclay renders this judgment concerning the Jewish community in Rome during the period in which Paul wrote Romans: "They emerge as a thriving community winning admirers and imitators among ordinary citizens and even, in

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[123] Ciampa, *The Presence and Function of Scripture*, 260. Hays, *Echoes*, 201 n. 92, regards it as not implausible that Paul's Gentile readers had "an extensive knowledge of the LXX and an urgent interest in its interpretation" (29). And Stambaugh remarks that, "Reading from the Jewish scriptures probably had a place in the ritual [of early church worship], since the authors of the New Testament assume that even Gentile converts will know something of the content of the Old Testament" (John E. Stambaugh and David L. Balch, *The New Testament in Its Literary Environment*, 58).

[124] Ibid, 261-62.

[125] Shaye Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah*, 55. On Jewish success in winning sypathizers, see also Louis H. Feldman, *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World: Attitudes and Interactions from Alexander to Justinian*, 342-82 (= ch. 10).

certain cases, in the higher echelons of society, but also subject to hostile comment in conservative literary circles."[126] Indeed, there were instances of synagogues contributed by non-Jews.[127] Finally, we might mention the testimony of Josephus, who tells us that the Jewish laws had "to an ever increasing extent excited the emulation of the world at large. . . . The masses have long . . . shown a keen desire to adopt our religious observances; . . . as God permeates the universe, so the Law has found its way among all mankind."[128] We should also note that it appears that many Gentiles who became Christians had been Gentile God-fearers who were exposed to the Christian message through their connection to the synagogue (e.g. Acts 13:43; 17:1-15).[129] All of this suggests that it is unwise to simply assume that Gentile Christians had no knowledge of Scripture.

Even more important in this connection is the fact that Gentiles would receive scriptural instruction in the church. "We know from Acts and elsewhere in the NT that Jewish and Gentile believers were trained in their new faith on the basis of the OT, the Bible of the early church (e.g. Acts 17:10-12; 18:24-28; 2 Tim. 2:2, 15; 3:16-17)."[130] There is no telling the extent of scriptural training in the early churches. But the early church commitment to its faith and Scripture suggests that it was extensive indeed, as does the ubiquitous use of the Old Testament in the New Testament documents. We also have no way of knowing how long Gentiles in a given church had been studying the Scriptures. We can probably assume a normal range, including many Gentiles with years of experience.

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[126] Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, 307.

[127] Louis H. Feldman and Meyer Reinhold, eds., *Jewish Life and Thought Among Greeks and Romans: Primary Readings*, 69.

[128] *C. Ap.* 2.280-284, Thackeray's translation. Cf. also 2.123-24, 209-10 and 1.166. Again allowing for Josephus' apologetic intent, his first century testimony still provides strong support for the idea that many Gentiles were familiar with Jewish Scripture and customs.

[129] Stambaugh and Balch, *The New Testament in Its Social Environment*, 54-55; John Barclay, "The Jews of the Diaspora," 36. Barclay notes Rome as one of the places where the Christian movement would be in a good position to exploit Gentile synagogue contacts for mission because the Jewish community was strong and socially respected by Gentiles. Stambaugh and Balch's observation that Paul's first converts often seem to be wealthy Gentiles attached to the Jewish community strengthens our estimation (provided below) of early church financial resources available for purchasing copies of Scripture.

[130] Beale, 83.

Thus, it is probable that Paul would have expected much (or at the very least some) of his audience to pick up his allusions with a significant degree of scriptural understanding. But would Paul have made full understanding of his argument dependent on scriptural knowledge not possessed by what may still have been a considerable part of his audience? I think this is indeed feasible due to the profound scriptural orientation of both Paul and the early church, the "irresistible pull toward more literate modes of expression" created by the written format of Paul's argument,[131] and the tendency of texts to form their model readers by requiring a certain model of reader competence.[132] Indeed, 2 Peter 3:16 says that Paul's letters contain "some things hard to understand," which the author interestingly goes on to link to the Scriptures. But there are further considerations having to do with corporate realities and processes surrounding Scripture and Paul's letter in the Roman church (some of which is necessary for the biblical instruction of Gentiles discussed above) that would make possible both a high degree of scriptural knowledge among the Roman Christians in general and the ability for the community to gain the knowledge required to fully grapple with Paul's scriptural allusions, greatly strengthening the likelihood that Paul would intend them as pointers to their original contexts.

Not only would Paul have probably expected some of his audience to be well versed in Scripture, but it is likely that he also could have counted on them hearing it over and over, providing them with many opportunities to discern and understand the various allusions upon subsequent readings. "This is based on the known fact in the second century and the probability in the first century that letters were read *repeatedly* in the early church, as implied for example, by Col. 4:16; 1 Thess. 5:27; and Rev. 1:3."[133] Moreover the average Jewish Christian's familiarity with Scripture would probably have been surpassed by the scriptural knowledge of the early church leaders, whose main function was to teach the Scriptures (Acts 6:2,4; Gal 6:6; 1 Tim 3:2; 4:13-16; 5:17; 2 Tim 3:14-4:3; Heb 13:7; 1 Pet 1:24-2:3; 5:1-2). It seems highly probable, therefore, that Paul would have expected the leaders of the Roman church to

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[131] See Stanley, " 'Pearls Before Swine', " 135.

[132] On this textual tendency, see Ciampa, *The Presence and Function of Scripture*, 267f., who quotes Umberto Eco at length; cf. Thiselton, *New Horizons*, 526; Osborne, *Hermeneutical Spiral*, 162f.

[133] Beale, 83; emphasis in original. Cf. Wagner, *Heralds*, 36-39.

grasp his scriptural allusions and their import for his arguments. Given the likelihood of repeated readings, it is possible that Paul could have expected his letter to be used for teaching, and that teachers would have studied his scriptural allusions and shared their understanding with their Christian community. Paul's status as an apostle would enhance this possibility. And the fact that his letter was retained and copied testifies to the value it had for its first recipients.[134] Moreover, "it is quite likely that the bearers of Paul's letters were charged by the apostle with the further responsibility of helping to interpret them."[135] Furthermore, it should be remembered that the reading we are speaking of was generally a community activity,[136] and that this community activity would encourage interaction over Paul's letter and provide opportunity for gaining insight into his Old Testament allusions.

But is this picture realistic? Would Christian teachers have checked Paul's references? Does not such an idea anachronistically construe first century Christians as modern scholars checking footnotes? First, let me say that in light of the argument so far, it is not necessary to assume that Paul would expect his readers to check his references in order to suppose that he might write in such a way as to make awareness of the original contexts of his scriptural allusions illuminating for the meaning of his discourse. This is so because of the knowledge of Scripture possessed especially by ancient Jews discussed above, and the famous strength of the ancient memory.[137] With that said, we must not think of this possibility as if the early Christians (leaders in particular) were modern scholars checking footnotes, but rather as recipients of a letter from one of the most prominent Christian teachers of their (or any) time, a letter which is heavily laden with scriptural support for Paul's argument explicating his understanding of the Christian faith. The Scriptures are to them the very word of God, their life (Matt 4:4), able to make them wise unto salvation (2 Tim 3:15). Among their

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[134] Cf. 2 Pet 3:15-16 where Paul's writings seem to be well known and esteemed; Wagner, *Heralds*, 38f.

[135] Wagner, *Heralds*, 38, which see for further discussion and documentation of this point.

[136] Cf. Binder, *Into the Temple Courts*, 402f., on this phenomenon in the synagogue.

[137] On the strength of ancient memories see Harris, *Ancient Literacy*, 30-33, 301, and references he provides. Cf. Wagner's (*Heralds*, 20-28) important corrective to the position of Koch and Stanley, which denies a significant role to memory in Paul's appropriation and interpretation of Scripture, and the wealth of bibliographic information he provides.

primary values is the study and interpretation of this word.[138] Is it not at least plausible that they would use this extended demonstration of Christian scriptural interpretation and application by one of the most skilled Bible teachers of the early church for guidance in studying the Scriptures? It has often been pointed out that what we call the Old Testament was the only Bible the early church had. But surely we have not done full justice to this observation until we have surmised that the New Testament writings, rich in scriptural allusion, must have functioned as guides to the study and interpretation of the Bible for the early church.

We do have positive indication that "checking references" was valued in the New Testament church. Acts 17:11 tells us the Bereans "were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, who received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily [to see] whether these things might be so."[139] Given this commendation by the author who has contributed the largest amount of material to the New Testament I count it is as quite feasible that early church leaders/teachers might have examined Paul's scriptural allusions in their original contexts. Truly, we should not underestimate the extent of Scripture study that may have been engendered by radical first century Christian commitment combined with zeal for the Scriptures as seen in the book of Acts (e.g. 2:42; 6:2,4).[140]

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[138] I take it for granted that the early church attached supreme value to Scripture and its interpretation based on the character of the New Testament documents themselves. For some evidence of this see the Scriptures provided on the previous page concerning early church leaders as Bible teachers, and further discussion below. On Paul's high regard for Scripture see Brian S. Rosner, " 'Written for Us': Paul's View of Scripture." Romans 15:4 is of particular import for this study as a direct statement from Paul to the Christians at Rome affirming Scripture as highly relevant for Christian instruction (cf. Rom 1:2; 4:23-24; 7:12).

[139] Although this is reported as taking place in the context of a Jewish synagogue, and the Thessalonians presumably did not search the Scriptures, Luke's commendation reveals the ethos of the early church.

[140] The context of the book of Acts makes clear that ἡ διδαχὴ τῶν ἀποστόλων is to be understood to a large degree as teaching about and from Scripture (cf. Peter's sermons, 2:14-36 and 3:12-26, before and after this phrase found in 2:42). Similarly, although ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ may often refer to preaching, or to oral proclamation of the gospel more generally, it would be misleading to separate early Christian preaching from Scripture. Acts represents preaching of "the word of God" as proclamation through and from Scripture, as seen in chapter 13 (note the phrase τὸν λόγον τοῦ κυρίου in vs. 44 and τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ in vs. 46). Paul's statement in vv. 32-33 makes the point well: "and we preach to you the good news, the promise made to the fathers, that God has fulfilled this to us their children by raising up Jesus, as it has also been written in the second psalm . . . ." Cf. also 2 Tim 4:2 where "preaching the word" is certainly preaching from the Scriptures, and most important for our investigation, Paul's use of the phrases, ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ in Rom 9:6, and τὰ λόγια τοῦ θεοῦ in Rom 3:2, which refer largely to Scripture (see our treatment of Rom 9:6 in ch. 4 below).

But would Paul have expected the Roman church to have its own copy of the Scriptures? Again, keeping in mind that this is not necessary to our general approach, I would say that this is indeed possible, and would even venture to say that it is probable. Though copies of Scripture were expensive,[141] personal copies were owned by individuals. Indeed, in his important study of books and readers in the early church, Gamble has concluded that expense was not a significant obstacle to private ownership of texts.[142] Similarly, D. A. Koch notes that, "Dies zeigt sich in 4 Makk 18,10-19, wo die private Benutzung des schriftlichen Textes von insgesamt acht verschiedenen >Schriften< Kennzeichen eines frommen jüdischen Hauses ist."[143] And 2 Timothy 4:13 represents Paul as owning his own Scripture scrolls,[144] while Acts 8:27ff. tells the story of the Ethiopian eunuch who had his own copy of at least some of the Scriptures. Koch's judgement is probably correct: "Privater Besitz von Rollen der >Schriften< ist im 1. Jh. n. Chr. zwar sicher keine reine Alltäglichkeit, aber gewiß keine unwahrscheinliche Ausnahme gewesen."[145]

But if private ownership of Scripture was not rare, it seems probable that a large group of people totally committed to the Scriptures would have made sure they obtained that which was foundational to their common life. If it be questioned whether Scripture really played a central role in the early Christian community we can say that it is commonly assumed by historians of liturgy that Christian meetings

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[141] According to Bar-Ilan, "Scribes and Books," 36, a book of the Torah could cost between 80 and 120 gold denarii.

[142] Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 231-33, 237 (note the whole section on the private use of Christian books, pp. 231-37). According to Bar-Ilan, ibid, "Keeping books in a private house was considered an obligation, as is demonstrated by a law according to which a guardian should even sell houses and fields from orphans' property in order to purchase a Bible (*T. Terumot* 1:10)." Although Bar-Ilan's comment is based on a law codified after the NT era, it still likely represents the values inherent throughout the history of Judaism, and may well go back to the first century or earlier. On the private ownership of books in antiquity, cf. e.g., D. M. Scholer, "Writing and Literature: Greco-Roman," 1283; Wagner, *Heralds*, 20 n. 71, who cites Gamble, *Books and Readers*.

[143] Koch, *Die Schrift*, 99-100.

[144] On 2 Tim 4:13 as referring to Scripture scrolls, see ibid, 100. If one regards 2 Tim as authentically Pauline, the implication is clear. If not, it still testifies to the possibility of private ownership since it was either meant to be believable, or as an ideal of the Apostle and Christian leadership which relies on this possibility.

[145] Ibid, 99.

included the reading and exposition of Scripture from the beginning.[146] Wayne Meeks' comments would seem to represent a consensus:

> That scripture texts were read and homilies were based on them seems very credible indeed . . . . [T]he rich allusions to and arguments from scripture that Paul sometimes includes in his letters . . . presuppose *some* means for learning both text and traditions of interpretation. Regular readings and homilies in the assemblies are the most plausible.[147]

It is not surprising, then, that we find what appears to be an injunction to the practice of the public reading of Scripture in 1 Timothy 4:13. We might also ask where New Testament authors obtained access to Scripture for use in the composition of their writings.

Ciampa makes several comments which are relevant to this discussion:

> The book of Acts suggests there were a number of priests and important Jewish leaders who were among the first converts to the Christian faith. According to Acts 6:7 a large number of priests in Jerusalem responded positively to the Christian movement. Acts 18:18 tells us that among the Corinthians who believed in the Lord was one Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue. We also know that patronage systems were important to the establishment and growth of the early Christian movement. The provision of copies of Scripture to the new churches may well have been one of the more significant contributions a wealthy believer might have made, besides hosting a church in their own house or financially supporting their Christian leaders.
>
> Questions regarding the timing of the separation of a Christian church from the local synagogue may also be raised, even if they cannot be adequately answered on the basis of the available evidence: When he had the option did Paul (and his disciples) only leave the synagogue after they had acquired a copy of the Scriptures which could be read in the context of their own community? Was the conversion of a priest, synagogue leader or wealthy person capable of acquiring a copy (or

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[146] Wayne A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul*, 146.

[147] Ibid; emphasis his. See also Stambaugh and Balch, *The New Testament in Its Social Environment*: ". . . the writings of the New Testament, addressed to Christian groups in Greco-Roman cities that included Jews, clearly presuppose a knowledge of the Jewish texts" (123). "Christians appropriated many of the activities of the synagogue: scripture reading and interpretation, prayers and common meals" (141); Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 23ff.

> copies) of Scripture a prerequisite to starting a new church? Were there converted scribes and priests who dedicated themselves to providing copies of Scripture to the new movement?[148]

Ciampa's comments point to only some of the ways in which a first century church might have obtained a copy of the Scriptures and should be regarded as merely suggestive. His remark on patronage systems deserves more development.

Stambaugh and Balch relate that many groups of the ancient world

> had one or more wealthy members who fulfilled the role of patrons. . . . Most of these societies depended on the generosity of one or several patrons to supplement the more modest contributions of ordinary members. These patrons were expected to provide more elaborate banquets, for example, or to pay for the construction of a new temple. The hosts of Christian house churches functioned in a way analogous to that of such patrons.[149]

But there were important differences between the Greco-Roman associations and the Christian communities. Meeks notes that "the Christian groups were exclusive and totalistic in a way that no club nor even any pagan cultic association was. . . . to be 'baptized into Christ Jesus' . . . signaled for Pauline converts an extraordinarily thoroughgoing resocialization, in which the sect was intended to become virtually the primary group for its members, supplanting all other loyalties."[150] Given that all other loyalties came second, it is probable that such a committed group would obtain what they regarded as essential—the word of God. Prisca and Aquila, seem to have been such patrons in Rome (Rom 16:3-5),[151] as do Philologus and Julia (Rom 16:15). Our historical knowledge is extremely limited, but it is possible that these or some other wealthy Christians provided the Roman church with a copy of the Scriptures.

But, as Ciampa's comments suggest, it is not even necessary to assume that

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[148] Ciampa, *The Presence and Function of Scripture*, 265-66.

[149] Stambaugh and Balch, *The New Testament in Its Social Environment*, 126, 140. See also Meeks, *The First Urban Christians*, 78.

[150] Meeks, ibid. See also Stambaugh and Balch, *The New Testament in Its Social Environment*, 141, who make the same point about Christian groups generally.

[151] Stambaugh and Balch, ibid, 115-16.

the Roman church bought a copy of the Scriptures to suppose that they had one. They might have copied the Scriptures themselves, a much cheaper option, provided they had access to them. Bar-Ilan indicates that copying of the Scriptures was not uncommon: "Books of the Tora, *tefillin* and *mezuzot* that were written by a proselyte Jew, 'Min' (sectarian Jew), Samaritan, gentile, apostate, slave, woman, deaf and dumb person, a fool or by one who did not know how to read, were considered as faulty and had to be put in a Geniza to be burnt (*B.T. Gittin* 45b; *B.T. Menahot* 42b; *Massekhet Soferim* 1:13-14). Evidently, the Sages were displeased that so many people practiced writing sacred texts."[152] Generally, paper (papyrus) was readily available for the task.[153] Indeed, we know that at least copying of New Testament documents was taking place around the time we are concerned about, and for that matter, copying by Christians in Rome of at least Paul's letter! As Paul Achtemeier observes, "The wide distribution of copies of the writings of the NT gives evidence of the extent to which literature could circulate even among the less prominent members of Hellenistic culture."[154] In view of all that we have considered, I believe it is probable that Paul would have expected the Roman church to have its own copy (or copies) of the Scriptures, if it did not simply make use of synagogue copies. This means both that Paul would probably have expected the Roman church to be sufficiently familiar with Scripture so as to benefit from his scriptural allusions, and also that he could have expected them to possess the ability to reflect on them further in their original contexts if they so chose.

But even if the Roman believers had Scripture available to them, and would have desired to study Paul's letter and its scriptural allusions, could they have found the passages Paul alluded to? It is sometimes objected that looking up references in an ancient scroll would have been extremely difficult because of the physical nature of

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[152] Bar-Ilan, "Scribes and Books," 23; there is no reason to suppose that there was much variation in the numbers of individuals interested in copying the Scriptures between the first century and the written records referred to by Bar-Ilan. Indeed, Gamble's discussion of the publication and circulation of early Christian literature (*Books and Readers*, 82-143) and the private use of Christian books (ibid, 231-37) presents a historical context including the first century that renders it very likely that a great deal of copying of the Scriptures took place.

[153] Achtemeier, "*Omne Verbum Sonat*," 11.

[154] Ibid, 12.

the scroll itself.[155] There were less indications of structure and punctuation, no word division in Greek manuscripts, and the scroll would need to be rolled and re-rolled in the process of locating a passage. The invention of the codex in the first century makes it possible that some early Christians may have used codices, which were cheaper and more convenient for reference.[156] But this would not remove the difficulty of lesser textual structure and punctuation, and we cannot assume the use of a codex in every instance, the lesser expense notwithstanding.

However, the degree of difficulty may not have been as great as we, who live in the age of chapter and verse divisions, would expect. The ease of reference which we are accustomed to may cause us to overestimate the level of difficulty that obtained for those who were used to handling books in that milieu. Difficulty is, after all, often relative and a matter of degree, dependent on knowledge of a different reality.[157] All of this is to say that it was more difficult, but not impossible. The New Testament represents Scripture as being looked up, as with Jesus in the synagogue of Nazareth (Lk 4:17), and the Bereans who searched the Scriptures daily (Acts 17:11).[158]

There is also a false assumption implicit in the objection under consideration that the sheer difficulty of the task would prevent its performance by stifling motivation. But the radical commitment of the early Christian movement and its intense devotion to Scripture have been two of its characteristic features that we have

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[155] Ibid, 26-27

[156] See ibid, and Bar-Ilan, "Scribes and Books," 24.

[157] For example, many scholars today could not imagine having to use a typewriter and undertaking research and writing without the aid of a computer or word processor. And what did scholars do before the widespread availability of typewriters? Cf. Bruce M. Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, 13. Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 55, notes that "it is not clear that the ancient reader experienced any great frustration with the roll book." Indeed, he cites (ibid, 270 n. 54) T. C. Skeat, "Two Notes on Papyrus: I, Was Rerolling a Papyrus Roll an Irksome and Time-Consuming Task?" who concludes that re-rolling was not considered difficult.

[158] Even if one does not accept the historical validity of these accounts, they were certainly meant to be believable, revealing an implicit assumption on Luke's part that physically finding a Scripture passage was possible and not an extraordinary event. Shum, *Paul's Use of Isaiah*, 22f., suggests that Luke 4:17 records Jesus' reading from an anthology of scriptural excerpts rather than the scroll of Isaiah itself. But as we mentioned in note 115 above, his treatment of this text is flawed. He cites T. H. Lim, *Holy Scripture in the Qumran Commentaries and Pauline Letters*, 155f. in support of his position, while noting that many take the opposite view.

had occasion to emphasize throughout our discussion. I submit that they were motivated for the task. The character of the New Testament documents suggests a familiarity with Scripture that speaks of both study and the locating of fitting Scriptural passages.

The argument so far would suggest that Paul could have expected (1) many in his audience to be sufficiently learned in the Scriptures so as to consider his biblical allusions in light of their original contexts, and (2) that those without the requisite scriptural knowledge could gain it through communal processes that would come into play around Paul's letter. Acceptance of this as reasonable provides more than sufficient grounds for thinking that Paul might have intended his scriptural allusions as pointers to their original contexts.[159] Therefore, the possibility is not to be cast aside a priori based on an assumption about Paul's original readers as scripturally illiterate. Moreover, the best guide we have to Paul's assumptions about his audience is the text of Romans, which would lead us to posit scripturally astute readers based on the abundant scriptural allusions and argumentation.

This last point is perhaps the most important consideration in the entire discussion about the plausibility of Paul intending his allusions as pointers to their original contexts. The objection to investigating Paul's allusions as pointers based on his original audience's alleged scriptural ignorance is conjectural. But in the final analysis, the text of Romans is all we really have with which to specifically judge Paul's expectations and his readers.[160] And it is saturated with Old Testament allusions. Surely Paul's own discourse is a more reliable guide to understanding him and his readers than hypothetical reconstructions about what was possible for him to intend or conjecture about supposed reader competencies.[161] Indeed, scholars have typically taken Paul to assume that his audiences knew the Scriptures well based on

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[159] It is also worth mentioning that both Qumran and rabbinic literature commonly interpreted more of a scriptural passage than was quoted; see E. Slomovic, "Toward an Understanding of the Exegesis in the Dead Sea Scrolls," 6; Eugene Mihaly, "A Rabbinic Defense of the Election of Israel," 104 (cited by William Richard Stegner, "Romans 9:6-29—A Midrash," 41).

[160] Cf. R. T. France, "The Formula Quotations of Matthew 2 and the Problem of Communication," 134.

[161] Cf. Porter, "The Use of the Old Testament," 95.

his use of the Old Testament and have joined him in this assessment.[162]

Yet if there is any truth to the hypothesis that Paul's audience in Rome was largely ignorant of Scripture, and if Paul is to be taken as a competent communicator and reliable guide to the make-up of his original audience, then it would seem that the profound scriptural character of Paul's letter would virtually demand some type of corporate setting such as I have proposed in which repeated public readings and study of Paul's epistle would be conducted by church leaders who would understand his Old Testament allusions and share their understanding with the community. For it is all but certain that reading and interpreting Paul's letter was an ongoing community process and there were at least some members of the community who could hear his argument against the Old Testament background.

It remains for the present study to investigate what Paul in fact did in each and every instance of allusion in Romans 9:1-9. This in the end will be the strongest evidence for how Paul meant his allusions to be taken. Our findings will confirm Richard Hays' assumption that Romans

> is most fruitfully understood when it is read as an intertextual conversation between Paul and the voice of Scripture, that powerful ancestral presence with which Paul grapples. Scripture broods over this

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[162] According to Stanley, " 'Pearls Before Swine', " 124f. This perception of Paul's assumptions about his audience is so certain that Stanley is actually forced to suggest that Paul misjudged their reader competence in order to argue that they could not understand his biblical quotations; see ibid, 124f., 142-44. Cf. Hays' (*Echoes*, 29) estimation of the extensive competence of the implied readers of Paul's letters and his judgment (201 n. 92) that, "Some such characterization of Paul's actual readers . . . is not implausible"; Wagner's (*Heralds*, 35) similar conclusion concerning the ideal readers of Romans. See Dunn, l, for an example of this scholarly assessment in relation to the original audience of Romans. As Wilckens bluntly states in his comments on Rom 9:11, "Paul writes for readers who know the Bible" (cited by Dunn, 542). Cf. Cranfield's (866) description of Romans as Paul "setting forth the gospel as he understood it in a framework of OT exegesis." But is it likely that Paul wrote in this way to a group he believed to be uninterested in, or hostile to, Scripture, or incapable of understanding scriptural allusion and argumentation? There is another possible factor to note that might have contributed to Paul's use of the OT and the likelihood that he would point to the original contexts of his allusions if there was a significant number of unlearned receptors to take account of as he wrote Romans: He was no doubt aware of differing levels of scriptural competence among his readers, and he may have structured his discourse so that unlearned readers could understand his basic main points generally while greater knowledge of Scripture would yield greater understanding of his argument. This suggestion is too involved to develop here and to explain how it can be integrated with the conclusions and methodological approach of this investigation. As far as I know, this principle has not been directly discussed in any detail in relation to Paul. France, "Formula Quotations," discusses and demonstrates such an approach in detail from the formula quotations of Matthew 2. Hays, *Echoes*, 21f., implicitly testifies to the same type of approach in, e.g., his treatment of Paul's use of Job 13:16 in Phil 1:19. Cf. Wagner, ibid, 34-36; Stanley, ibid, 139-41.

> letter, calls Paul to account, speaks through him; Paul, groping to give voice to his gospel, finds in Scripture the language to say what must be said, labors to win the blessing of Moses and the prophets.[163]

It is to this intertextual conversation that we must now turn.

[163] Hays, *Echoes*, 35.

Chapter Two

Introduction to Romans 9-11 with Special Attention to Paul's Use of the Old Testament

Already in 1991, J. L. Martyn could say, "The bibliography on Romans 9-11 is endless."[1] The last decade or so of New Testament scholarship has managed to add an endless bibliography to the one already looming before the student of these important chapters when Martyn wrote. This is not without cause. Romans 9-11 is one of the most difficult and controversial passages in all of the Bible. This is due to a variety of factors, not the least of which is that many scholars now regard these chapters as the theological climax of Romans and that several theological issues are at stake in one's reading of the passage, such as the relationship between Judaism and Christianity, the continuity/discontinuity between the testaments, the nature of and relationship between Israel and the Church, God's plan of salvation, divine sovereignty and human will, Paul's view of the Law, etc.[2] Therefore, since Romans takes pride of place as Paul's most important and influential epistle, Romans 9-11 was bound to attract the lion's share of attention. Indeed, according to Oss, "In the history of the interpretation of Romans no other section of the epistle has been the subject of more debate than these chapters."[3] I myself regard Romans 9-11 to be the most important single passage in Paul for these and other reasons. So many debated issues in Pauline studies congregate here in a passage so broad in its scope, so carefully reasoned, and so profoundly founded upon Scripture. The purpose of this chapter is to

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[1] J. L. Martyn, "Events in Galatia: Modified Covenantal Nomism versus God's Invasion of the Cosmos in the Singular Gospel: A Response to J. D. G. Dunn and B. R. Gaventa," 179 n. 44. Years earlier, Nils A. Dahl, "The Future of Israel," 138, could speak "of the vastness of the literature."

[2] On the literary placement of Rom 9-11, see below. Concerning the issue of the Law, it is worth noting that the third Durham-Tübingen Research Symposium on Ancient Christianity and Judaism (1994) considered Rom 9-11 to be among the twelve most important passages for understanding Paul's view of the Law; see J. D. G. Dunn, ed. *Paul and the Mosaic Law*.

[3] Douglas A. Oss, "Paul's Use of Isaiah and Its Place in His Theology, with Special Reference to Romans 9-11," 71. But Heikki Räisänen, "Romans 9-11 and the 'History of Early Christian Religion' ," 743-48, reminds us that such abundant attention to Rom 9-11 as a whole is more of a modern phenomenon.

consider traditional, general introductory issues to prepare for a close reading of the text.[4] We will also give attention to some issues that are not usually considered directly, but play an important role in interpretation.

The Historical Background of Romans 9-11

Consideration of the historical background of Romans 9-11 must come to grips with the same types of issues as are important to the historical background of the epistle: the situation of the church in Rome on the one hand and Paul's situation on the other, including his impending visit to Jerusalem and intended future mission to Spain.

The Situation of the Church in Rome

The origin of the church in Rome is unknown.[5] But it seems most likely that, in accordance with ancient tradition,[6] it had a Jewish character to it from the beginning, probably originating from Christian Jews who immigrated to Rome for one reason or another. Paul's great attention to "Jewish issues" in Romans is consistent with the postulate of a Jewish origin and orientation to the Christian community in Rome. The likelihood of this picture is strengthened by the bare fact that Christianity

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[4] For a recent survey of approaches to introductory issues in Rom 9-11, see Richard H. Bell, *Provoked to Jealousy: The Origin and Purpose of the Jealousy Motif in Romans 9-11,* 44-79. Douglas C. Mohrmann, "Semantic Collisions at the Intertextual Crossroads : A Diachronic and Synchronic Study of Romans 9:30-10:13," ch. 1, provides an even more recent survey of studies on Rom 10. And Sanday and Headlam, 269-75, give a broad-ranging survey of interpretations of Rom 9 to around the turn of the last century.

[5] See Fitzmyer, 25-39, for a good, orderly, and concise survey of Rome and Roman Christianity at the time of Paul's writing. See also Raymond E. Brown and John P. Meier, *Antioch and Rome: New Testament Cradles of Catholic Christianity*, esp. 92-127; Raymond E. Brown , "Further Reflections on the Origins of the Church in Rome"; Wolfgang Wiefel, "The Jewish Community of Ancient Rome and the Origins of Roman Christianity." More recently, see the variety of articles in *Judaism and Christianity in First-Century Rome*, edited by K. P. Donfried and Peter Richardson; cf. Peter Oakes, ed. *Rome in the Bible and the Early Church*. Peter Lampe's seminal contribution to our knowledge of the history of Roman Christianity in the first two centuries, *Die stadtrömischen Christen in den ersten beiden Jahrhunderten: Untersuchungen zur Sozialgeschichte*, has been thoroughly reworked and updated and translated into English under the title *From Paul to Valentinus: Christians at Rome in the First Two Centuries*.

[6] See Ambrosiaster, *Ad Romanos*, 81.1.5-6.

was originally a Jewish movement and Paul reveals that the Roman church had been in existence for many years (Rom 15:23).

The Jewish community in Rome was strong and socially respected by Gentiles, though it was not without detractors.[7] Their position was precarious and could not be taken for granted. Government oppression could flash out against them at any moment.[8] It appears that there was actually a general respect for Jews on the part of the Gentile populace and a growing infatuation with their customs which was reacted against by conservatives and the literary elite. Tiberius evicted the Jews from Rome in 19 C.E. because of the spread of non-Roman religion in their winning of many natives to their ways.[9] Then, in 41 C.E. the Emperor Claudius affirmed the Jewish right to religious practice in Alexandria, but warned them that he would act against them if they continued to seek equal rights with the native Greeks.[10] That same year he barred the Jews from meeting in Rome because of disturbances, but did not expel them because of their great numbers.[11] Finally, in 49 C.E. Claudius expelled

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[7] On the popularity of Judaism among Gentiles see ch. 1, pp. 37f. above. On opposition to Jews in Rome, see e.g., John M. G. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora: From Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE-117 CE)*, 307; Wiefel, "Jewish Community of Ancient Rome"; Fitzmyer, 28. However, the situation seems to have been more nuanced than Wiefel or Fitzmyer suggest. See below.

[8] James C. Walters, *Ethnic Issues in Paul's Letter to the Romans: Changing Self-Definitions in Earliest Roman Christianity*, 55. Walters describes a situation characterized by an abiding anxiety that could boil over, bringing repressive reaction. Cf. his more recent article, "Romans, Jews, and Christians: The Impact of the Romans on Jewish/Christian Relations in First-Century Rome."

[9] Dio Cass. 57.18.5a. See especially Walters' treatment of this event in *Ethnic Issues*, 46ff. Cf. Fitzmyer, 28; Dunn, xlvi; F. F. Bruce, "The Romans Debate—Continued," 178-80. Contra Leonard Victor Rutgers, "Roman Policy toward the Jews: Expulsions from the City of Rome during the First Century C.E.," 98-105, who finds the idea of large scale Roman conversions to Judaism in the first century implausible. But Dio's comment probably does not refer to what we would normally regard as conversion, but an adopting of certain Jewish practices and a popular admiration of their religion. Cf. Walters, "Romans, Jews, and Christians," 181 n. 24; Mary E. Smallwood, *The Jews Under Roman Rule: From Pompey to Diocletian*, 205f. Rutgers, ibid, 99 n. 20, identifies the available sources for the expulsion under Tiberius as Tacitus, *Annals* 2.85.4-5; Suetonius, *Tiberius* 36.1; Joesphus, *Ant.* 18.63f.; Dio Cassius 57.18.5a; Philo, *Embassy* 159-61, and *Against Flaccus* 1.

[10] Walters, *Ethnic Issues*, 45.

[11] Ibid; Dio Cass. 60.6.6; Fitzmyer, 32; Smallwood, *Jews Under Roman Rule*, 210, 215. Rutgers, "Roman Policy," 105, points out that Claudius "suppressed all gatherings, whether of Jews or of non-Jews, because he considered such gatherings a potential source of unrest."

the Jews from Rome because of synagogue riots,[12] probably instigated by Christian preaching.[13]

This last act against the Jews by Claudius has been the focus of a great deal of debate, and is considered by some to be the key to understanding the historical background of Romans as well as Paul's purpose and occasion in writing because of the tensions allegedly created by the return of Jewish Christians to a thoroughly Gentile church after Claudius' death in 54 C.E.[14] A properly nuanced view of the Claudian edict of 49 C.E. should take its cue from the nature of Roman administration of religious matters,[15] which could result in stringent but ineffectual decrees of

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[12] There is some question over whether Claudius' denial of the right of assembly to the Jews and his expulsion of them from Rome were one or two incidents. Here we follow the standard view, which is almost certainly correct. See Walters, *Ethnic Issues*, 51f.; Fitzmyer, 32; Dunn, xlix; Smallwood, *Jews Under Roman Rule*, 215. Rutgers, "Roman Policy," 105 n. 48, identifies the sources for the Claudian expulsion as Suetonius, *Claudius* 25.4; Dio Cass. 60.6.6; Acts 18:2; Orosius, *Adversum Paganos* 7.6.15.

[13] See the following note.

[14] E.g., Wiefel, "Jewish Community of Ancient Rome"; Walters, *Ethnic Issues*, esp. 56-66. James C. Miller, *The Obedience of Faith, the Eschatological People of God, and the Purpose of Romans*, 110-11, gives a full description of the typical reconstruction. It rests on the fact that "Suetonius reports an incident in Rome during Claudius' reign when 'the Jews constantly made disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus' and were expelled from the city as a consequence. 'Chrestus' is regarded as a misspelling of 'Christus,' indicating the cause of the problem was Christian preaching among the Jews in Rome. On the basis of a statement by Suetonius (*The Deified Claudius*, 25.4) and the note that Prisca and Aquila left Rome 'because Claudius had ordered all the Jews to leave' (Acts 18:2), this event is dated to 49 C.E." (Miller, ibid, 110). Miller himself admits an expulsion in the late 40's, but doubts "that this event was the decisive factor shaping the Christian movement in Rome at the time Paul writes the letter" (idem, 111). He makes the incredible claim that this standard view has been rendered untenable (idem, 16 n. 37). If so, it seems to have escaped the notice of recent major commentators such as Dunn, Fitzmyer, Moo, Schreiner, Byrne. See Miller's (idem, 111 n. 41) bibliography of "well-documented" challenges to this reconstruction as well as the similarly critical comments of J. Ross Wagner, *Heralds of the Good News: Isaiah and Paul "in Concert" in the Letter to the Romans*, 34, and references he cites. One of the main arguments against this reconstruction is that with a Jewish population of some 40,000-50,000, such an expulsion would be completely unfeasible (so Miller, *Obedience of Faith*, 111; J. N. Vorster, "The Context of the Letter to the Romans: A Critique on the Present State of Research," 130; cf. Mark D. Nanos, *Mystery*, 380). Estimates of the Jewish population of Rome in the first century "range between fifteen and fifty thousand" (Brändle and Stegemann, "Formation," 120 n. 11; they themselves estimate 20,000 [120]). Of course, whether "Chrestus" really is a misspelling is in dispute. Some argue that it is not a reference to Christ at all, or alternatively and more likely in my opinion, it may simply be an alternative spelling (see Werner George Kümmel, *Introduction to the New Testament*, 308; and esp. Lampe, *Die stadtrömischen Christen*, 6, who documents that "Chrestianer" was a popular designation for Christians). In any case, we join the vast majority in concluding that it is a reference to Christ. See particularly Nanos, *The Mystery of Romans: The Jewish Context of Paul's Letter*, 378-80, and the literature he cites, for arguments against it. Fitzmyer, 31, concisely states the case for the dominant view.

[15] Walters, ibid, 40-45, characterizes Roman policy as passive and reactive on a case-by-case basis, and therefore as inconsistent though not inexplicably so; cf. the similar conclusion of Rutgers, "Roman Policy."

expulsion.[16] This observation suggests that the Claudian expulsion of all Jews was technically just that, as Luke records (Acts 18:2), but in practice something much less, possibly amounting to an expulsion of those involved in the disturbances and those who fell prey to the individual whim of the officials responsible for carrying out the expulsion, armed as they were with a broad-ranging decree.[17] This would undoubtedly make for a tense, defensive, cautious atmosphere for Jews at the time, and deplete the Roman church of most of its leadership as well as a number of other Jewish Christians, contributing to a church membership dominated by Gentiles.

However, while plausible, it probably goes beyond the evidence to *rely* on the Claudian expulsion as the definitive influence on the make-up of Roman Christianity. The case for the composition of the church at Rome as consisting of a majority of Gentiles and a minority of Jews may be argued more certainly on grounds other than the Claudian edict of 49 C.E.[18] Paul's opening address makes it clear that the addressees are at least predominantly Gentile. In Romans 1:5-6 he says that his

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[16] See Walters, ibid, 43, who points to Rome's handling of astrologers and magicians; note the citation from *Tac. Ann*. 12.52.

[17] Walters, ibid, does not draw out the implications of his discussion for the question at hand, but does in his more recent article: Walters, "Romans, Jews, and Christians," 177 n. 11. Luke's report can also be explained as an inaccuracy, or as is commonly done, as an exaggeration (so, e.g., Fitzmyer, 32; Smallwood, *Jews Under Roman Rule*, 216; Brown and Meier, *Antioch and Rome*, 102; Lampe, *Die stadtrömischen Christen*, 7), or as presupposing a specific group well-known to the recipient(s) of Acts—"all the Jews [who were involved in the Roman disturbances concerning Christ]." The last mentioned possibility should be based on historical context rather than Nanos' contention (*Mystery*, 376), following Dixon Slingerland, "Suetonius *Claudius* 25.4, Acts 18, and Paulus Orosius' *Historiarum Adversum Paganos Libri VIII*: Dating the Claudian Expulsion(s) of Roman Jews," 134, that πάντας in the predicate position may be translated indefinitely as simply "Jews," or "some Jews," which appears to be without basis. On πᾶς in the predicate position together with a noun with the article, see BDAG s. v. 1bβ, and esp. Max Zerwick, *Biblical Greek*, 61, who states that the construction means "all without exception."

[18] The great majority of scholars now regard the composition of the church at Rome to consist of a majority of Gentiles and a minority of Jews, at least in terms of the address of the epistle. See e.g., H. J. Schoeps, *Paul: The Theology of the Apostle in the Light of Jewish Religious History*, 235 (as addressed); Mark D. Nanos, *The Mystery of Romans: The Jewish Context of Paul's Letter*, 75-84 (as addressed); Johann D. Kim, *God, Israel, and the Gentiles: Rhetoric and Situation in Romans 9-11*, 91f.; Robert Badenas, *Christ the End of the Law: Romans 10.4 in Pauline Perspective*, 82 (especially as addressed); H.-M. Lübking, *Paulus und Israel im Römerbrief: Eine Untersuchung zu Römer 9-11*, 155; D. Fraikin, "The Rhetorical Function of the Jews in Romans," 93; William S. Campbell, "Divergent Images of Paul and His Mission," 203; J. Munck, *Christ and Israel: An Interpretation of Romans 9-11*; Fitzmyer, 33; Dunn, 1.xliv-liv (see liv for summary conclusion); Moo, 12-13; Richard H. Bell, *Provoked to Jealousy: The Origin and Purpose of the Jealousy Motif in Romans 9-11*, 68-72, 76-78; Shiu-Lun Shum, *Paul's Use of Isaiah in Romans: A Comparative Study of Paul's Letter to the Romans and the Sybilline and Qumran Sectarian Texts*, 175; Kümmel, *Introduction*, 309-11.

addressees are among all the Gentiles. Now this could refer to the church's geographical location, but cannot reasonably be maintained when we reach 1:13 and read that Paul's trip to Rome will result in some fruit among the Roman church just as among the rest of the Gentiles.[19] Add to this Paul's specific address to the Gentiles and his presentation of himself as the Apostle to the Gentiles (11:13; cf. 15:15-19) as well as the ratio of predominantly Gentile to Jewish names in the greetings of Romans 16,[20] and the most likely conclusion is clearly that Paul wrote to a predominantly Gentile church. Now, when we combine the above evidence with the likelihood that a significant number of Jewish Christians were expelled from Rome in 49 C.E., we have an even stronger case for the consensus that the Roman church consisted of a solid majority of Gentiles and a minority of Jews.

But this does not mean that there were no Jews or only a few in the Roman church when Paul wrote. There was probably a significant minority of Jews in the church.[21] This is supported by the type of evidence that has led some scholars to argue for a Jewish majority in the church, such as the heavy Scripture use and heavy concentration on "Jewish issues" throughout the letter.[22] Furthermore, the Jewish

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[19] It is interesting to note that Miller, *Obedience of Faith*, 109f., 121, who contends that arguments for a Gentile majority are inconclusive, ignores 1:13. He himself finds the question unanswerable with the available evidence, but appears to think a Gentile majority likely. While καθὼς καὶ ἐν τοῖς λοιποῖς ἔθνεσιν could be taken "as a slightly inexact way of saying 'even as (I have already done) in the rest of the Gentile world'," as Cranfield, 20 remarks, why take it in a roundabout way when it makes perfectly good sense to take it straightforwardly, particularly when Paul says that the fruit he hopes to reap is *among* the Roman church and that he desires to impart spiritual blessing to them (1:11)? Francis Watson's (*Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles: A Sociological Approach*, 103f.) comments in support of a primary Jewish Christian address appear to be based on the notion that such activities as preaching the gospel and obtaining fruit were exclusively missionary activity for Paul which aimed at conversion to Christianity. But Paul's understanding of the gospel was much richer and included far more than the barest minimum necessary for conversion. Indeed, his preaching of the gospel where Christ had already been named would have been building on another's foundation (Rom 15:20).

[20] On the names of Rom 16 see Peter Lampe, "The Roman Christians of Romans 16." Cf. Dunn, 1.liii. For the argument that the greetings of Rom 16 reflect Paul's theology of social inclusion, see Andrew D. Clarke, "Jew and Greek, Slave and Free, Male and Female: Paul's Theology of Ethnic, Social and Gender Inclusiveness in Romans 16." We should add here that according to Donfried, *Romans Debate*, lxx, the majority of scholars now regard Rom 16 as authentic.

[21] Perhaps roughly corresponding to the 15% of Jewish names in Rom 16?; see Lampe, ibid, for this figure.

[22] Those who favor a predominantly Jewish audience (again, at least in terms of address) include Watson, *Paul*, e.g. 103f.; cf. 162; A. J. Guerra, *Romans and the Apologetic Tradition: The Purpose, Genre and Audience of Paul's Letter* (as addressed; the actual audience expressly not predominantly Gentile); Halvor Moxnes, *Theology in Conflict: Studies in Paul's Understanding of God in Romans*, 53; R. Scroggs, "Paul as Rhetorician: Two Homilies in Romans 1-11" (original address of Rom 1-4 and

minority probably possessed power and influence far out of proportion to its size given (1) the inherent importance that would attach to Jews in a movement rooted in Judaism and still considered Jewish, even if this very fact was a basis of contention, and (2) their greater mastery of Scripture, which would automatically predispose them toward leadership in a community grounded in and devoted to the sacred writings.

But what of the Claudian edict of expulsion in 49 C.E.? It probably did exercise a considerable influence on the contours of the Christian community. But it would only have exacerbated a situation which was bound to develop. It seems highly probable that, just as in the rest of the Gentile world, the Christian gospel would be meeting with success among Gentiles and rejection (by and large) among Jews in Rome, so that the church was bound to see a Gentile majority and a Jewish minority. As elsewhere this would make for tension and conflict between Jews and Gentiles in the church. The Claudian edict intensified this whole situation. Just as importantly, it would have affected the leadership of the church, ripping many Jews away from leadership and thrusting many Gentiles into leading roles. Yet the burgeoning number of Gentiles would have made their extensive break into leadership inevitable. So the fundamental situation of the Roman church would have been the same with or without the edict, and our estimation of the situation does not depend on it. But the edict must have greatly exacerbated the situation and made the issues which occasioned Paul's letter all the more pressing as Christian Jews returned to Rome at the lapse of the edict occasioned by Claudius' death in 54 C.E. or even at an earlier apathy—the disparity in respective numbers was made greater, the make-up of leadership more pronounced, and the tension and conflict more intense.

Two caveats are in order at this point. First, it is a generalization to depict the groups involved as Jewish vs. Gentile. It has long been recognized that there may well have been Jews who were theologically "Gentile" (i.e., not living according to Jewish ceremonial tradition/Law) and Gentiles who were theologically "Jewish" (i.e., living

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9-11); A. Maillot, "Essai sur les citations vétérotestamentaires continues dans Romains 9 à 11, ou comment se servir de la Torah pour montrer que le 'Christ est la fin de la Torah', " 73; O'Neill; Heikki Räisänen, "Römer 9-11: Analyse eines geistigen Ringens," 2898. Fitzmyer, 32f., lists six reasons urged by those who advocate a Jewish audience as well as a number of scholars not listed here who hold this view.

according to Jewish ceremonial tradition/Law).[23] Bruce perceptively comments, "Among the house-churches of Rome, then, we should probably envisage a broad and continuous spectrum of varieties in thought and practice between the firm Jewish retention of the ancestral customs and Gentile remoteness from these customs, with some Jewish Christians, indeed, found on the liberal side of the halfway mark between the two extremes and some Gentile Christians on the 'legalist' side."[24] Nevertheless, it still seems a priori likely that Jews generally would tend to keep Jewish tradition and expect Gentile converts to do the same, and that Gentiles generally would have the opposite tendency.

Second and relatedly, Gentile Christians may well have had tremendous scriptural knowledge and certainly did have a vital interest in matters having to do with Jewish tradition and Law.[25] So Paul's abundant use of Scripture and attention to Jewish matters cannot be used solely to establish that his audience was wholly or largely Jewish. Nevertheless, it again seems a priori likely that, on the whole, Jews would have had a greater mastery of Scripture and a more vital interest in matters of Jewish custom and Law. Paul's use of Scripture and attention to traditional Jewish matters argues for some type of significant Jewish presence in the Roman church, but not exclusively.

Another matter which deserves some attention is that there is a difference between the make-up of Paul's historical audience and the identity of those he addresses rhetorically, also known as the implied/ideal/embedded/encoded audience. Some scholars now eschew questions concerning Paul's empirical audience,

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[23] See e.g., Bruce, "Romans Debate," 186; Brown and Meier, *Antioch and Rome*, esp. 1-9. Brown and Meier detect at least four approaches to the Law in the NT period, and Bruce, ibid, n. 40, notes that P. S. Minear (*The Obedience of Faith: The Purposes of Paul in the Epistle to the Romans*) identifies five different outlooks. More recently, see Richard Longenecker, "Prolegomena to Paul's Use of Scripture in Romans"; Mark D. Given, *Paul's True Rhetoric: Ambiguity, Cunning, and Deception in Greece and Rome*, 160 n. 65.

[24] Bruce, ibid.

[25] On the likelihood that many Christian Gentiles enjoyed significant familiarity with Scripture, see the discussion of the possibility of Paul intending his scriptural allusions as pointers to their broad OT contexts in ch. 1 above. On their certain interest in things Jewish, see that discussion as well as below.

convinced that the historical evidence is inconclusive and that the most fruitful approach for interpretation is to focus on the audience encoded in the letter.[26] There is some benefit to this approach since the text is the most certain evidence we have relating to the Roman church. But it ignores to some extent the importance of historical context for interpretation and the fact that Paul's historical letter will certainly yield valuable information for understanding its own historical context, which can then be used, albeit in circular fashion, in interpreting Paul's discourse. Nonetheless, the difference between the empirical and rhetorical audience cautions us against drawing hasty conclusions based on Paul's rhetorical address. His rhetorical strategy may involve addressing Gentiles in such a way that he makes his point even more effectively to Jews and vice versa.[27]

The safest approach is to follow Paul's own lead and recognize that he addressed his letter to the whole church (πᾶσιν τοῖς οὖσιν ἐν Ῥώμῃ ἀγαπητοῖς θεοῦ, 1:7), a church he could characterize as Gentile (1:5-6, 13), but certainly contained some Jews (ch. 16). The fact that there were tensions between Jews and Gentiles, and that these tensions appear to be among Paul's greatest concerns in the letter, brings about the practical result that the content of Paul's rhetoric is addressed to a mixed community.

All of this leads us to one of the most obvious and most frequently recognized aspects to the historical background of Romans 9-11—the relationship between Jews and Gentiles in the church. This was a ubiquitous issue throughout early Christianity, which was originally a Jewish movement. As time passed, the vast majority of Jews rejected Jesus Christ and the gospel concerning him, while those coming into the Church were almost all Gentiles. Therefore, the issues surrounding Jew/Gentile relations loomed large: Can Gentiles be part of the people of God without adhering to the boundary markers of Israel's Law such as circumcision, Sabbath, and food regulations? Can and/or should Jewish Christians have fellowship with Gentiles who

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[26] See e.g., Wagner, *Heralds*, 34ff., and the literature he cites. Cf. Hays, *Echoes*, 29, 201; Vorster, "Context," esp. 130, 139. Vorster's whole approach of challenging the assumptions underlying scholarly consensus concerning Romans falters on its affinities with poststructuralist thought. He unwisely minimizes the relationship between communication and its implications with respect to extra-linguistic reality. He also makes his own questionable assumptions which seem even less likely than the ones he challenges.

[27] Cf. Wagner, ibid, 35f.; Guerra, *Romans and the Apologetic Tradition*, 36, 154.

do not follow the Law in this sense? With the vast majority of Jews rejecting Christ while Gentiles were streaming into the Church, had not God rejected the Jewish people, and was not bringing the gospel to them just throwing pearls before swine? Did this not all mean that the Gentiles had replaced the Jews as God's chosen people? Extremely contentious questions such as these enlivened the early Church. And it appears that they were even more pressing in Rome than in some other places.

So, many Jewish Christians at Rome probably questioned whether Gentiles could be accepted by God apart from the Law and had a tendency to look upon their Gentile brethren in the church critically, while many Christian Gentiles at Rome probably questioned whether the Jewish people had simply been written off by God, and had a tendency to look down on their Jewish brethren in the church. There appears to have been conflict over the observance of Jewish ceremonial Law such as Sabbath, holy days, and food regulations (ch. 14). How contentious the situation in Rome became is impossible to know, but Paul's letter seems to reflect a situation marked by tension and conflict, but not all out war. That is, the church appears to have managed a degree of unity which allowed for co-existence, interaction, and even corporate worship. While there probably were a number of house churches in Rome (ch. 16), this does not mean that they were completely separate from one another or that the church as a whole did not worship together regularly.[28] Romans does not give the impression of complete disunity, let alone other problems with the idea of completely separate house groups.[29]

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[28] See Chrys C. Caragounis, "From Obscurity to Prominence: The Development of the Roman Church between Romans and *1 Clement*," 252-60, for a provocative argument against the theory "that Roman Christianity consisted entirely of separate house groups" (259). Several of Caragounis' points are easily cast aside, but his basic argument remains solid. Cf. William L. Lane, "Social Perspectives on Roman Christianity during the Formative Years from Nero to Nerva: Romans, Hebrews, 1 Clement," who emphasizes the importance of separate house churches for understanding Roman Christianity.

[29] See Caragounis ibid, for these. To his argument, I would add the following considerations. The typical reconstruction of the Roman church's situation that regards at least one of Paul's purposes in writing Romans to be the fostering of unity in the church, perhaps even to convince the separate groups to worship together, does not make much sense of totally separate groups. Paul's climactic appeal to the Christians of Rome (as a whole, i.e., a church) to accept one another (Rom 15:7) would have little impact if they had little or no contact with one another. It would certainly be too vague an exhortation to effect common worship among them. This could not be due to Paul's attempt at tact, since he writes boldly on some points (15:15), as here. Indeed, it would not have been much to explain what he meant by accepting one another. I would argue that he has in fact done so in all the preceding exhortations to loving and unified behavior, which presuppose a common church life, so that the Romans knew just what accepting one another was to look like. This is not to deny that they did meet in house groups, just that they did so exclusively with little interaction among the groups. Lo Lung-kwong, *Paul's Purpose*

Paul addressed his letter to this specific situation in Rome. By now it should be obvious that we agree with the scholarly consensus that Romans is addressed to a concrete historical situation.[30] However, we must beware of mere semantics here. The important point is that Paul addresses himself to issues in Rome, even if his greater purpose lies in "his own consciousness and ministry."[31] Even if some other issue(s) related more closely to Paul's situation motivated him to send this letter, its content was largely determined by issues in Rome, which he surely knew about given Rome's high visibility as the capital of the Empire and his connection to people there. This now brings us to Paul's own situation.

Paul's Own Situation

Paul had completed his call/mission in the Eastern Mediterranean, i.e., he had won converts and planted churches throughout the region which could themselves continue the work of evangelism in their respective areas (Rom 15:19, 23). Paul's preference was to preach the gospel where Christ was unnamed (Rom 15:20). So he had resolved to forge ahead to Spain in the West to continue fulfilling his call (15:19b-28). He would visit Rome on his way to Spain, spend time with the Roman church preaching and teaching the gospel among them, a church he had never visited, thereby imparting spiritual blessing to them and receiving spiritual blessing from

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in Writing Romans: The Upbuilding of a Jewish and Gentile Christian Community in Rome, offers a plausible view of the relationship between the first century house churches of Rome that envisions a lack of united organization on the one hand and a close social relationship between the house churches akin to the situation of the city's synagogues on the other hand. He labels this relationship a "community net-work"; see esp. p. 20. While Lung-kwong's reconstruction is a welcome corrective to those that posit a high degree of fragmentation, I think the data points toward an even closer relationship among the house churches of Rome. I would also question the popular assumption that the Christians of Rome first separated into house churches at the edict of Claudius. I suspect that the situation was similar to the earliest days of the Christian movement: "daily both spending much time with one mind in the temple and breaking bread from house to house, sharing in food with great joy and sincerity of heart" (Acts 2:46). The Christians of Rome probably met both in the synagogue and from house to house prior to Claudius' edict, and then solely in houses afterward.

[30] K. P. Donfried, *The Romans Debate*, lxix, identifies this as unquestionably the consensus. Donfried himself helped to bring about this consensus through his essay, "False Presuppositions in the Study of Romans," reprinted in the first edition (1977) of *The Romans Debate*. The exact date of Romans is not important for us to determine. It is enough to recognize with most interpreters that Paul wrote from Corinth sometime in the mid to late 50's C.E.

[31] Longenecker, "Prolegomena," 153.

them (1:10-15; 15:23-29). But he would first bring the collection from his Gentile churches for the poor to the church in Jerusalem (15:25-28).

As we have indicated above, the conflict between Jews and Gentiles was certainly not limited to Rome. It was one of if not the most important issues in the whole Christian movement at the time Paul wrote, when the Jewish people had rejected Christ wholesale, and the movement was growing mainly among Gentiles. It is imperative to understand how important the collection was to Paul.[32] It was far more than aid to the poor saints of the mother church, as important to Paul as that was. It represented the unity of Jews and Gentiles in Christ and the acceptance of Paul's gospel by Jewish Christianity represented by the mother church and her leaders. Its rejection would strike a severe blow to everything Paul had worked for in seeking to establish a people of God unified in Christ by faith, and perhaps a deathblow to hopes for any sort of wide ranging unity. Paul had worked so hard among his Gentile churches to collect the offering, but he was uncertain whether it would be accepted (Rom 15:30-31).

Paul stands at a crossroads in his ministry. He has completed a major portion of his life's work, and is preparing to undertake a new phase of his ministry. But a crucial judgment upon his ministry awaits him in Jerusalem, one that could determine whether his labors had truly been successful with respect to his fundamental goal of Jew/Gentile unity. Rome stands before him on the way to Spain as an important support and home base for his mission. It was important for another reason. Rome was probably the premier Gentile church, quite large and located as it was in the capital, yet not founded by Paul.[33]

Another significant factor to be kept in mind when considering Paul's circumstances when writing Romans is his previous controversies experienced

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[32] G. Bornkamm, "The Letter to the Romans as Paul's Last Will and Testament," 17-18, highlights the importance of the collection for Paul, as do J. Christian Beker, *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought*, 332; A. J. M. Wedderburn, "The Purpose and Occasion of Romans Again"; and Jacob Jervell in his essay, "The Letter to Jerusalem," who develops E. Fuchs' (*Hermeneutik*, 181) suggestion that Romans is a secret letter to Jerusalem, arguing that the epistle was essentially his collection speech that he would present at Jerusalem.

[33] Black, 22f.; Schreiner, 14; Brown and Meier, *Antioch and Rome*, 99; Dunn, lii; Fitzmyer, 35, think the Roman church large. In addition to the reasons advanced in the aforementioned works, such as Tacitus' comment in *Annales*, 15.44, this seems likely because of the large Jewish population and somewhat positive social position of Judaism in Rome.

throughout his career.[34] Not to be overlooked are Paul's controversies with Jews as he sought to convince them of the gospel. Undoubtedly, many of the objections to the gospel Paul addresses in Romans, and especially chs. 9-11, were posed by Jewish opponents. The place of Israel in God's plan, her fate, and the faithfulness of God to his promises and election would be obvious sticking points for Christian and non-Christian Jews alike. And it seems likely that negative reports about Paul had already reached Rome (Rom 3:8).

The most immediate historical fact related to Romans 9-11 and Paul's own heart was the widespread rejection of his gospel by Jews. It is surely this fact, if nothing else, which occasioned Paul's argument (9:1-5, 30-33). It was an issue of intense personal pain and concern for Paul; indeed he would pray to be cut off from Christ if it would only save his kinsmen from the fate their choice was bringing upon them (9:2-3). The horror of the prospect that his own people, the historic covenant people of God, had rejected their Messiah and therefore stood outside the community of salvation was almost unbearable.

This raises the issue of Paul's missionary context. His frustration and heartache resulting from his own attempts to win his kinsmen according to the flesh must have been immense. Moreover, his own missionary practice was to go to the synagogue and proclaim the gospel to Jews first (Rom 1:7; Acts 9:20; 13; 14:1ff., 17:1-15; 18:4-17; 19:8-10). Whether one accepts Acts as reliable or not generally, the similarity between Luke's description of Paul's missionary practice and Paul's own statements in Romans are simply too great to ignore. Paul's own mission to the Jews appeared to have failed. Perhaps some of Paul's fellow Jewish Christians believed that Paul's efforts, with his so-called Law-free gospel of inclusion for Gentiles and relativizing of the Law even for Jews, actually contributed to the Jewish rejection of Christ and their hardness of heart.

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[34] See Bornkamm, "Last Will and Testament," 22-27, who follows T. W. Manson, "St. Paul's Letter to the Romans—and Others," in taking Romans to be written "from the standpoint of the controversies Paul had encountered during his missionary endeavors in the East" (Bornkamm, ibid, 22) and lists sixteen key phrases from previous epistles echoed in Romans tying them largely to Paul's controversies. Fitzmyer, 71-73, expands Bornkamm's list.

The Purpose of Romans 9-11

If the view of the vast majority of scholars that Romans 9-11 is at least directly connected if not an integral or even climactic part of the epistle is correct, then the question of the purpose of the passage is intimately tied to the question of the purpose of the letter as a whole, a question so notorious it has earned its own name—the Romans Debate.[35] So we will begin with a consideration of the purpose of the epistle. Methodologically, it is important to remember that a section of an epistle can have a separate purpose which contributes to the larger purpose of the whole. But if the recent trend of regarding Romans 9-11 as the climax of the theological argument of the epistle is right, then we may well find that the purpose of Romans itself comes to its most urgent theological expression in these chapters.

Scholars have made a number of suggestions for Paul's purpose in writing Romans.[36] The variety of proposals advanced suggests that the very popular general

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[35] See the standard compendium (now revised) of this and related issues in the volume by the same name and edited by K. P. Donfried. The epithet refers to the multiple issues of an introductory nature concerning Romans, but most directly to Paul's purpose in writing; see Donfried, *The Romans Debate*, xlvix; Bruce, "Romans Debate," 175; Miller, *Obedience*, 1 n. 2. For the variety of views on the purpose/occasion of Romans, see, in addition to the above, the survey in Morris' commentary (7-18) in which he lists twelve suggestions, and the influential monograph by A. J. M. Wedderburn, *The Reasons for Romans*. Miller, idem, gives a recent description of the Romans Debate in his opening chapter, treats and critiques four representative approaches, and offers his own differing opinion, which asserts a single aim against the increasing popularity of Wedderburn's multiple reasons approach. Perhaps the most comprehensive monograph on the question of the purpose of Romans is now Lung-kwong, *Paul's Purpose*, noted by Dunn in a foreword for correlating the epistolary framework and final ethical section of the epistle with its main body and doctrinal core.

[36] Suggestions include (the following list largely follows the helpful and convenient survey of Morris, 7-18): (1) to present a compendium of Christian doctrine (the standard view of older commentators, e.g., Melancthon, *Dispositio orationis in ep. Ad Rom*, 15.445: "caput et summa universae doctrinae christianae" [cited by Fitzmyer, 74]; Shedd, viii [cited by Morris, 8]; (2) to present Paul's last will and testament, i.e., his "mature thinking on essential Christianity" (Morris, 8 [italics and some capitals removed]; see also Bornkamm, "Last Will and Testament"; cf. Manson's position in "St. Paul's Letter"); (3) to present doctrinal truth of one sort or another (Morris, 9, mentions the ecclesiological emphasis of Leenhardt, 15 [Eng.]); (4) to obtain the support of the Roman church for the Jerusalem collection so as to represent all the Gentile churches unified behind Paul, the main content of Romans being a rehearsal of Paul's collection speech in Jerusalem (see Jervell, "Letter to Jerusalem"; cf. Wedderburn, "Purpose"); (5) to establish Paul's apostolate over the important Gentile church at Rome (G. Klein, "Paul's Purpose in Writing the Epistle to the Romans"), or otherwise assert his apostolic teaching and authority (see Morris, 12), or at least obtain recognition of his apostolic authority (Käsemann, 20); (6) to bring unity in the church at Rome (Minear, *Obedience*; Wiefel, "Jewish Community"; Watson, *Paul*; Miller, *Obedience*; Lung-kwong, *Paul's Purpose*; Shum, *Paul's Use of Isaiah in Romans*, 174); (7) to introduce himself to a church he did not know in preparation for a visit (Morris, 16-18; Bruce, 12; Mohrmann, "Semantic Collisions," 274f.); (8) to gain support for his mission to Spain (see references for # 7 as well as Lung-kwong, *Paul's Purpose*; Shum, *Paul's Use of Isaiah in Romans*, 174f.); (9) to defend against Jewish or other objections to the gospel (see Beker,

view championed by Wedderburn that Paul had several reasons for writing Romans is correct.[37] This does not mean, however, that every suggested purpose actually belonged to Paul or that every real purpose that can be discerned was of equal importance.

I would argue that no single purpose could account for the letter Paul wrote, but that only one of the many purposes of Paul can explain why he wrote at all. He doubtless wished to say many things to any number of churches he had never visited. But something brought Paul to write to Rome, some goal functioning as the proverbial straw that broke the camel's back. Once he had a compelling reason to write, then all sorts of aims would come to bear, many of which would work towards fulfilling that larger goal, but not all of which are reducible to it or even necessarily closely connected to it. Some were related to his own situation and some to the situation in Rome. But only Paul's upcoming mission to Spain can explain why Paul wrote to Rome. He wanted "to use Rome as a base of operations in the Western Mediterranean, much as he had used Antioch (originally) as a base in the East."[38] As a result, Paul

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Paul, 77, 86 [cited by Morris, 16] for Jewish objections; more generally, see Moo, 21); (10) to defend Paul's reputation against detractors (Moo, 21; Schreiner, 21); (11) to glorify God (Schreiner, 15-23. With this suggestion Schreiner has trumped all, and to this I must say, of course. Paul's purpose in writing anything at any time, or doing anything for that matter, whether breathing, preaching, or writing, was the glory of God. It is unquestionably his highest purpose in every letter. But the suggestion does little to help us appreciate Paul's specific concerns in this letter.)

[37] Wedderburn, *Reasons*. This is not to affirm Wedderburn's specific construal, but his point that Paul had multiple reasons for writing. Miller, *Obedience*, 14-16, takes issue with Wedderburn's multiple reasons approach on two grounds: (1) there is a difference between the circumstances that led Paul to write and his aim(s) in writing; (2) Wedderburn "overstates the evidence in Romans regarding the importance of the collection" (14). The truth of Miller's first premise may be admitted without granting the force he would assign to it. It is true "that multiple causes do not *necessarily* require multiple aims" (my emphasis), but this does not mean that a single aim is preferable to multiple aims. That remains to be seen from an examination of Rom. Moreover, it should be admitted that multiple causes at least increase the likelihood of multiple purposes. In my opinion, Miller's second point actually vindicates Wedderburn in a way; he again has a good point that he carries further than warranted. While Wedderburn may overemphasize the importance of the collection (I make no judgment either way here), the issue may be settled by asking a simple question based on Miller's own apparent definition of "aim" as "what Paul hoped would happen as a result of his letter" (p. 14): Did Paul hope that the Roman Christians would support his trip to Jerusalem in some way such as prayer as a result of his letter (Rom 15:30-32)? The answer must be yes. (This is just one example. We could ask similar questions in relation to other purported purposes.) Therefore, Paul did have multiple purposes in writing Rom. The real question Miller's critique of Wedderburn raises is whether there are purposes of varying importance. The answer to that would also have to be affirmative; see below.

[38] N. T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology*, 234. It is interesting to note that in a volume which previously discusses several other important passages in Rom, it is in connection with Rom 9-11 that Wright finds it necessary to discuss "what Romans is all

must visit Rome, something he had wanted to do for some time anyway, presumably for various reasons, but especially for mutual fellowship and to strengthen the Roman Christians through his preaching of the gospel (Rom 1:10-15; 15:22-24). But this desire to go to Rome was not enough to bring him there; it was only when he would go to Spain in pursuit of his missionary call that he would finally make the trip on his way (15:23-24). In preparation for his visit, Paul writes a letter of introduction crafted to procure the Roman church's support for his mission to the West. But Paul's gospel is controversial, and there is disunity and tension among the Roman Christians.

Out of this situation one can see many of the purposes of Romans arising. Romans is in fact a letter of introduction. That is essential if Paul is going to enlist the Roman Christians' support when he arrives. But it is more than this. Romans does give a somewhat systematic presentation of Paul's gospel. This is also necessary if the church is going to support Paul's mission; they must know what he preaches and approve. Thus, Romans does sometimes have the feel of a systematic treatise, though it is not one. And if the church is going to support Paul, they must be unified behind his gospel. Hence, the presentation of Paul's gospel with an emphasis on the unity of Jews and Gentiles to a church suffering from tension and conflict over Jew/Gentile relations. Paul had to reckon with these two basic positions (and everything in between) in his presentation of the gospel to the Romans.

We must not lose sight of the fact that love/unity between believers was of supreme importance for Paul. I would venture to say that it was in fact part of his gospel.[39] For Paul, the gospel was not fully operative in a church's life unless there was unity, the practical result of love. So Paul surely wanted to influence the Romans pastorally for their own sake, for God's sake (i.e., his glory tied up in the gospel and the love and unity it produces), and for the sake of the gospel in Rome, not just for the sake of the gospel in Spain. Nevertheless, he probably would not have written if it were not for the sake of the gospel in Spain. Once undertaking a letter to Rome though, Paul would be compelled to urge the ultimate practical result of the gospel

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about" (233). His description is one of the best available in my opinion, though in need of some correction.

[39] It is beyond the scope of this study to prove such a significant assertion, which is based on my reading of Paul's epistles. Suffice it to say here that love and unity looks to be a (perhaps the) main practical purpose behind every Pauline epistle in one way or another.

upon them—love/unity. It became all the more urgent, indeed necessary, when Paul required their unified support.

Similar observations could be made with respect to Paul's purpose of obtaining Roman Christian support for his collection trip to Jerusalem. It seems doubtful that Paul wrote to a church he did not know at this late date solely for moral or even prayer support in this matter, even if it was the premier Gentile church. But once he was writing, he would certainly request prayer for such a crucial event, representing as it did the very gospel Paul would take to Spain (Rom 15:30-32). We should beware underestimating how much Paul valued prayer.

Despite all of this, Paul's most immediate concern is that the Christians at Rome be unified behind his gospel for his mission to Spain. Therefore, Paul's presentation of his gospel comes with an emphasis on his missionary practice—Ἰουδαίῳ τε πρῶτον καὶ Ἕλληνι (Rom 1:16; cf. 2:10). He needed the support of both basic theological camps in Rome.[40] So he must lay out the rationale for his controversial and apparently paradoxical missionary practice, bringing correction of a sort to both groups. "Against" the Gentile majority Paul's gospel insists that God has not written off the Jews and demands that mission include outreach to Jews, and more than that, prioritizes them![41] "Against" the Jewish minority Paul insists that the gospel is the power of God for salvation for all, whether Jew or Gentile without distinction, and this apart from observance of traditional Jewish identity markers. The converts Paul wins will not be required to live like Jews in order to be Christians.

This description makes clear, then, that one of Paul's purposes was undoubtedly to shape the Roman church according to his own apostolate and gospel. But his most immediate practical concern is for the presentation and defense of his gospel which will win the unity of the Roman Christians with a view toward the more

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[40] To speak of two theological camps is an overgeneralization for the sake of convenience; see pp. 56f. above. While varying nuances of outlook may have existed, we may still helpfully characterize the situation based on the significant division between the "liberal side of the halfway mark between the two extremes and . . . the 'legalist' side" (Bruce, "Romans Debate," 186).

[41] It is one of Wright's (*Climax*, 234) important insights that one of Paul's purposes in Romans was to argue for a mission to Gentiles which includes Jews. Here we improve on Wright's insight by emphasizing that even more to the point was that Paul's mission prioritized Jews.

ultimate purpose of his mission to the West.[42] In speaking of the defense of Paul's gospel, we are recognizing the protreptic nature of Paul's discourse in Romans forged from the fire of past and present controversy and addressed to a church struggling with internal conflict over similar controversy, a church where Paul's reputation surely preceded him.[43] This defense was necessary to bring about the unity of the Roman Christians behind his gospel and attendant missionary practice ("to the Jew first and also to the Greek") with a view toward procuring assistance to his mission to Spain.

We have spent so much time on the purpose of the epistle as a whole because this is intertwined with the purpose of chapters 9-11, to which we now turn. Just as with the epistle, chs. 9-11 have multiple purposes. There have been at least twenty suggestions:

(1) to answer the problem of Jewish unbelief;[44]
(2) to answer questions raised by the previous discussion or continue development of the theme;[45]

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[42] Cf. Miller, *Obedience*, 19: "Specifically, Romans was intended to shape a community of the new age where Jew and gentile dwelt together in unity. Only such an obedient, Spirit-led community would prove resistant to the charges Paul anticipates will be made against him and his gospel, thereby preserving the assistance Paul needed to carry out his ministry in Spain." Miller appears to violate his own assertion of one purpose here, for there are several purposes in his comments. Integrating or subordinating purposes does not make their number any less.

[43]On the protreptic nature of Paul's discourse in Romans, see Guerra, *Romans and the Apologetic Tradition*; David E. Aune, "Romans as a *Logos Protreptikos*." Cf. B. D. Chilton, "Romans 9-11 as Scriptural Interpretation and Dialogue with Judaism," 27f. Defense is perhaps more properly assigned to judicial or forensic rhetoric, and with Kim, *God, Israel, and the Gentiles*, 119-21, we might so classify Rom 9-11. But the protreptic genre might make use of apologetic rhetoric in pursuing its goal of influencing an audience. In terms of classical rhetoric, Rom in general and Rom 9-11 in particular are probably best understood as a mixture of forensic, deliberative, and epideictic rhetoric in service of the protreptic genre. The complex rhetorical situation in question is probably due in part to the difference between literary and practical aims discussed in the present section. Be that as it may, the unqualified application of classical rhetorical identifications to Paul's epistles is problematic; see e.g., Burton L. Mack, *Rhetoric and the New Testament*, 35. Barnabas Lindars, *New Testament Apologetic: The Doctrinal Significance of the Old Testament Quotations*, 241-44, considers Paul's use of OT quotations in Rom 9-11 to be an "apologetic of response" (to Jewish unbelief in relation to the gospel); cf. also E. Earle Ellis, *Paul's Use of the Old Testament*, 122: "a profound apologetic for a 'Christian' interpretation of the OT."

[44] H. Boers, *The Justification of the Gentiles*; D. Fraikin, "The Rhetorical Function of the Jews in Romans," 100ff.; Kuss, 664.

(3) to argue against the Jews and/or win God-fearers from the synagogue;[46]

(4) to advance or consider the continuing validity of Israel or the like;[47]

(5) to correct Gentile pride;[48]

(6) to defend Paul's gospel/justification/mission/argument in the epistle;[49]

(7) to defend Paul himself (against the charge of apostasy or antinomianism, etc.);[50]

(8) to advance certain doctrine;[51]

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[45] Mary Ann Getty, "Paul on the Covenants and the Future of Israel," 96 (to balance previous comments); Daniel Jong-Sang Chae, *Paul as Apostle to the Gentiles: His Apostolic Self-Awareness and Its Influence on the Soteriological Argument in Romans*, 285; Dodd, 148; John A. T. Robinson, *Wrestling with Romans*, 109f.; W. Vischer, "Le Mystère d'Israël: Une exégèse des chapitres ix, x et xi de l'épître aux Romains," 433f.; Cranfield, 445f.

[46] Schmithals, 321-26, 342; E. C. Blackman, "Divine Sovereignty and Missionary Strategy in Romans 9-11," 124f.

[47] Lloyd Gaston, "For All the Believers: The Inclusion of Gentiles as the Ultimate Goal of Torah in Romans," 116; idem, "Israel's Enemies in Pauline Theology"; William S. Campbell, "The Freedom and Faithfulness of God in Relation to Israel," 49; E. Trocmé, "Comment le Dieu d'Abraham, d'Isaac et de Jacob peut-il être à la fois fidèle et libre? (Épître aux Romains, chap. 9 à 11)," 7.

[48] Schoeps, *Paul*, 236; Nanos, *Mystery*, 100; Kim, *God, Israel, and the Gentiles*, 114 (but in service of Paul's mission and defense of God's character); Gaston, "For All the Believers," 116; Schreiner, 471; Alan Johnson, 169; Walters, *Ethnic Issues*, 81; B. Klappert, "Traktat für Israel (Römer 9-11)," 75; Mark A. Seifrid, *Justification By Faith: The Origin and Development of a Central Pauline Theme*, 49; D. W. B. Robinson, "The Salvation of Israel in Romans 9-11," 91; W. D. Davies, "Paul and the People of Israel," 138, 144; G. Eichholz, *Die Theologie des Paulus im Umriss*, 291; Lübking, *Paulus und Israel*, 155; C. Müller, *Gottes Gerechtigkeit und Gottes Volk: Eine Untersuchung zu Römer 9-11*, 47; P. von der Osten-Sacken, "Römer 9-11 als Schibbolet christlicher Theologie," 309.

[49] Hays, *Echoes*, 64; Nygren, 359; Stuhlmacher, 142ff. (Paul's doctrine of justification and his mission); L. T. Johnson, 141; Godet, 127; Alan F. Segal, "Paul's Experience and Romans 9-11," 56f.; idem, *Paul the Convert: The Apostolate and Apostacy of Saul the Pharisee*, 272f.; A. J. Guerra, "Romans: Paul's Purpose and Audience with Special Attention to Romans 9-11"; idem, *Romans and the Apologetic Tradition*, 41 (Schreiner, 471, opposes Guerra's assertion that Paul defends his mission to the Gentiles before Jewish Christians); Murray, 2.xiiff.; Chilton, "Romans 9-11," 30; Robinson, *Wrestling*, 109f.; Krister Stendahl, *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles and Other Essays*, 3-4; Alan Johnson, 169; Wright, *Climax*, 234; Dieter Zeller, *Juden und Heiden in der Mission des Paulus: Studien zum Römerbrief*, 110f.; Wilckens, 181; Morris, 344; Fitzmyer, 539ff.; Lübking, ibid; G. Maier, *Mensch und freier Wille nach den jüdischen Religionspartien zwischen Ben Sira und Paulus*, 353; S. Lyonnet, "Le Rôle d'Israël dans l'histoire du salut selon Rom 9-11," 264; I. Fransen, "Le Dieu de toute consolation: Romains 9,1-11,36," 27; J. Radermakers and J.-P. Sonnet, "Israël et l'Eglise," 677; W. Vischer, "Le Mystère d'Israël," 433f.; C. H. Dodd, *According to the Scriptures: The Substructure of New Testament Theology*, 18; Bell, *Provoked to Jealousy*, 79.

[50] Badenas, *Christ the End of the Law*, 87; E. Brandenburger, "Paulinische Schriftauslegung in der Kontroverse um das Verheissungswort Gottes (Röm 9)," 7; W. D. Davies, "Paul and the People of Israel," 138; Osten-Sacken, "Römer 9-11," 300; Brown, and Meier, *Antioch and Rome*, 120 (affirming Roman Christianity); B. Noack, "Current and Backwater in the Epistle to the Romans," esp. 164 (for Paul's missionary practice and prioritizing trip to Jerusalem).

[51] Sanday and Headlam; Alan F. Segal, "Paul's Experience," 56f.; idem, *Paul*, 272f.; Brunner, 83f.; Käsemann, 261; Murray, 2.xii-xv; Gaston, "For All the Believers," 116; idem, "Israel's Enemies";

(9) to advance some type of salvation historical purpose;[52]

(10) to argue that Israel and the church owe their existence to God's grace;[53]

(11) to identify Israel's place in God's plan or address her fate;[54]

(12) to conduct mission to the Gentiles in Rome;[55]

(13) to reinterpret Israel's history;[56]

(14) to gain support for the trip to Jerusalem;[57]

(15) to gain support for mission to Spain;[58]

(16) to teach the salvation or inclusion of Israel;[59]

(17) theodicy;[60]

(18) unity of the Roman church;[61]

Robinson, *Wrestling*, 109f.; Byrne, 283; Schmithals, 321-26; Cranfield, 445f.; Michael Theobald, "Kirche und Israel nach Röm 9-11," 3ff.; Morris, 344; Fitzmyer, 539ff.; Dodd, 148; Longenecker, "Prolegomena," 166 (setting forth of Paul's remnant theology); Eichholz, *Theologie*, 291f.; Kuss, 664, 928; Lyonnet, "Le Rôle d'Israël," 264; Radermakers and Sonnet, "Israël et l'Eglise," 676f.; F. Refoulé, "Unité de l'Épître aux Romains et histoire du salut," 233; Trocmé, "Comment le Dieu d'Abraham," 7.

[52] Hendriksen, 305f.; Murray, 2.xiiff; Peter Richardson, *Israel in the Apostolic Church*, 143 n. 2; F. Refoulé, "Unité," 233.

[53] Campbell, "Freedom and Faithfulness of God," 49.

[54] Ibid; Fitzmyer, 541; Richardson, *Israel*, 146 (speaking of Rom as a whole); Brunner, 83f.

[55] O'Neill, 145.

[56] Scroggs, "Paul as Rhetorician."

[57] Mary Ann Getty, "Paul and the Salvation of Israel: A Perspective on Romans 9-11," 466f.; Noack, "Current and Backwater," esp. 164.

[58] Getty, "Paul and the Salvation of Israel," 468; Wright, *Climax*, 234; E. Brandenburger, "Paulinische Schriftauslegung," 7; Guerra, *Romans and the Apologetic Tradition*, 156.

[59] H. Boers, *Justification*; Byrne, 283.

[60] Schoeps, *Paul*, 235; Hays, *Echoes*, 64; Stuhlmacher, 142ff.; Godet, 127; Segal, "Paul's Experience," 56f.; idem, *Paul*, 272f.; Käsemann, 253, 261; Ben F. Meyer, "Election-Historical Thinking in Romans 9-11, and Ourselves," 1; Campbell, "Divergent Images," 200; R. David Kaylor, *Paul's Covenant Community: Jew & Gentile in Romans*; 161; Badenas, *Christ the End of the Law*, 93; Alan Johnson, 169; M Barth, "The Testimony of Romans 9-11 and Other Pauline Texts," 29 (to glorify God's faithfulness); Bruce, 183; Davies, "Paul and the People," 131; G. Wagner, "The Future of Israel: Reflections on Romans 9-11," 81.

[61] Watson, *Paul*, 160; Guerra, *Romans and the Apologetic Tradition*, 41f.; Chilton, "Romans 9-11," 30; Timothy W. Berkley, *From a Broken Covenant to Circumcision of the Heart: Pauline Intertextual Exegesis in Romans 2:17-29*, 178; Badenas, *Christ the End of the Law*, 84; Wright, *Climax*, 234; Walters, *Ethnic Issues*, 79; Bruce, 182f.; Leenhardt, 138; Daniel Jong-Sang Chae, *Paul*, 217 (to argue for "the equality of Jew and Gentile in the plan of God"); Wiefel, "Jewish Community," 96.

(19) to urge evangelism of Jews and Gentiles;[62]
(20) to warn against false security.[63]

Given the complexity of Paul's purposes in writing Romans, and the complexity of chs. 9-11, it is not surprising to find so many suggestions. And just as with the letter, there are probably several purposes behind these chapters.

We should keep in mind that different aims can operate on different levels and that the literary and practical purposes of a letter can differ. Thus, as a literary argument, Romans 9-11 might have a purpose in the total literary argument of Romans 1-11 which is related to but different than Paul's practical aim. Indeed, there may well be one or more practical aims as well as one or more literary aims. Literary aims are pursued to further practical ends.

With this said, I would argue that the primary practical purpose of Romans 9-11 is the same as that of the epistle as a whole. Indeed, in the theological section of the letter, Paul pursues his purpose most directly here, bringing that purpose to a theological climax.[64] Paul sought to (1) procure support for his gospel and upcoming mission to Spain by (2) unifying the Jews and Gentiles of the Roman church with one another behind that gospel and accompanying missionary practice. Tied up with Paul's goal of fostering unity were the subordinate purposes of checking Gentile pride and arguing for Gentile inclusion. Romans 9-11 pursues these aims as a brief recapitulation and defense of the gospel with an emphasis on the priority of the Jew while still presenting the guilt and rejection of ethnic Israel amidst an affirmation of the fundamental equality of Jew and Gentile before God.[65]

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[62] Badenas, *Christ the End of the Law*, 86.

[63] Radermakers and Sonnet, "Israël et l'Eglise," 676.

[64] Cf. Wright, *Climax*, 234: "the climax of the argument and the focus of the practical aim."

[65] Many deny that Paul speaks of the rejection of Israel in Rom 9-11, but this is undeniable from 11:15 where he clearly refers to their rejection (ἡ ἀποβολὴ αὐτῶν). Yet 11:1 denies their rejection (μὴ ἀπώσατο ὁ θεὸς τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ; μὴ γένοιτο·). There are semantic issues here which must be addressed. For Paul, God had rejected his people in one sense and had not rejected them in another. Whatever the case may be, it must be granted that we follow Paul in using such language (but see K. Haacker, "Die Geschichtstheologie von Röm 9-11 im Lichte philonischer Schriftauslegung," 218f.). Our exegesis will seek to determine the nature of Israel's rejection.

On a literary level Romans 9-11 completes the exposition of the theme of the epistle (1:16-17), a summary statement of the gospel, by explaining the priority of the Jew and by defending the gospel Paul has presented at length against its most compelling objection—how the Christian gospel can be the fulfillment of Judaism/the Old Testament and its promises to Israel when the vast majority of Jews had rejected Christ and were therefore excluded from God's salvation and promises to them. He defends the covenant faithfulness of God. This is at the same time a defense of the gospel, for the gospel is essentially equivalent to the righteousness/faithfulness of God, or more precisely, it is its content or the way God has effected his righteousness/faithfulness. Indeed, to borrow the title of N. T. Wright's influential study, the gospel of Jesus Christ is "the climax of the covenant."

The Theme of Romans 9-11

When we turn to the theme of Romans 9-11, we again find a multitude of suggestions. Over thirty years ago, U. Luz sketched three different broad approaches among scholars to the theme of these chapters: (1) those who emphasize the fate of Israel; (2) those who see *Heilsgeschichte* as central to the problem of Romans 9-11; and (3) those who think the theme is the faithfulness of God to his word.[66] More specifically, we have found that scholars have suggested that the theme of Romans 9-11 is:

(1) Romans 9:6a[67] or the faithfulness of God;[68]

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[66] U. Luz, *Das Geschichtsverständnis des Paulus*, 21-24. Luz also lists representatives of these views. B. Corley, "The Jews, the Future, and God (Romans 9-11)," 43f., describes four approaches (with represenatatives): (1) eternal predestination; (2) salvation history; (3) Jewish unbelief; (4) divine faithfulness. More recently, Jack Cottrell, 23f., 28ff., has identified seven subjects that arise in the chapters before revealing his conclusion concerning which is primary—the faithfulness of God. See Cottrell, 23-30, for one of the lengthiest discussions of the theme of Rom 9-11.

[67] Schreiner, 491; I. Broer, "Die Juden im Urteil der Autoren des Neuen Testaments: Anmerkungen zum Problem historischer Gerechtigkeit im Angesicht einer verheerenden Wirkungsgeschichte," 21; Cranfield, 473; Dunn, 518, 539; Kuss, 699; Lübking, *Paulus und Israel*, 62, 136f.; M. Rese, "Israel und Kirche in Römer 9," 212; W. Vischer, "Le Mystère d'Israël," 444; Ziesler, 239; S. K. Stowers, *A Rereading of Romans: Justice, Jews, and Gentiles*, 287; Campbell, "Freedom and Faithfulness of God," 44; Kim, *God Israel, and the Gentiles*, 110; R. Schmitt, *Gottesgerechtigkeit-Heilsgeschichte-Israel in der Theologie des Paulus*, 68ff.; Wagner, "Future of Israel," 81; Wilckens, 191; Chae, *Paul*, 218; Scott J. Hafemann, "The Salvation of Israel in Romans 11:25-32: A Response to Krister

(2) Romans 9:6b;[69]

(3) the divine purpose in history;[70]

(3) the faithfulness of Paul, his gospel, or his argument;[71]

(4) the fate of Israel;[72]

Stendahl," 45; R. Dean Jr. Anderson, *Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Paul*, 235; Getty, "Paul and the Salvation of Israel," 465 (cf. 461); idem, "Paul on the Covenants," 97. Some of the items on the following list overlap, but we have included them for the sake of completeness. Some scholars may be found supporting more than one item.

[68] H. L. Ellison, *The Mystery of Israel: An Exposition of Romans 9-11*, 24-29; Ziesler, 37; Watson, *Paul*, 162 (essentially); Hays, *Echoes*, 64 (essentially); Nygren, 359; Stuhlmacher, 144; J. Christian Beker, "Romans 9-11 in the Context of the Early Church," 44; Segal, "Paul's Experience," 56; idem, *Paul*, 276-84; Guerra, *Romans and the Apologetic Tradition*, 144 (essentially); Chilton, "Romans 9-11," 27f. (essentially); Meyer, "Election-Historical Thinking," 1; Hafemann, "The Salvation of Israel," 43; Campbell, "Divergent Images" (seemingly); idem, "The Freedom and Faithfulness of God in Relation to Israel"; Marty L. Reid, "Paul's Rhetoric of Mutuality: A Rhetorical Reading of Romans," 135; Kaylor, *Covenant Community*, 159-93; B. Corley, "The Jews, the Future, and God (Romans 9-11)," 45; Bruce W. Longenecker, "Different Answers to Different Issues: Israel, the Gentiles and Salvation History in Romans 9-11," 95; Dahl, "Future," 142; Cottrell, 28; Michael Theobald, *Die Römerbrief*, 260f.; Dieter Sänger, *Die Verkündigung des Gekreuzigten und Israel: Studien zum Verhältnis von Kirche und Israel bei Paulus und im frühen Christentum*, 153f.; Badenas, *Christ the End of the Law*, 84-87; R. Penna, *Paul the Apostle: Jew and Greek Alike: A Theological and Exegetical Study*, 89; Alan Johnson, 169; John B. Polhill, *Paul & His Letters*, 294; Wright, *Climax*, 235; Heikki Räisänen, "Paul, God, and Israel: Romans 9-11 in Recent Research," 178; idem, "Römer 9-11," 2893; E. Güttgemanns, "Heilsgeschichte bei Paulus oder Dynamik des Evangeliums: Zur strukturellen Relevanz von Röm 9-11 für die Theologie des Römerbriefes," 40 (in the sense of the truth of the gospel); Luz, *Geschichtsverständnis*, 28; E. Brandenburger, "Paulinische Schriftauslegung in der Kontroverse um das Verheissungswort Gottes (Röm 9)," 15; Rese, "Israel und Kirche," 212; N. Walter, "Zur Interpretation von Römer 9-11," 189 (for a different but apparently complementary statement of the issue, see 172f.); Wilckens, 181; Fitzmyer, 541 (essentially); Dodd, 150; L. Goppelt, *Jesus, Paul and Judaism: An Introduction to New Testament Theology*, 151-53; Davies, "Paul and the People," 131; W. Kraus, *Das Volk Gottes: Zur Grundlegung der Ekklesiologie bei Paulus*, 293f. (but he emphasizes that this is not simply about the reliability of God's word, but about the contradiction between God's promise of salvation to Israel and their present state of exclusion from salvation in Christ [293 n. 138]); G. Lüdemann, *Paulus und das Judentum*, 31; Maier, *Mensch und freier Wille*, 353 (apparently); B. Mayer, *Unter Gottes Heilsratschluss: Prädestinationsaussagen bei Paulus*, 167; Osten-Sacken, "Römer 9-11," 300; J.-N. Aletti, *Israël et la loi dans la lettre aux romains*, 176 (of divine election); Fransen, "Le Dieu de toute consolation," 27f.; Vischer, "Le Mystère d'Israël," 444. Jan Lambrecht, "Israel's Future According to Romans 9-11: An Exegetical and Hermeneutical Approach," 34, and O. Hofius, "Das Evangelium und Israel: Erwägungen zu Römer 9-11," 299f., both take this position in the form of finding the theme in the two questions of 9:6 (whether God's word had failed) and 11:1 (whether God had rejected his people).

[69] Richardson, *Israel, 136.*

[70] Dodd, 148.

[71] Watson, *Paul*, 162; Hays, *Echoes*, 64; Nygren, 359; Sanday and Headlam, 225f. (reconciliation of justification by faith with privilege of Jews and God's justice); Guerra, "Romans 9-11"; idem, *Romans and the Apologetic Tradition*, 144; Robinson, *Wrestling*, 109f.; Güttgemanns, "Heilsgeschichte bei Paulus," 40; Wilckens, 181; Maier, *Mensch und freier Wille*, 353 (apparently); Vischer, "Le Mystère d'Israël," 444.

(5) Israel and God's plan;[73]

(6) God's plan of salvation for Jews and Gentiles;[74]

(7) human unbelief and God's grace;[75]

(8) God in his character and deeds;[76]

(9) justification;[77]

(10) the meaning of Israel's history;[78]

(11) mercy;[79]

(12) the place of Gentiles in God's plan;[80]

(13) predestination;[81]

(14) the rejection of Israel;[82]

(15) the relationship between the Church and Israel;[83]

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[72] Dunn, 520; Black, 128; Penna, *Paul*, 315; Schlier, 282; Scroggs, "Paul as Rhetorician," 278; Davies, "Paul and the People," 131; Kraus, *Das Volk Gottes*, 292; Mayer, *Unter Gottes Heilsratschluss*, 167; F. Müßner, "Gesetz-Abraham-Israel," 211.

[73] Achtemeier, 153; Dunn, 520 ("God and Israel"); Nils A. Dahl, "The Future of Israel," 142; Werner George Kümmel, "Die Probleme von Römer 9-11 in der gegenwärtigen Forschungslage," 15f.; Howard Clark Kee, *Knowing the Truth: A Sociological Approach to New Testament Interpretation*, 91; N. Walter, "Römer 9-11," 172f. (put uniquely: how the inevitable individual soteriological structure of salvation announced in the gospel of Christ, which makes all people equal, relates to the one determined people of Israel as a whole in light of the salvific promises of God in Scripture); Morris, 343; O'Neill, 146; Barnabas Lindars, "The Old Testament and Universalism in Paul," 513; Stephen Westerholm, *Preface to the Study of Paul*, 102; Lyonnet, "Le Rôle d'Israël," 266f. (specifically summed up in Rom 11:30-32); Haacker, 190; Black, 128.

[74] L. T. Johnson; Zeller, *Juden und Heiden*, 110; Blackman, "Divine Sovereignty," 124 (essentially).

[75] Bruce, 181.

[76] Barrett, 175.

[77] Bell, *Provoked*, 44-55 (esp. 55); Hendriksen, 306; Käsemann, 260; Leenhardt, 138 (based on consideration of the validity of the promise to the currently rejected people); Fitzmyer, 541 (following Käsemann).

[78] Scroggs, "Paul as Rhetorician," 275-81 (esp. 281).

[79] Gaston, "Israel's Enemies," 97, speaking of 9:6-29, though his argument seems to point toward a similar understanding of the broader unit of chs. 9-11.

[80] Krister Stendahl, "The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West," 85; Refoulé, "Unité," 235 (specifically, the inclusion of the Gentiles).

[81] Popular among older commentators such as Luther, 136.

[82] Black, 128 (both of God and by God); E. Dinkler, "The Historical and the Eschatological Israel in Romans, Chapters 9-11: A Contribution to the Problem of Predestination and Individual Responsibility," 109; Dodd, 149. Morris, 344, cautions against extremes of total and no rejection.

(16) the relationship between Jews and Gentiles;[84]

(17) the righteousness of God;[85]

(18) the salvation/inclusion or necessity of Israel;[86]

(19) the sovereignty of God;[87]

(20) theodicy;[88]

(21) the true people of God;[89]

(22) the unbelief of Israel;[90]

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[83] Wayne A. Meeks, "On Trusting an Unpredictable God: A Hermeneutical Meditation on Romans 9-11," 120; Stendahl, *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles*, 4; Kümmel, "Probleme," 15f.; Howard Clark Kee, *Knowing the Truth: A Sociological Approach to New Testament Interpretation*, 91; Leenhardt, 138 (essentially); Daniel J. Harrington, *Paul on the Mystery of Israel*, 48f.; Norman A. Beck, *Mature Christianity in the 21st Century: The Recognition and Repudiation of the Anti-Jewish Polemic of the New Testament*, 108 (following Stendahl); Davies, "Paul and the People," 131; Osten-Sacken, "Römer 9-11," 300; Erik Peterson, "Die Kirche aus Juden und Heiden," 143.

[84] F. Siegert, *Argumentation bei Paulus: gezeigt an Röm 9-11*, 110; A. Gueuret, "Épître de Paul aux Romains: Analyse des contenus du ch. 9, 6-13," 17; Harrington, ibid (within the Church); Chae, *Paul*, 217 (their equality in God's plan); Mayer, *Unter Gottes Heilsratschluss*, 167 (specifically Israel's position in relation to believing Gentiles); Osten-Sacken, ibid; Aletti, *Israël*, 167.

[85] Ellison, *Mystery*, 24-29; Stuhlmacher, 144; Beker, "Romans 9-11," 44; Käsemann, 253; Brunner, 83; John G. Gager, *The Origins of Anti-Semitism: Attitudes Toward Judaism in Pagan and Christian Antiquity*, 223; Stephen Westerholm, "Paul and the Law in Romans 9-11," 220 ("the triumph of God's goodness in a creation corrupted by sin").

[86] Mark D. Nanos, *The Mystery of Romans: The Jewish Context of Paul's Letter*, 100; P. Gorday, *Principles of Patristic Exegesis: Romans 9-11 in Origen, John Chrysostom, and Augustine*, 9 (proper stance of Gentile Christians in light of Jewish unbelief); Byrne, 281ff. These former scholars see this theme as working toward the correction of Gentile pride; the following do not necessarily so connect the cited statement of theme: Robinson, "Salvation of Israel"; Trocmé, "Comment le Dieu d'Abraham," 7 (essentially 11:1).

[87] Segal, "Paul's Experience," 56; idem, *Paul*, 276-84; Campbell, "Freedom and Faithfulness of God"; Trocmé, ibid (essentially 9:18); Shedd, 271-72 (cited in Cottrell, 25); Haldane, 438 (cited in Cottrell, 25).

[88] Godet, 128; Reid, "Paul's Rhetoric of Mutuality: A Rhetorical Reading of Romans," 135; opposed by Müller, *Gottes Gerechtigkeit*, 83, and Nygren, 354f. This could essentially be equivalent to number 1 on a certain definition of theodicy.

[89] Penna, *Paul*, 315; Badenas, *Christ the End of the Law*, 84-87; Robinson, "Salvation of Israel" (identity of Israel).

[90] The following at least take this as an important aspect of the theme; entries followed by an asterisk actually seem to take it as the theme: Boers, *Justification*, 92, 133, 156;* Sänger, *Verkündigung*, 153; Kaylor, *Covenant Community*, 159-93; P. Gorday, *Principles of Patristic Exegesis: Romans 9-11 in Origen, John Chrysostom, and Augustine*, 9; Penna, *Paul*, 89; John B. Polhill, *Paul & His Letters*, 294; Wright, *Climax*, 235; C. K. Barrett, "Romans 9.30-10.21: Fall and Responsibility of Israel," 104;* Räisänen, "Römer 9-11," 2901, 2908; Bruce 181; Cranfield, 445; Hofius, "Das Evangelium und Israel," 299f.; Lindars, "Old Testament," 513 (its temporary nature and effectiveness for universal salvation); Kuss, 662, 665 (explanation of it in light of Scripture);* Mayer, *Unter Gottes*

(23) the universality of sin and salvation in the light of God's promises;[91]
(24) whether Paul should proclaim the gospel to both Jews and Gentiles;[92]
(25) the obedience of the Gentiles and disobedience of the Jews to the gospel.[93]

Out of the many suggestions for the theme of Romans 9-11, the solid consensus is that it is the faithfulness of God to his word/promises to Israel.[94] Many would specify this theme textually as contained in 9:6a (Οὐχ οἷον δὲ ὅτι ἐκπέπτωκεν ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ). We would concur on both counts.

Among the many proposals, several types stand out for special mention. First, there are theories which find the theme centered in Israel, whether her fate, or her relationship to the gospel, Church, Gentiles, God, or his plan. What these theories miss is that Romans 9-11 are theocentric rather than anthropocentric. That is why the actual argument begins with God's faithfulness and ends with a doxology, and everywhere in between God is the ultimate focus of attention. Granted, the discussion has to do with God's faithfulness *to Israel* specifically, but this is addressed because the case of Israel presents the greatest and most obvious objection to the gospel which Paul has delineated in the previous chapters.

This leads us to another problem with all such theories: they ignore, or at least shortchange, the connection to the preceding argument (chs. 1-8). They fail to recognize, or give due weight to, the fact that Romans 9-11 is a defense of the gospel.[95] They defend against an objection to the truth of the gospel based on a charge

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Heilsratschluss, 167;* Osten-Sacken, "Römer 9-11," 299; Fransen, "Le Dieu de toute consolation," 27f.; Michael Theobald, *Die überströmende Gnade: Studien zu einem paulinischen Motivfeld*, 165;* C. H Giblin, *In Hope of God's Glory: Pauline Theological Perspectives*, 265;* Segal, "Paul's Experience," 56; idem, *Paul*, 276; James W. Aageson, "Scripture and Structure in the Development of the Argument in Romans 9-11," 267. Against it are Watson, *Paul*, 162; Gaston, "Israel's Enemies in Pauline Theology," 97; P.-G. Klumbies, "Israels Vorzüge und das Evangelium von der Gottesgerechtigkeit in Römer 9-11," 137ff.

[91] Schmithals, 320-26.

[92] Dodd, *According to the Scriptures*, 18 (i.e. Rom 1:16).

[93] F. Müßner, *Tractate on the Jews: The Significance of Judaism for Christian Faith*, 208 (in Müßner's case, especially why this is so); Aletti, *Israᵉl*, 179 n. 2.

[94] See number 1 above and accompanying notes.

[95] See above, pp. 65ff.

against God's character vis-à-vis his dealings with Israel. Thus, in a general sense it is fair to say, as Dunn,[96] that their theme is "God and Israel." But that is not the most precise way to put it.

Second, the case is similar with those who find justification or righteousness to be the theme of Romans 9-11. In a very general sense, this is true, since Paul is defending justification by faith, a summary description of the gospel, and explaining its ethnic aspects. But his theme, which concerns the gospel/justification as well as God and Israel, is more specific: it is God's faithfulness to his promises to Israel in the gospel/justification by faith.

Third, theories related to God's working in history, or his plan of salvation, or even his sovereignty are both too general and too specific. They are too general in that they miss that Paul's point is to argue that God has been faithful in his working in history, in his plan of salvation, and in the exercise of his sovereignty. They are too specific in that these issues are not discussed as ends in themselves, but in the service of God's faithfulness to his word to Israel. This latter point of too much specificity is a strike against every suggestion other than God's faithfulness. They ignore the details of the text which emerge through careful exegesis and reveal that everything in 9:6-11:32 supports 9:6a.[97]

Most suggestions for the theme of Romans 9-11 are legitimately present in the text, and a few may rightfully be called the theme in a general sense.[98] Indeed, many scholars may be found making more than one suggestion. Romans 9-11 is so complex that it may be described in a variety of ways. But the most appropriate is God's faithfulness to his word to Israel, viz., 9:6a.

Another theme surely present in the text is that of the unbelief of Israel/her rejection of Jesus Christ. Indeed, this factor is "almost universally held by exegetes" to be the background of Romans 9-11, the cause of Paul's grief, and the cause of the

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[96] Dunn, 520. However, he goes way too far when he contends elsewhere that Rom 9-11 only has Israel in view (see J. D. G. Dunn, "Did Paul Have a Covenant Theology? Reflections on Romans 9.4 and 11.27," 303).

[97] See below on literary placement and character for more on this as well as the relationship of this theme to the rest of the epistle.

[98] Note Dunn's identification of the theme in his commentary as "God and Israel" in one place (520) and as 9:6a in another (539).

problem he addresses.[99] The few objections to this presupposition notwithstanding,[100] this stance is justified and unassailable. Often, this fact is stated as part of the theme so that what calls God's faithfulness into question is Israel's unbelief or rejection of Christ. But it is this assumption which must be questioned rather than the fact itself.

Many, perhaps most, assume that what causes Paul's grief is Israel's unbelief. This is undoubtedly true, but it is not what Paul addresses and it is not what he laments in the text. The actual problem he addresses is God's rejection of Israel rather than their rejection of Christ; he addresses their exclusion from salvation (e.g., 9:3, 8, 22ff., 30-33).[101] This point is subtle, but its significance is great. Just as a slight mistake in the direction set at the beginning of a journey can result in landing far off the original mark, so in exegesis. And so is the case with identifying Israel's unbelief as the problem posed to God's faithfulness.

It is easy to see how this mistake can be made, for it is Israel's unbelief which brings God's rejection of Israel. So it is even reasonable to put the matter this way, except that this is not how Paul frames it. Doing so tends to obscure Paul's argument. Practically, if it is the unbelief of Israel which is the problem Paul addresses, then Romans 9-11 can tend to be read as seeking to explain Israel's unbelief and God's responsibility for it. On the other hand, if it is rather God's rejection of Israel that is the issue, then Paul is defending God's right to call who he wishes and on the basis he wishes, i.e., faith. Ultimately, the resulting difference comes down to whether Israel's hardening is the reason for Israel's unbelief, for then Paul is trying to explain such a bewildering divine action which works against promised salvation, or, as most

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[99] Gaston, "Israel's Enemies," 92. For a qualification concerning the language of the rejection of Israel, see note 65 above in this chapter.

[100] Ibid; Getty, "Paul and the Salvation of Israel," 459.

[101] Cf. James Arminius, "Analysis of the Ninth Chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans," esp. 486-88, who makes a similar type of point concerning the precise subject of Paul's argument. He correctly argues that Paul does not address the abstract question of whether God can be faithful to his word when he rejects most of the Jews, but that the actual subject of Paul's discourse is: " 'Whether the word of God is not made of none effect, if those of the Jews who seek righteousness, not from faith, but from the law, are rejected by God' " (487). It seems to me that the failure to grasp this profound insight by many in the history of scholarship has been encouraged by the long-standing standard view of years past that held Rom 9-11 to be a mere excursus or appendix to the doctrinal section of the letter (cf. our treatment of the literary placement of Rom 9-11 below), the very conviction that made it possible to think that the chapters' main theme is predestination. Cf. also our discussion below of the hermeneutical question of the direction in which we should read Paul's argument.

interpreters would have it,[102] the consequence of their unbelief, in which case Paul partially defends God's response to Israel's unbelief.

We should especially look to 9:1-6 for direction since they set up the problem and give its fundamental answer. First, we find that the heart of Paul's concern is the accursed condition of his people (9:1-5).[103] Second, Paul states the problem in terms of the faithfulness of God's promises to Israel, promises of salvation rather than promises of faith and faithful reception of the Messiah. Faithful response to God was always the condition for receiving his blessings in the Old Testament, not the promised blessing.[104] That it is the promise of salvation that Paul especially has in mind is further supported by the fact that Paul takes the discussion to the salvation of all Israel. Third, Paul spends so much of his argument on matters related to the redefinition of Israel (9:6b-11:32 in one sense), 9:6b occupying pride of place as the point most directly connected to the thematic statement of 9:6a. Finally, 9:30-33 gives support along similar lines in its summing up of the practical implications of 9:6-29 in terms of attainment of God's Law/righteousness (i.e., word/promise).

Rather than seizing upon the historical situation for our primary understanding of Paul's argument, although it is important and should inform our interpretation, we should attend to what Paul chooses to emphasize and identify from the historical

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[102] So Hofius, "Das Evangelium und Israel," 303f. The fact that most interpreters frame the problem in terms of Israel's unbelief and attribute Israel's hardening to their unbelief suggests that hardening unto unbelief is not a necessary deduction from this understanding of the problem. However, it does logically strengthen such a position.

[103] See our exegesis below in chapter 3; cf. esp. John Piper, *The Justification of God: An Exegetical and Theological Study of Romans 9:1-23*, 17-46 (ch. 2).

[104] It is true that OT promises of restoration often include the promise of a new, (Spirit-inspired) obedience from the heart and faithfulness on the part of God's people (e.g., Deut 30; Isa 32:15-20; 44:1-5; 59:20-21; Jer 31:27-37; Ezek 36:22-38; 37:24-28; 39:25-29; Hos 2:14-23; these references follow English versification). But this is presented as something God will do for the covenant community (and those who remain connected to it) and is contingent on their turning to the Lord (see Deut 30; cf. the contingency of Jer 31:29-30; and see Paul's interpretation of Ezek 36:26-27, Jer 31:31ff., and Ex 34:29-35 in 2 Cor 3:7-18, which asserts that the veil of Jewish hard-heartedness is removed *when* [ἡνίκα] a person turns to the Lord [3:16] and *in Christ* [3:14]). This is why Paul seeks to redefine Israel/Abraham's seed spiritually. For him, faith in Jesus Christ justifies and effects inclusion in the covenant community. This faith is not the subject of the OT promises, but the means of participating in their fulfillment. Even then, the resulting obedience is not pictured as an individual, perfect obedience, but a corporate reality, pressed out by individuals in community, which labors under the tension between the already and not yet (cf. Rom 6-8). The type of detailed attention this subject requires goes far beyond the scope of the present investigation. But we can consider related issues as they relate to the OT texts Paul alludes to in Rom 9:1-9.

situation.[105] That is, the exclusion of Israel from salvation. It is this which throws God's faithfulness into question. How could he reject and condemn those he promised to save, and at the same time save those he never made any such promise to? As Ziesler puts it, "if historical Israel was the recipient of God's promises to Abraham (vv. 4-5), and if God has now rejected her in favour of a new and multi-racial people, does that not impugn the faithfulness and reliability of God?"[106] Or in Hays' words, "If there is no such congruity [between God's word in Scripture and God's word in Paul's gospel], then the word of God has 'fallen' (Rom. 9:6), and the God with whom we have to do is either untrustworthy or impotent."[107]

It is easy to see that the theme of the faithfulness of God's word contributes to the argumentative/apologetic purpose of Romans 9-11 discussed above, which in turn works towards the more practical purposes of winning acceptance of Paul's gospel and mission to Spain. But how does it pursue the practical purposes of obtaining both the unity of Jews and Gentiles in the Roman church and support for Paul's missionary procedure of going to Jews first yet including Gentiles? By completing the development of the letter's theme with this subject, Paul shows that the ethnic component of the former is *necessary* to maintain the integrity of God's character. This provides defense for Paul's missionary methodology and even *demands* support for it. Likewise, the theme of chs. 9-11 promotes the unity of the Roman Christians by linking the truth of God's faithfulness to both an honored position for Jews and the inclusion of Gentiles apart from ceremonial Law-observance. It is probably the ideal theme to accomplish Paul's goals, for it grounds Paul's gospel and missionary practice in God's faithfulness and represents them as part of its very outworking.

The Integrity, Authenticity, and Literary Placement of Romans 9-11

There is very little debate over either the integrity or authenticity of Romans 9-11. Given the sheer volume of literature on this passage, it should probably be

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[105] It should go without saying that Paul would have considered the rejection of Israel as a real, historical reality.

[106] Ziesler, 234.

[107] Hays, *Echoes*, 64.

surprising that only a few modern scholars have suggested that there are cases of interpolation within Romans 9-11 or that the chapters were not original to the epistle.[108] These rare exceptions serve more to confirm the integrity and authenticity of Romans 9-11 than to challenge them. Hays' comments on interpolation theories generally in the Book of Romans apply perfectly here: "Such theories belong in a museum of exegetical curiosities rather than in a serious discussion of the theological coherence of Romans. These hypotheses demonstrate nothing more than the inability of their authors to tolerate dialectical complexity."[109]

There has been much more debate in the history of interpretation over the literary placement of Romans 9-11.[110] Cranfield considers this to be one of the notorious problems presented by this section of the epistle,[111] and Kümmel identified it as one of the major questions attracting very different answers in his standard essay of introduction to the passage.[112] The problem arises out of the obvious abrupt change in mood, tone, and precise subject that occurs beginning at 9:1, exacerbated by asyndeton.

We may identify four approaches to the literary placement of Romans 9-11. (1) Some have found the dissonance so great between these chapters and the rest of

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[108] O'Neil, 150f., 170ff., 177, argues that 9:7b-8a, 11-23, 10:6b-11:32 are commentary by a later hand on what Paul has written. M. Widmann, "Der Israelit Paulus und sein antijüdischer Redaktor: Eine literarkritische Studie zu Rom. 9-11," argues that two tractates have been inserted into Paul's argument: 9:6b-29, written by a predestinationist against Paul, and 9:30-10:21; 11:7-10, written by a Deutero-Paulinist on the failure of Israel; all of this stems from the hand of an anti-Jewish redactor of the Pauline corpus; 10:14-15, 17 and 11:6 should be eliminated as glosses (see Fitzmyer, 64f. for a summary of Widmann's article). C. Plag, *Israels Wege zum Heil: Eine Untersuchung zu Römer 9 bis 11*, considers 11:25-27 to be a later addition. Refoulé, "Unité," concludes that the many purported connections between Rom 9-11 and the rest of the letter are untenable and that the passage did not originally belong to the epistle, perhaps being the work of a disciple of Paul who sought to correct Paul's unqualified statement of election and its privileges on the church. Scroggs, "Paul as Rhetorician," argues that Rom 1-11 is made up of two separate and previously constructed homilies, chs. 1-4 and 9-11 forming a single homily, and chs. 5-8 another. Leander E. Keck, "What Makes Romans Tick?," 7-16, is sympathetic to interpolation theories in Romans.

[109] Richard B. Hays, "Adam, Israel, Christ: The Question of Covenant in the Theology of Romans: A Response to Leander E. Keck and N. T. Wright," 76.

[110] For significant treatments of the placement of Rom 9-11 see Lübking, *Paulus und Israel*, 21-50; Müller, *Gottes Gerechtigkeit*, 49-57; E. Elizabeth Johnson, *The Function of Apocalyptic and Wisdom Traditions in Romans 9*-11, 110-23, and to a lesser extent, Kümmel, "Probleme," 15-18; Luz, *Geschichtsverständnis*, 19-22; Scroggs, "Paul as Rhetorician"; Cranfield, 445ff.; Cottrell, 34-39.

[111] Cranfield, 445.

[112] Kümmel, "Probleme," 16.

the epistle that they regard them as *an excursus or appendix* to the doctrinal section of the letter. This view was much more common, indeed the standard view, among older interpreters,[113] when Romans was typically seen as a theological treatise and the theme of chs. 9-11 as the doctrine of predestination. Surprisingly, however, the view has been adopted in some form by a handful of more recent interpreters as well.[114] One of the classic and more colorful descriptions of this approach was furnished by Dodd, who held the passage to be a Pauline sermon incorporated into the epistle before chs. 12ff. were written, but was "very likely not written *currente calamo* with the rest of the epistle, but represent a somewhat earlier piece of work, incorporated here wholesale to save a busy man's time and trouble in writing on the subject afresh."[115]

(2) The second approach to the placement of Romans 9-11 recognizes that the passage is *directly connected* to the rest of the letter.[116] (3) A third approach finds

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[113] E.g., Sanday and Headlam, 225f.; Morison, 6; Calvin, 190; Dodd, 148.

[114] Dahl, "Future," 139; John A. T. Robinson, *Wrestling with Romans*, 108f.; Anderson, *Ancient Rhetorical Theory*, 234 (seemingly; he finds there to be an *unexpected change* of mood and subject); Schlier, 282f. (essentially); Kuss, 664f.; Refoulé, "Unité" (in essence, but he goes beyond this view in positing 9-11 as an interpolation). Fitzmyer, 540, incorrectly attributes this type of view to W. D. Davies, "Paul and the People of Israel," *NTS* 24 [1977-78]: 14-15 n. 3 [reprinted in Davies' *Jewish and Pauline Studies*, 123-52]. While Davies' note is lengthy and provides an overview of various approaches to the relationship between Rom 1-8 and 9-11, he does not actually state his own view positively, but does express appreciation for the input of John Knox who regards Rom 5-8 as the heart of the epistle. This view does not necessarily claim that there is no connection to the rest of the letter. Sanday and Headlam, Dahl, Robinson, and Schlier do find some connection, especially in development of the theme of the letter, Rom 1:16f.

[115] Dodd, 150.

[116] Guerra, *Romans and the Apologetic Tradition*, 144 (Paul picks up from 3:1-9, defending his argument in the epistle); Wilckens, 181; Lindars, "Old Testament," 513; Zeller, *Juden und Heiden*, 110 (dominated by the main theme of the letter—salvation); Meeks, "Trusting an Unpredictable God," 106; Godet, 127f.; Brunner, 83f.; Käsemann, 257; Barrett, 175; Penna, *Paul*, 85-88 (1:18-5:21 presupposed in 9-11); Jan Lambrecht, "Israel's Future According to Romans 9-11: An Exegetical and Hermeneutical Approach," 35; James C. Walters, *Ethnic Issues in Paul's Letter to the Romans: Changing Self-Definitions in Earliest Roman Christianity*, 79; Judith M. Gundry Volf, *Paul and Perseverance: Staying In and Falling Away*, 161; Schmithals, 321 Mayer, *Unter Gottes Heilsratschluss*, 167f.; Müller, *Gottes Gerechtigkeit*, 49-57; Haacker, 179f.; Schmitt, *Gottesgerechtigkeit*, 71f. I note the above references because of their more reserved expression of the connection between Rom 9-11 and the rest of the letter. This does not necessarily mean that a given scholar does not believe the passage to be integral to the epistle, only that he or she did not state the connection so strongly.

Romans 9-11 to be an *integral or necessary* part of the letter.[117] Without it, Paul's argument would lose some of its force or remain incomplete.

(4) A final view regards Romans 9-11 as the *climax* of the epistle's theological argument (chs. 1-11).[118] Many who ascribe to this view find the real burden of Romans in chs. 9-11. For some, Paul argues everything before it in preparation for this crucial moment. The view is invariably connected to the conviction that the relationship between Jews and Gentiles is, in any number of ways, paramount to Paul's concern in Romans.[119]

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[117] Ziesler, 37-39; Watson, 227 n. 3; Nygren, 357; Stuhlmacher, 144; Black, 128; Johann D. Kim, *God, Israel, and the Gentiles: Rhetoric and Situation in Romans 9-11*, 96; R. David Kaylor, *Paul's Covenant Community: Jew & Gentile in Romans*, 160f.; Dinkler, "The Historical and the Eschatological Israel," 124; Mary Ann Getty, "Paul and the Salvation of Israel: A Perspective on Romans 9-11," 467; idem, "Paul on the Covenants and the Future of Israel," 95; Johnson, *Function of Apocalyptic*, 174; Cottrell, 35-37; Schreiner, 469; Byrne, 282; Heikki Räisänen, "Paul, God, and Israel: Romans 9-11 in Recent Research," 179f.; idem, "Römer 9-11," 2895; Kümmel, "Probleme," 16-17; Bruce, 182-84; Cranfield, 445-47; Hofius, "Das Evangelium und Israel," 299; Leenhardt, 138; Morris, 343; Harrington, *Paul*, 48f.; Bruce W. Longenecker "Different Answers to Different Issues: Israel, the Gentiles and Salvation History in Romans 9-11," 112; Moo, 551f.; Luz, *Geschichtsverständnis*, 19-21; Richard Longenecker, "Prolegomena to Paul's Use of Scripture in Romans," 165f.; Lübking, *Paulus und Israel*, 12; Lyonnet, "Le Rôle d'Israël," 264; Bell, *Provoked*, 53; Piper, *Justification*, 17-19; Wagner, *Heralds*, 44 n. 4; D. Fraikin, "The Rhetorical Function of the Jews in Romans," 100-02; Ellis, *Paul's Use*, 121f. The scholars listed above may or may not believe there to be an even stronger connection to the rest of the letter (option 4 below), but their statements did not explicitly indicate anything more than an integral/necessary role for Rom 9-11. Some listed here have explicitly set themselves against the climax view, seeking to present a moderating position, such as Watson, Cottrell, Räisänen, Kümmel, and Morris.

[118] N. T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology*, 234; Dunn, 519-20; Ellison, *Mystery*, 27; Hays, *Echoes*, 63; L. T. Johnson, 140; J. Christian Beker, "Romans 9-11 in the Context of the Early Church," 44; idem, "The Faithfulness of God and the Priority of Israel in Paul's Letter to the Romans," 13; Murray, 2.xii; Marty L. Reid, "Paul's Rhetoric of Mutuality: A Rhetorical Reading of Romans," 135 (the climax of the *probatio* answering the final objection to Paul's position); P. Gorday, *Principles of Patristic Exegesis: Romans 9-11 in Origen, John Chrysostom, and Augustine* (cautiously: necessary [p. 3] and perhaps the highpoint [p. 236]; see pp. 1-10 for general treatment); B. Corley, "The Jews, the Future, and God (Romans 9-11)," 48-50; Stendahl, *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles*, 4; idem, "Introspective Conscience," 85; Alan Johnson, 169; John G. Gager, *Reinventing Paul*, 45; idem, *The Origins of Anti-Semitism: Attitudes Toward Judaism in Pagan and Christian Antiquity*, 223; Campbell, "Freedom and Faithfulness of God," 43; idem, "Romans III as a Key to the Structure and Thought of the Letter," 257 n. 36 (specifically, 11:29), 264; Fitzmyer, 540f.; Goppelt, *Jesus, Paul and Judaism*, 153; Moisés Silva, "Old Testament in Paul," 639; O'Neil, 145; Beck, *Mature Christianity*, 107; Daniel Jong-Sang Chae, *Paul as Apostle to the Gentiles: His Apostolic Self-Awareness and Its Influence on the Soteriological Argument in Romans*, 288; Eichholz, *Theologie*, 287; Vischer, "Le Mystère d'Israël," 431; B. Noack, "Current and Backwater in the Epistle to the Romans"; Sidney G. Hall III, *Christian Anti-Semitism and Paul's Theology*, 113 (he makes the astonishing claim that "[m]any scholars think that Romans was written as different homilies that Paul merged together," and gives the incorrect impression that Scroggs' theory of two homilies [see n. 108 above] is generally accepted, though he nowhere cites Scroggs).

[119] F. C. Baur, who is often cited, first espoused this view. He calls Rom 9-11 "the germ and centre of the whole, from which the other parts sprang; . . . we should take our stand on these three chapters in

The vast majority of scholars today have rightly rejected the notion that Romans 9-11 is merely an appendix to Romans 1-8.[120] The inherent connection to the rest of the letter is simply too great to ignore.[121] It begins in the opening verses of the epistle which speak of "the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, concerning his son, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh . . . Jesus the Messiah, our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship for the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for the sake of his name . . . " (Rom 1:1-5). Here, at the very beginning of the letter, we find the necessity for Paul to both defend his gospel out of Israel's Scriptures and to relate it to the historic people of the Messiah, who had been entrusted with those Scriptures, in light of the inclusion of the Gentiles within the messianic community of salvation.[122] We need only proceed to the next verse to find the first impulse of Paul's concern for the nature of God's call in Romans 9-11 (1:6); from one point of view, we may regard Romans 9-11 as an explanation of the nature of the (Roman) Christian calling and its relationship to the call of Israel.

We cannot even leave the first chapter without encountering yet another foretaste of Romans 9-11, now in the crucial statement of the epistle's theme—"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation for all who believe, both to the Jew first and the Greek [i.e., Gentile]. For the righteousness of God is being revealed in it from faith to faith, just as it is written, 'The righteous one will live out of faith' " (1:16-17).[123] The concern for the relationship between Jews and Gentiles vis-à-vis their relationship to the gospel is evident. Paul first states the

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order to enter into the Apostle's original conception, from which the whole organism of the Epistle was developed, as we have it especially in the first eight chapters" (*Paul the Apostle of Jesus Christ: His Life and Work, His Epistles and His Doctrine*, 1.315; cited by O'Neill, 145).

[120] Chae, *Paul*, 221, is right to say that few see these chs. as a digression now; cf. Donfried, *Romans Debate*, lxx, who speaks of "wide-ranging agreement" on this point.

[121] See especially Lübking, *Paulus und Israel*, 21-50, for demonstration of connections between Rom 9-11 and 1-8. For a more recent treatment, which is self-descriptively more pragmatic and less semantically and author oriented, see Angelika Reichert, *Der Römerbrief als Gratwanderung: Eine Untersuchung zur Abfassungsproblematik*, 149-66 (she highlights 1:16f; 2:28f.; 3:1-4).

[122] Cf. Cranfield, 445f.

[123] These verses are typically recognized as the theme of the letter (Dunn, 38). Cf. Cranfield's (445f.) relating of Rom 9-11 to the theme of 1:16-17.

priority of Israel here, then repeats it in a different form without significant elaboration in 3:1ff., only to be explored fully in Romans 9-11, and recalled in 15:7-12. So from another point of view, Romans 9-11 is dominated by the theme of the epistle. It is an exploration of the gospel as salvation to all who believe with special attention to Jewish priority. Romans 1-8 may be described similarly, except that the emphasis is on Gentile inclusion.[124] Both sections discuss the fulfillment of God's word/promise in the salvation of those who believe.

Therefore, we should not be surprised by the numerous contacts between Romans 9-11 and 1-8 such as the discussion of the true Jew in 2:17ff., who may be Jew or Gentile physically. This passage then leads into 3:1-8, which is commonly acknowledged to be a brief discussion that is resumed at length in 9-11.[125] The charge that Jews and Gentiles are all under sin in 3:9ff. is hardly unrelated to the discussion of how God calls each group to salvation in chs. 9-11, nor is the demonstration of the righteousness of God in justification by faith of both Jews and Gentiles in Christ which is found in 3:21ff. Of course, Romans 4 is often noted for its similarity to chs. 9-11 because of the appeal to Abraham and attention to themes of calling, Gentile inclusion, promise, reckoning, and seed.[126]

Rom 5-8 is sometimes thought unrelated to chs. 9-11, even by those who view 9-11 as an important part of the letter. But this is hardly the case. It is true that there is greater connection of subject to Romans 1-4, but this in no way severs the ties between chs. 5-8 and 9-11. Chs. 5-8 discuss the salvation granted in the gospel common to both Jews and Gentiles in Christ, and is therefore still related to the fundamental concerns of chs. 9-11, but admittedly more distant in emphasis. Beyond

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[124] Thus, the structure of the theological section of the epistle in terms of emphasis is chiastic if one begins from the statement of the theme: Jew—Gentile (1:16)—Gentile inclusion/equality of Jew and Gentile (chs. 1-8)—Jewish priority (chs. 9-11).

[125] Lübking, *Paulus und Israel*, 30, notes that 3:1ff. grows out of 2:17ff. On Rom 9-11 as picking up 3:1ff., see e.g., Ellison, *Mystery*, 25; Robinson, *Wrestling*, 109; Schreiner, 469; Penna, *Paul*, 87 (who sees no other connection than 3:1-4); Edwards, 228; Wilckens, 181; Eichholz, *Theologie*, 287; Scroggs, "Paul as Rhetorician," 277 n. 19; Dunn, 519; Dodd, 149f.; Guerra, *Romans and the Apologetic Tradition*, 144; Moo, 549; G. Lüdemann, *Paulus und das Judentum*, 31; Reichert, *Der Römerbrief als Gratwanderung*, 159-66, 177 (in the latter location she notes that there is wide-ranging agreement on this connection); Achtemeier, 156; Theobald, *Die Römerbrief*, 262; Cranfield, 446; William S. Campbell, "Romans III as a Key to the Structure and Thought of the Letter"; S. K. Williams, "The 'Righteousness of God' in Romans," 280f.

[126] See e.g., Dunn, 541.

this, other connections have been detected, even in unexpected places, such as the discussion of Jewish Law/piety, hopelessness of the Law, and the blindness motif in 7:7-25.[127] Furthermore, Romans 8 is quite connected to chs. 9-11 through both vocabulary and concept.[128]

It is no wonder that the vast majority of scholars believe Romans 9-11 to be directly connected to the rest of the letter, and that there is a strong consensus that it is indeed an integral, necessary part of the letter. But we should go further and join with the many who now consider Romans 9-11 to be the climax of the theological argument, the so-called doctrinal section of the epistle, chs. 1-11.[129] It is not that Romans 1-8 are merely preparatory for chs. 9-11. Nor is it that Romans 1-8 could not logically stand on their own with some sense of satisfaction. It is more that Romans 9-11 contain the height of what Paul wants to say. They contain the most relevant statement of his theology for his practical purposes with respect to the Roman Christians and his paraenesis to them.

As we have argued, Romans 9-11 functions (at least on one level) to defend the explication of Paul's gospel in chs. 1-8. This brings us to the often-noted fact that Romans 8 brings Paul's explication of the gospel to glorious climax and is the most immediate rhetorical connection to chs. 9-11. Paul caps off his description of the gospel and its blessed consequences with a rapturous celebration of the victorious security of the eschatological messianic community. But the question of Israel looms in the background. If the gospel Paul has proclaimed in chs. 1-8 is truly the fulfillment of the promises of the Scriptures of Israel as he claimed at the beginning of the letter, and if this fulfillment is accomplished in the messianic community of salvation composed of Jews and Gentiles which bears the name of Jesus Christ, then the fact

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[127] Lübking, *Paulus und Israel*, 47.

[128] See e.g., J.-N. Aletti, "L'argumentation paulinienne en Rm 9," 43, 53-55; Byrne, 282; idem, '*Sons of God*'-'*Seed of Abraham*': *A Study of the Idea of Sonship of God of All Christians in Paul against the Jewish Background*, 127f. Note the use of the terms σάρξ, υἱοί, τέκνα, καλεῖν, υἱοθεσία, δοξάζω.

[129] Lübking's (*Paulus und Israel*, 12) assertion that few view Rom 9-11 as the climax of the epistle is blatantly incorrect. Not as blatant, but still incorrect are the claims of Chae, *Paul*, 215, and Stephen R. Haynes, "Recovering the Real Paul: Theology and Exegesis in Romans 9-11," 71, that the majority or consensus views Rom 9-11 as the climax or center of the epistle. Neil Richardson, *Paul's Language About God*, 26, is right to speak of a scholarly consensus concerning the integral role of Rom 9-11 in the epistle.

that the Jewish people as a whole remain outside this community of fulfillment appears to mean that they remain separated from salvation and the fulfillment of the promises made to them. This seems to undercut the argument of chs. 1-8. The greater Paul's ecstasy, the greater the challenge to the veracity of God's word and the gospel.

So Paul must finally face this ultimate and greatest challenge to the gospel. The asyndeton of 9:1 helps signal the close connection. Thus, there is a solid, immediate connection between Romans 8 and 9-11 which carries great rhetorical power in its dramatic change of mood and tone.[130] Nevertheless, the placement of Romans 9-11 here is not necessary as opposed to somewhere else. Yes, the dominant note of mercy sounded connects well to 12:1ff. But 12:1ff. would follow splendidly after 8:39, a fact so well-acknowledged that it has often been used to support the idea that Romans 9-11 is an appendix. Moreover, the substance of chs. 9-11 could have been placed after 3:3 or effectively merged with that discussion in light of the common observation that the former picks up on 3:1ff. and continues its discussion. As a defense against a major objection to the gospel Paul has explained, Romans 9-11 could have easily been placed elsewhere, within the main explanation of that gospel.

So it behooves us to look for additional reasons that might have motivated Paul to place Romans 9-11 just where he did. It could be as simple as Paul feeling that the passage would have been too dense to include any earlier, and that it does connect nicely to what precedes and follows. But I would suggest a practical purpose which drove Paul's placement even more strongly. This gets away from the purely literary/argumentative approach to the question and builds on Paul's purpose in Romans generally and chs. 9-11 in particular. Paul's practical aims of obtaining support for his gospel and mission to Spain (along with its Jew-prioritizing method) and uniting the Jews and Gentiles in the Roman church are most directly addressed here from a theological perspective. We must remember that the Roman Christians would have experienced the epistle read out loud. So it is this discussion of the priority of the Jew, within an overall perspective of the fundamental equality of Jew

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[130] Indeed, the great display of emotion in 9:1-5 points to an added factor, often noted, which moved Paul to deal with the subject of God and Israel—his great love for his people. In contrast to the traditional difficulty felt by scholars in connecting the rapturous celebration of the end of Rom 8 with the solemnity and sorrow of the beginning of Rom 9, it is interesting to note that Andrew A. Das, *Paul, the Law, and the Covenant*, 96, can now state confidently without apparent fear of contradiction, "Romans 9-11 flow naturally from the closing thoughts of Rom 8."

and Gentile, along with the interdependence of the two in salvation history that they would hear last, just before Paul heads into practical exhortation to unity in chs. 12-16, an implicit appeal for support of his gospel and mission to Spain in ch. 15, and an explicit appeal for support of his trip to Jerusalem, full of symbolic meaning, in 15:25-32. We would also do well to remember that Gentiles were the majority. Consequently, he saves this most objectionable aspect of his gospel and missionary theology till the end of his argument—where he does become quite bold with the Gentile majority, even commanding them not to be arrogant toward their Jewish brethren (11:18)—so that he can argue from a position of strength, having presented material which would be readily accepted by the Gentile majority.

All of this is why Romans 9-11 is more epistolary in character than most of chs. 1-8, as has been noticed by various scholars.[131] Paul is getting to the heart of his most immediate practical concern while he is still engaged in his theological argument, which provides the rationale for his ensuing paraenesis. Therefore his tone becomes more paraenetic as he transitions from a theological emphasis to an exhortatory one. The paraenetic tone of Romans 9-11 is one more indication that we encounter the most urgent theological expression of Paul's purposes and concerns in Romans in these very chapters. In a word, Paul places Romans 9-11 where he does because they are the climax of his theological argument, and this because they are the most relevant theology for advancing his purposes.[132]

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[131] Dahl, "Future," 140-42; Badenas, *Christ the End of the Law*, 89, and in a somewhat different way by Dodd, 148-50; Douglas C. Mohrmann, "Paul's Sermon to the Churches at Rome: Romans 9-11 as Theological Speech and Apostolic *Parousia*"; idem, "Semantic Collisions," 176-92; Stowers, *A Rereading of Romans*, 291-93; Scroggs, "Paul as Rhetorician," and others who see a sermon here. The suggestion that Rom 9-11 was a sermon Paul inserted into his letter is unlikely because the passage bears all the marks of having been crafted specifically for the Roman Christians. Paul had surely addressed these issues time and again in his ministry; it is likely that he did have a sermon(s) very similar to what we find in Rom 9-11. So the passage may well be adapted from a sermon, but it is a fresh treatment fitted to the Roman church. Dunn, 520, has stated the matter well: "Paul had probably rehearsed the arguments in so many discussions and expositions that it was more a matter of shaping familiar material than of *de novo* composition." Cf. the analysis of the pattern of person and number in Paul's language by Dunn's student: Lung-kwong, *Paul's Purpose*, 383-98, though he does not relate his findings to the oral feel of Rom 9-11; cf. note 212 in ch. 3 below. Dunn's more recent student, Douglas Mohrmann (ibid), has focused specific attention on the oral qualities of the passage.

[132] Note Nils A. Dahl, "The Missionary Theology in the Epistle to the Romans," 86: "The inner unity of Paul's mission and theology is nowhere more obvious than in Rom. 9-11"; cf. Dunn, 519.

The Structure and Literary Character of Romans 9-11

Scholars most commonly conceive of the broad structure of Romans 9-11 in the following threefold manner:[133]

9:1-5	Introduction
9:6-29	God's sovereignty/freedom in election
9:30-10:21	The guilt of Israel
11:1-32	The salvation of Israel
11:33-36	Conclusion/doxology.

Of course, some divide these sections into smaller units, the most common probably being the division of 11:1-32 into 11:1-10 and 11:11-32[134] or the inclusion of 11:1-10 with 9:30-10:21.[135] Barrett describes the typical view of Romans 9-11 thus: "after a predestinarian account of the fall of Israel in 9. 1-29, 9. 30-10. 21 provides a complementary account of the same lapse in which the fault is laid squarely at Israel's door, and in turn leads to a synthesis in chapter 11 in which Paul states his hope for Israel's future."[136]

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[133] "Three-fold" refers to the body of the chapters, excluding the introduction and conclusion. Corley, "The Jews," 47 n. 24, claims few deviate from this type of structure. Outside of the introduction and conclusion, the section titles are more in dispute, but still generally followed in essence. Even those who do not specifically designate 9:1-5 and 11:33-36 as introduction and conclusion respectively would generally agree that they function accordingly. Some would include other verses with 11:33-36 as the conclusion such as Osten-Sacken, "Römer 9-11," 300, and Guerra, *Romans and the Apologetic Tradition*, 154ff., who identify 11:25-36. For a more unique statement of the subjects of these sections, see M. Barth, "Testimony," 34: 9:6-29 ("God's free election and sovereign faithfulness pertain to a people in revolt and keep it together"; 9:30-10:21 ("The Jew Jesus Christ performs and consummates the worship which Israel failed to offer"); 11:1-32 (The good Lord made the unbelief of some serve the salvation of many"). Mohrmann, "Semantic Collisions," 192, observes that few studies of Rom 9-11 look closely at its structure and genre. The present section should help to address this lack.

[134] See e.g., Hafemann, "The Salvation of Israel," 45f.

[135] See e.g., Walter, "Römer 9-11," 174; Schreiner, 26, 474, 531ff. Cf. Bruce, 184, who divides ch. 11 into vv. 1-16 and 17-32.

[136] Barrett, "Romans 9.30-10.21," 99f.

A few have opted for a two-fold structure, usually asserting units comprising 9:6-11:10 and 11:11ff.[137] Others offer more distinctive structures. L. T. Johnson suggests that we divide the passage as follows: 9:1-5; 9:6-29; 9:30-11:6; 11:7-36.[138] Hafemann divides the passage according to the four rhetorical questions of 9:14; 9:30; 11:1; 11:11.[139] And Schmithals argues that Paul advances four lines of argument framed by 9:1-5 and 11:25-31: 9:6-33; 10:1-21; 11:1-10; 11:11-24.[140] Still others divide the passage into many parts, doing little to help us grasp the broad contours of Paul's argument.[141] Kim has provided yet a different approach by analyzing the passage with rhetorical categories:[142]

9:1-5 *Exordium*
9:6a *Propositio*
9:6b-11:32 *Probatio*
    9:6b-29 Argument 1 (*Refutatio*)
    9:30-10:21 Argument 2 (*Confirmatio*)
    11:1-32 Argument 3 (*Refutatio*)
11:33-36 *Peroratio*.

The biggest disagreement over the structure of Romans 9-11 probably concerns the place of 9:30-33, whether it belongs with 9:6-29 or 10:1-21, or is an independent unit which may or may not conclude 9:6-29 and/or introduce ch. 10. The clear majority take 9:30-33 with ch. 10,[143] but there are a number of scholars who

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[137] Sänger, *Verkündigung*, 158; Lambrecht, "Israel's Future," 35; Hofius, "Das Evangelium und Israel," 300. Richardson, *Israel*, 130, suggests a curious two-fold structure: 9:6-10:13 and 10:14-11:36.

[138] L. T. Johnson, 143.

[139] Hafemann, "The Salvation of Israel," 45f. One problem with this view is that there are other rhetorical questions in Rom 9-11.

[140] Schmithals, 326, 337. The strange thing about Schmithals' suggestion is that he ends the so-called epilogue at 11:31, taking 11:32 with 11:33-36. He suggests an interesting correspondence between ch. 3 and his proposed four lines of argument: 3:2 = 9:6-33; 3:3 = 10:1-21; 3:3-4 = 11:1-10 and 11:11-24. Cf. Boers, *Justification*, 133f., who points to a similarity in structure to 7:7-8:4 as well as 3:3.

[141] Black, 128-50; Anderson, *Ancient Rhetorical Theory*, 235.

[142] Kim, *God, Israel, and the Gentiles*, 116-17.

[143] Aletti, "L'argumentation," 42, claims that very few still regard 9:30-33 as part of 9:6-29 (as a conclusion). Reichert, *Der Römerbrief als Gratwanderung*, 168, is more cautious to state that this is the most common view.

argue for an alternative structure[144]—rightly in our opinion. We would argue that 9:30-33 is a literary hinge which concludes 9:6-29 and introduces 10:1-21, but that it is more closely connected to the former. Its subject matter belongs to both chapters logically, but rhetorically, it belongs more to chapter 9, as indicated by the inferential question of 9:30 (Τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν;), the section's summarizing/concluding force in relation to what precedes, and what appears to be a significant break at 10:1.[145]

Given the subject matter of Romans 9-11 and the prominence of the Old Testament in Paul's argument, we regard suggestions that locate the key to the structure of the passage in the OT background, Jewish tradition, or chiasm to be especially worthy of consideration. Some scholars have suggested that Romans 9-11 has a chiastic structure.[146] Badenas and Corley give similar chiastic arrangements:

A God has not revoked his promises to Israel (9:6-29)
B Israel has rejected God's plan (9:30-10:21)

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[144] Dahl, "Future," 143; B. Klappert, "Traktat für Israel (Römer 9-11)," 76; Siegert, *Argumentation*, 115-19; Michael Theobald, "Kirche und Israel nach Röm 9-11," 12; idem, *Die Römerbrief*, 263-68; C. Plag, *Israels Wege zum Heil: Eine Untersuchung zu Römer 9 bis 11*, 13; Haacker; Schmitt, *Gottesgerechtigkeit*, 265; Schmithals, 326; Ziesler, 234f.; Boers, *Justification*, 135; Edwards, 229; B. Klappert, "Traktat für Israel (Römer 9-11)," 76; Rese, "Israel und Kirche" (seemingly); A. Maillot, "Essai sur les citations vétérotestamentaires continues dans Romains 9 à 11, ou comment se servir de la Torah pour montrer que le 'Christ est la fin de la Torah'," 71f. (seemingly); Radermakers and Sonnet, "Israël et l'Eglise," 678; Sven Hillert, *Limited and Universal Salvation: A Text-Oriented and Hermeneutical Study of Two Perspectives in Paul*, 131; Jan Lambrecht, "The Caesura between Romans 9:30-3 and 10:1-4"; Reichert, ibid, 168f. (from a "pragmatisch-functionaler Perspektive" and with simultaneous approval for the typical structure). Chae, *Paul*, 229 n. 65, opts for the typical structure but recognizes that 9:30-33 does function as a conclusion to what precedes and an introduction to what follows. The following regard 9:30-33 as its own unit: Fransen, "Le Dieu de toute consolation"; Kraus, *Das Volk Gottes*, 294 n. 145 (who also argues for 9:30-33 as a conclusion to what precedes and an introduction to what follows); Vischer, "Le Mystère d'Israël."

[145] See further, esp. Lambrecht, "Caesura." In light of our focus on Paul's use of the OT, Lambrecht's observation that other subdivisions in Rom 9 are rounded off by OT quotations is especially noteworthy. Indeed, the broad midrashic strucure of Rom 9-11 advanced below also argues for the inclusion of 9:30-33 with what precedes.

[146] Corley, "The Jews," 48; Badenas, *Christ the End of the Law*, 89, 94-96; Räisänen, "Römer 9-11," 2894; Aletti, *Israël*, 172; E. W. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible: Explained and Illustrated*, 387; Kim, *God, Israel, and the Gentiles*, 118; John J. Collins, "Chiasmus, The 'ABA' Pattern and the Text of Paul," 577f., who also notes the observation of A. Feuillet, "La citation d'Habacuc ii. 4 et les huit premiers chapîtres de l'Épître aux Romains," 71, that Rom 9-11 "offers one of the clearest examples of the ABA pattern so frequent in Paul's letters" (Collins, idem, 577); John D. Harvey, *Listening to the Text: Oral Patterning in Paul's Letters*, 132, who also notes and rejects the suggestion of P. F. Ellis, *Seven Pauline Letters*, 240; Mohrmann, "Semantic Collisions," 179, 187-89, 194-207. For smaller chiasms in the rest of Rom 9-11, see Harvey, idem, 133ff., 150f.

A’ God has not rejected Israel (11:1-32).[147]

This outline misunderstands the logical structure of Paul’s argument. The problem is in the first member (A), which identifies the essence of 9:6-29 as 9:6a. But 9:6a stands over the whole of chs. 9-11, not just 9:6-29. Moreover, 9:7-33 support 9:6b with a view toward supporting 9:6a. So a more appropriate description of the first member would be 9:6b: “not all who are of Israel are Israel,” or more interpretively, “only true Israel will inherit the promises/salvation.” But then how do the first and final member correspond? They come together in the concept of Israel, the first denying an ethnic definition and the last affirming the salvation of true Israel in fulfillment of the promise.[148]

One possible problem with the idea of Romans 9-11 as a chiasm is that 10:1-21 (or 9:30-10:21) is the central element. This has been raised by Räisänen, who concedes that there is a rough A-B-A pattern present in Romans 9-11, but on questionable grounds charges Badenas with straining to make 9:30-10:21 the heart of the section.[149] While Räisänen’s critique may be off the mark, 10:1-21 does not seem

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[147] Badenas, ibid, 94; cf. Corley, ibid. Bullinger’s (*Figures of Speech*, 387) arrangement is even more comprehensive and detailed but appears to misunderstand Paul’s argument regarding true Israel in 9:6-13 as well as the nature of Paul’s argument in 11:1-32; for exegesis of Rom 9:6-9 and 11:1-32, see respectively ch. 4 below and Wright, *Climax*, 246-51. Mohrmann, “Semantic Collisions,” 187-89, 194-207, also proposes a more detailed chiastic structure. But it is unconvincing because he fails to relate the structure to the main theme of Rom 9-11 and must resort to connections that do not commend themselves as uppermost in Paul’s mind. The most convincing feature of Mohrmann’s proposal—common vocabulary—also reveals its weakness. The verbal correspondences he finds are too subtle to signal such a detailed chiasm and more likely result from the unity and common themes of the chapters. Ellis also offers a more detailed chiasm that is rightly criticized by Harvey (though it is curious that he finds little in common between 9:1-5 and 11:33-36); see note 146 above. Harvey’s (*Listening to the Text*, 132) own arrangement is reasonable—A: Israel’s plight against the backdrop of God’s sovereignty (9:6-29); B: Israel’s rejection of the gospel of righteousness by faith (9:30-10:21); A’: Israel’s plight in light of God’s mercy and grace (11:1-32). Collins’ arrangement (“Chiasmus,” 577f.) is also relatively accurate—A: the rejection of Israel and the divine plan (Rom 9); B: the culpability of Israel (Rom 10); A’: the rejection of Israel and the divine plan (Rom 11).

[148] For our construal of Rom 9-11’s chiastic structure, see the outline later in this section. See also our treatment of the logical flow of Paul’s argument below; the three movements identified correspond to Badenas’ A-B-A’ respectively. The A-B-A patterns suggested by Collins and Harvey (see the previous note) are not open to the same criticism that we have leveled against the others. While different from the structure we submit, and not as accurate in our opinion, their suggestions are complementary to our own and fair statements of the structure and content of Rom 9-11.

[149] Räisänen, “Römer 9-11,” 2894 n. 17. He criticizes Badenas for missing the fact that the Israel of ch. 9 is different than the Israel of ch. 11. Harvey, ibid, takes 9:30-10:21 to address the heart of the problem at issue.

to be Paul's main point, whether one takes its main thrust as a summary of the gospel, Israel's guilt, or God's faithfulness to give Israel every opportunity to participate in the fulfillment of his good promises. This seems to go against the logic of Paul's argument if the emphasis must lie on the center of the chiasm.

The logic of Paul's argument in Romans 9-11 runs like this: Paul expresses his concern for and commitment to Israel in light of the problem of Israel's rejection/Gentile inclusion, which calls God's faithfulness into question (9:1-5). This elicits Paul's denial of the implicit charge against the veracity of God's word: God's promises to Israel have not failed (9:6a). This statement functions as Paul's thesis/theme. Everything that follows, with the exception of the climactic ending doxology (11:33-36), supports this assertion. Paul argues in three movements that ground 9:6a: God's word has not failed because: (1) the Israel God made promises to is not ethnic Israel, but the Israel of God's call, fulfilled now in the Church of Jews and Gentiles, the eschatological messianic community (9:6b-33); (2) Israel has failed the promises and God has been faithful to bring them to fruition in the gospel, giving Israel every opportunity to participate in the fulfilled promises (9:30-10:21);[150] (3) God has not rejected ethnic Israel per se from potential inclusion in the community of promise, but is at work to bring them to salvation as he works for the salvation of the true Israel of Jews and Gentiles (11:1-32). The whole argument erupts into praise and glory to God, shifting the logical weight of the whole onto his awesome wisdom, power, and majesty (11:33-36). Each of the three main sections provides a separate but complementary defense of God's faithfulness to his word. 9:30-10:21 are clearly not Paul's central concern, but ground his main point. How then can they be the central element of the chiasm?

It is not at all clear that the central member of a chiasm must carry its main point. Beale actually asserts that the emphasis usually (but not always) falls on the outside parallels.[151] It would seem that every case must be decided individually. The important thing is to identify the relationship between the elements of a chiasm. I

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[150] The grouping of 9:30-33 with both chs. 9 and 10 is intentional here, despite our conviction that the passage connects even more closely with 9:6-29. The function of 9:30-33 is complex, as indicated above.

[151] Beale, 33. Of course, some chiasms may be an incidental manner of expression with no interpretive significance.

would suggest that in the case of Romans 9-11, the center element (the gospel and its proclamation) reveals the means by which the outer elements (the call and salvation of the true Israel) are accomplished, giving a measure of logical priority to the latter. Yet the logical priority is almost negligible in this case since the ends and the means involved are so intertwined. Indeed, 9:30-10:21 plays a central role in that it reflects Paul's purpose of recommending his gospel ministry in chapters 9-11 and reveals that the gospel he preaches is in fact the fulfillment of God's promises to Israel rather than their undoing.

Thus, the logical and chiastic structures of Romans 9-11 are distinct but complementary.[152] The logic of Paul's argument is primary[153] and develops his thesis with three main grounds for God's faithfulness to his word to Israel. The organizational structure complements the logic, not by making 9:30-10:21 the logical center of the argument, but by showing that the gospel and its proclamation are central to the demonstration and enactment of God's covenant faithfulness in the call and salvation of the true Israel. At the same time, it betrays the section's practical purpose of seeking support for Paul's upcoming mission to Spain.

We now move to the significance of the OT and Jewish tradition for the structure of Romans 9-11. Hays is probably correct to note that Romans 9-11 is broadly analogous in structure to a lament psalm, though his outline is not completely satisfactory:[154]

9:1-5	lament
9:6-29	election
9:30-10:21	paradox
11:1-32	the salvation of Israel
11:33-36	doxology

[152] As Aletti, "L'argumentation," 44, has pointed out, chiastic parallelism does not prohibit a real progression in argumentation.

[153] As Aletti, *Israël*, 173, has pointed out, the concentric arrangement in Rom 9-11 is subordinate to the propositional content.

[154] Hays, *Echoes*, 64.

We might find an even more specific correspondence by considering the basic structure of the OT lament psalm:[155]

A. Address to God, which can be expanded into an ascription of praise or recollection of God's deeds (9:1-5)
B. Complaint (9:1-6a)
C. Confession of Trust (9:6a, 9:14, etc.)
D. Petition (10:1)
E. Words of Assurance (11:25-32)
F. Vow of Praise (11:33-36)

This correspondence is probably more than an incidental product of a mind steeped in the Scriptures approaching a grievous situation of the highest order. It is indicative of Paul's prophetic and apocalyptic stance in these chapters (see below). Moreover, it signals the direction of Paul's approach to the problem—trust in God. It confirms once again that the theme of Romans 9-11 is the faithfulness of God, for as Anderson comments quite apart from any thought of Romans 9-11:

> . . . the Israelite psalms of lament express the conviction that Yahweh is trustworthy and faithful. The God of Israel has displayed *hesed* (covenant loyalty) decisively in the saving experience of the exodus and has come to the aid of the people in the subsequent crises of their history. Unlike human beings which fail to be true to their word, Yahweh's word can be trusted; and Yahweh's word is laden with the power to accomplish its saving purpose. . . . Nevertheless, the people of God finds itself again and again in the interim between God's promise and the fulfillment of the promise. That interim is the time when faith is put to the test; for there are no unambiguous proofs that God has spoken and that God is in control of the human situation. . . . What characterizes these psalms, with very few exceptions . . . is the confidence that the situation can be changed if Yahweh wills to intervene. [156]

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[155] This OT lament psalm structure is adapted from Bernhard W. Anderson, *Out of the Depths: The Psalms Speak for Us Today*, 76f.; see pp.63-105 on OT lament psalms generally.

[156] Ibid, 68f., 75.

For Paul, Yahweh has again displayed חסד (covenant loyalty), this time in the most decisive way possible—in the death and resurrection of his own son—and Yahweh is indeed intervening through Paul's gospel and mission.

Drawing closer to the specific executions of Romans 9-11, we may note Scroggs' observation that Romans 9-11 "has as its model the narration of *Heilsgeschichte* found in Jewish homiletic tradition. At the same time it reflects the alteration of this model within early Christianity."[157] He contends that Paul modeled his presentation on the homiletic midrash, which was structured upon the Torah and attending quotations from the other divisions of Scripture, together with an even more fundamental model of the narration of *Heilsgeschichte*.[158] This is exactly right. Unfortunately, Scroggs did not explore the midrashic structure of Romans 9-11.

A. Maillot provided the next piece of the puzzle by observing that each of the three sections of Romans 9-11 has a coherent structure: a preamble that refers to salvation history followed by Scripture quotations, generally prophetic, which corroborate Paul's assertions.[159] This is similar to the basic form of the rabbinic proem midrash, except that they would often more specifically begin with Torah texts as primary, and then move to the Prophets and/or Writings to illuminate them.[160] What Maillot fails to note is that Paul follows this more specific latter procedure in each of his three major sections.

Badenas, on the other hand, does perceive this in a general way:

> The texts of the Pentateuch are quoted first, as the basic theses. They give concrete examples of how God intended to carry out his plan in the history of his people. Then, these Torah texts are commented on by texts from the Prophets and Ketubim, which support and confirm the arguments which Paul draws from the Torah texts. The passages are quoted almost in 'canonical' sequence, following the order of the

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[157] Scroggs, "Paul as Rhetorician," 292. But his suggestion that Rom 1-4 and 9-11 together form one homily distinct from the rest of the epistle is unlikely.

[158] Ibid, 290-92. On the legitimate use of the term "midrash," see note 209 in ch. 4 below.

[159] Maillot, "Essai," 71f. See also Maillot's very helpful table displaying the OT quotations of Rom 9-11 in order and classified according to the division of the OT in which they are found (57f.). Cf. the similar chart in Badenas, *Christ the End of the Law*, 91f.

[160] See Ellis, *Paul's Use*, 46.

> history of Israel from Isaac to Elijah, in an arrangement which may hardly be taken as accidental or irrelevant.[161]

By combining the insights of Maillot (the structure applies to all three of Paul's major sections) and Badenas (there is a movement from Torah as fundamental to the rest of Scripture), we may suggest that Paul has partly structured the main body of his presentation on citations from the Torah, which are basic to his argument, followed by texts from other portions of Scripture that elucidate them.

The problem with this suggestion is that Paul returns to the Torah (Deut 32:21/Rom 9:19) while still in what the logical structure would dictate to be section 2 (10:1-21) of his argument, and then quotes from both the Former and Latter Prophets as well as the Writings before returning to the Torah again (Deut 29:3/Rom 11:8), after which he goes on to quote from the Prophets and Writings again. Yet Paul does not directly discuss the jealousy motif (Deut 32:21) or the hardness motif (Deut 29:3) until after he quotes Deuteronomy 29:3 in Romans 11:8.[162] This is a significant fact, which together with the fact that these two motifs are fundamental to ch. 11, argues for these two quotations from Deuteronomy as forming respectively the primary and secondary Torah texts of the third midrashic section of Paul's argument in Romans 9-11. Nonetheless, the problems of how Paul can quote the primary Torah text of the following section prior to beginning that section and include quotations from the other sections of Scripture before offering his secondary Torah text still remain.[163]

The pattern seems generally clear in Romans 9:6-33 and 10:1-21, except for the citation of Deuteronomy 32:21 in Romans 10:19. Genesis 21:12 is the primary Torah text of the former, supported by supplementary Torah texts from Genesis 18:10, 14; 25:23; Exodus 33:19; 9:16 (see Rom 9:7-17), and Lev 18:5 is the primary Torah text of the latter, supported by supplementary Torah texts from Deut 9:4; 30:12, 13, 14; 32:21 (see Rom 10:5-8, 19). Rather than dismissing the striking pattern of

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[161] Badenas, *Christ the End of the Law*, 90. Cf. Carol K. Stockhausen, "2 Corinthians 3 and the Principles of Pauline Exegesis"; see esp. pp. 144-46 for a description of what she suggests are Paul's principles of exegesis.

[162] However, the Former and Latter Prophets quoted between the two Torah texts do support Deut 32:21/the jealousy motif. Nevertheless, there is still no *direct* development of the motif until 11:11.

[163] Bell, *Provoked to Jealousy*, 81, claims that it is a matter of consensus that there is a section break between Rom 10:21 and 11:1.

Paul's presentation, it seems better to recognize that Deuteronomy 32:21 serves a dual function in Paul's argument.

On the one hand it serves as one of the supplementary Torah texts to Lev 18:5 and logically supports the idea of Israel's guilt advanced by Paul in 10:1-21. On the other hand, it serves as the primary Torah text of the third and final stage of Paul's argument. Just as Paul begins his paraenesis while still in his theological argument,[164] and frequently begins the next stage of an argument while concluding the preceding one,[165] so here Paul begins the final stage of his argument while still in the second section. That Paul has done so, or that he has included many scriptural quotations between his primary and secondary Torah texts, need not mean that he did not structure his argument in the manner being suggested. For the rabbinic midrashim are not uniform themselves and in their written form are later than Paul. More importantly, Paul was no slave to form. Indeed, we are not even suggesting that Paul was using a definite form, but that he took a typical Jewish interpretive approach which tended to address a problem or question by appealing to the Torah fundamentally and then drew in other portions of the OT to illuminate it. In Paul's case he appealed to other sections of Scripture to supplement and further his argument as well.

We may now offer a broad outline of Romans 9-11:

9:1-5	Introduction: The problem of God's rejection of Israel in light of his promises to her
9:6-33	The Israel God made promises to is not ethnic Israel, but the Israel of God's call, fulfilled now in the Church of Jews and Gentiles (A)
10:1-21	Israel has failed the promises while God has been faithful to bring them to fruition in the gospel, giving Israel every opportunity to participate in the fulfilled promises (B)
11:1-32	God has not rejected ethnic Israel per se from potential inclusion in the

[164] See p. 87 above on the literary placement of Rom 9-11.

[165] See Dunn, 271, 634.

community of promise, but is at work to bring them to salvation as he works for the salvation of the true Israel of Jews and Gentiles (A')

11:33-36 Conclusion/doxology

Given the focus of this investigation, the structure of Romans 9 demands closer scrutiny. There is quite a variety of scholarly opinion on this question. The break at 9:6 is universally acknowledged and need not be defended. One could hardly find a sharper section break than ἀμήν! Suggestions for the rest of the chapter include: (1) 9:6-18; 19-21; 22-29; 30-33;[166] (2) 9:6-16; 17-24; 25-29;[167] (3) 9:6-13; 14-29;[168] (4) 9:6-13; 14-24; 25-29;[169] (5) 9:6-18; 19-29;[170] (6) 9:6-13; 14-18; 19-21; 22-29;[171] (7) 9:6-13; 14-21; 22-29; 30-33;[172] (8) 9:6-13; 14-18; 19-29.[173] I submit that the most appropriate structure for Romans 9 is based on the rhetorical questions located in 9:14, 19 (together with the resumption of the diatribe), and 30. At each juncture, the οὖν clearly indicates an inference being taken up from what precedes. These rhetorical features advance Paul's argument to its next stage, yielding the following logical structure:[174]

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[166] Plag, *Israels Wege zum Heil*, 13ff.

[167] D. D. Evans, "The Mystery of Israel," 30f.

[168] Güttgemanns, "Heilsgeschichte bei Paulus," 36. He notes that the latter passage can be further subdivided.

[169] Luz, *Geschichtsverständnis*, 28f.

[170] F. Montagnini, "Elezione e libertà, grazia e predestinazione a proposito di Rom. 9, 6-29," 67. However, Montagnini also further subdivides these broad sections according to more traditional lines, 9:6-18 into 9:6-13 and 14-18, and 9:19-29 into 19-21 and 22-29. Her treatment is notable for the assertion that 9:6-18 is structured on Mal 1:2.

[171] Brandenburger, "Paulinische Schriftauslegung," 10f. Cf. Montagnini's treatment in the previous note.

[172] Rese, "Israel und Kirche," 212.

[173] Morris, 34, 342-73.

[174] Cf. Aageson, "Scripture and Structure." The following outline is offered tentatively, in recognition of the need for an intertextual exegesis of the whole of Rom 9. It should be noted that logically, 9:6-13 is primary, and that the following sections support it. More specifically, 9:14-18 support it by defending God's justice in the election described by it. Then, 9:19-29 support 9:14-18 by defending the principle it has enunciated to support 9:6-13. All of this is in the context of God's rejection of ethnic Israel and calling of the Church of Jews and Gentiles, especially (but not exclusively) revealed by 9:19-

9:1-5	Introduction: The problem of God's rejection of Israel in light of his promises to her
9:6-13	The Israel God made promises to is not ethnic Israel, but the Israel of God's call/faith
9:14-18	God is just in his call/election because, as God, he has the right to dispense mercy and judgment on whom he will (i.e. on those who believe and disbelieve respectively)
9:19-29	God is just in his bestowal of mercy and judgment (based on faith and unbelief respectively) because he is the Creator God who has acted in faithfulness to his word to bless the vessels of his mercy
9:30-33	Israel has been rejected because she has pursued righteousness by works rather than faith

But just as Romans 9-11 as a whole, ch. 9 also has both a chiastic and scripturally structured character in addition to the governing logical structure.

Aletti has convincingly demonstrated a concentric structure for 9:6-29:

A = 6-9 *Israel* v.6 (2^x)
sperma v.7 (2^x).8
B = 10-13 *agapan* v.13
C = 14-18 *eleein* v.15 (2^x).16.18
thelein v.[16].18 (2^x)
dynamis v.17
endeiknysthai v.17
C' = 19-24 *thelein* v.22
endeiknysthai v.22
to dynaton v.22
to eleos v.23
B' = 25-26 *agapan* v.25 (2^x)
A' = 27-29 *Israel* v.27 (2^x)
sperma v.29[175]

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29. 9:30-33 then provides a summarizing conclusion that points forward to the next stage of the argument in 10:1-21. We can represent the structure of Rom 9 schematically as follows:

9:1-5. . . . . (Introduction)
9:6-13. . . . . (Main thesis)
9:14-18. . . . . .(Supports 9:6-13)
9:19-29. . (Supports 9:14-18)
9:30-33. . . . . (Summarizing conclusion)

[175] Aletti, "L'argumentation," 42. Cf. Dunn, 537; Schreiner, 472; Mohrmann, "Semantic Collisions," 189f. n. 717. Dunn's proposal can be used to fill out Aletti's even further. Harvey, *Listening to the*

This places the Israel that is the seed of Abraham at the poles of the chiasm, with God's covenantal love closely associated as the next rung. Thus God's call of his true covenant people stands at the outer layer of the chiasm while the central section defends God's justice in the exercise of his will and power to embrace whom he will (on the basis of faith/promise rather than ancestry/works/Law) as his covenant people and to extend his mercy and fulfilled promises to them. The pervasive presence of καλέω (9:7, 12, 24, 25, 26), which encompasses most of the chiasm, underscores that the justice of God's call and election of the new community as his covenant people (and the concomitant rejection of ethnic Israel) is the issue at stake in Romans 9.[176]

But how does this chiastic structure relate to the logical structure we have identified? Again, they are best seen as complementary. The logical structure is primary—content takes precedence over form—and states that God's word has not failed because only those who believe in Christ are enjoying the fulfillment of Israel's promises, for he has called/regarded only those who have faith in Christ as his true covenant people (i.e., Israel) and has always recognized true Israel on the basis of faith and promise. In terms of the chiasm, he has set his covenant love upon those he regards as true Israel, Abraham's seed. It is this call or reckoning that is defended in the central section. Thus, the central section in this case supports the ends. But it is central because the burden of Paul's argument is this defense. Moreover, the faithfulness of God's word is also his righteousness. So there is a sort of equivalence between 9:6a and the function of Aletti's central section (9:14-24).[177]

Some have identified another feature of the structure of Romans 9:6-29—it is

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Text, 150f., regards Dunn's proposal as possible, but rejects it in favor of a threefold structure based on word chains.

[176] Contra Aletti, "L'argumentation," 45, who argues that καλέω is absent from the central section because the question of God's justice refers to those who are not called. The pervasiveness of καλέω and cognates in the chapter overrides its absence in the central section. Moreover, the question of the relationship between this pervasive element and God's justice must still be addressed. In the logical development of Paul's argument, it is clearly God's call which calls God's justice into question.

[177] Aletti's (ibid, 42f.) argument that the chiasm shows the limits of the passage to exclude 9:30-33 so that the latter belongs with 10:1-21 does not necessarily follow. The question concerning 9:30-33 is not whether 9:1-29 is a distinct unit, for it is equally possible that 10:1-21 is also a distinct unit, but the relative connection of 9:30-33 to the former as compared with its connection to the latter.

a midrash.[178] Genesis 21:12 functions as the primary Torah text, and Gen 18:10, 14 as the secondary text in a fashion similar to the form of the later rabbinic proem midrash.[179] Every Scripture citation in 9:6-29 is linked to one of these passages by one of the key words found in them (καλέω, σπέρμα, or υἱός), whether in their cited wording or in the citation's immediate original context (LXX).[180] Stegner cites Eugene Mihaly's observation that ". . . often, the Rabbis will cite the first half of a verse when the 'proof' is contained in the latter part of the text or even in the following or preceding verse."[181] This midrashic structure gives a discrete form to 9:6-29.[182]

Hübner doubts that Paul follows a midrashic pattern because the Genesis quotations are not formal whereas the quotation from Malachi is,[183] but that is to impose on Paul an unwarranted rigidity. Hübner's concern about the lateness of the rabbinic parallels is weightier, but also unwarranted.[184] The general parallel is so striking that both Paul and the rabbis must have been operating on at least a flexible common exegetical practice. We must again remember that Paul was no slave to form

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[178] William Richard Stegner, "Romans 9:6-29—A Midrash"; E. Earle Ellis, *Prophecy and Hermeneutic in Early Christianity*, 155; idem, "How the New Testament Uses the Old," 203f. Cf. Williams, "The 'Righteousness of God'," 281, who labels Rom 9:6-13 a midrash.

[179] Stegner, ibid, 38-41; Ellis, ibid; more specifically, Ellis finds that the passage "has affinities with the *yelammedenu*-type discourse in which a question or problem is posed and then answered by a biblical exposition" (*Prophecy and Hermeneutic*, 218; cf. idem, "How the New Testament Uses the Old," 206). Cf. Stockhausen, "Principles of Pauline Exegesis." More recently, Chae, *Paul*, 228f., has given a prominent place to Paul's use of the OT in the structure of Rom 9 without labeling it a midrash (note the helpful chart he provides). He describes the chapter's structure thus: "Each proposition is supported by an OT proof, then a pesher-style interpretative comment is made, which is also then reinforced by another OT proof" (p. 229).

[180] Stegner, ibid, 40-41. The fact that ancient rabbis, though their writings are not quite as ancient as Paul, clearly cited portions of Scripture as pointers to the broader OT context increases the probability that Paul did also.

[181] Ibid, 41. Eugene Mihaly, "A Rabbinic Defense of the Election of Israel," 104.

[182] Cf. Stegner, ibid, 49. Just as with Aletti's argument based on his concentric arrangement of 9:6-29, this does not necessarily mean that 9:30-33 therefore belongs with 10:1-21. See note 177 above.

[183] Hans Hübner, *Gottes Ich und Israel: Zum Schriftgebrauch des Paulus in Römer 9-11*, 35f.

[184] See ibid, 36. Cf. Dunn, 537, who also faults Stegner for relying "too much on later material." But this seems to miss Stegner's point. He argues that the late rabbinic material *preserves* more ancient exegetical traditions. This makes sense, since the rabbis were certainly not following Pauline interpretation. Valid criticism of Stegner's argument must be based on other grounds. See Stegner, "Rom 9:6-29," 38, for his defense against anticipated criticism on this point. Cf. note 51 in ch. 4 below.

and would adapt whatever methods he used to his own purposes. The significance of taking note of the parallel in my judgment is that it alerts us to the fact that Paul's Pentateuchal texts are primary and thus gives us insight concerning the structure of Paul's argument as well as where its weight lies. Of course, Hübner is correct to insist that we pay most attention to the interpretation of each individual quotation in the context of Paul's argument.[185]

J.-N. Aletti objects to Stegner's observation concerning the presence of key words in the immediate original context of some quotations rather than in their cited wording vis-à-vis the apparent absence of καλέω in Romans 9:14-24 (except for v. 24), Aletti's central section in his perceptive concentric arrangement, based on an asserted difference in meaning of the term in Mal 1:4 and Ex 33:19.[186] But this observation is invalid, for in both passages there are significant points of contact between the meaning of καλέω in the OT context and its meaning in Romans 9. In the case of Mal 1:4, the word refers to the divine naming of those rejected from the Lord's covenant and love vis-à-vis their rejection and corresponding destiny. Likewise, the proclamation of the divine name in grace and mercy found in Ex 33:19 is well suited to the context of Romans 9, which concerns the calling of that name over the messianic community, the people of God and true Israel.

Heikki Räisänen also takes issue with Stegner, finding it too incredible that Paul would find a *Stichwortanscluß* not in the verse he quotes but in a related one.[187] He also argues that Paul chooses the specific words that he quotes because it is to those words he wants to draw attention.[188] But these points ignore the practice of the rabbis which Stegner calls attention to, as well as the importance of the broad OT context for Paul's use of Scripture which we will see clearly in this investigation and which has been appreciated increasingly since the publication of Hays' *Echoes*.

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[185] Ibid.

[186] Aletti, "L'argumentation paulinienne," 45 n. 14. On the meaning of καλέω in Rom 9, see ch. 4 below, pp. 328ff.

[187] Räisänen, "Römer 9-11," 2897-98 n. 38.

[188] Cf. C. K. Barrett, "Diskussion," 93: ". . . that which Paul omits he intends not to say."

It should be clear by now that Paul's use of the Old Testament is determinative for the structure of his argument in both Romans 9 and 9-11.[189] Aageson has found in Romans 9-11 "a complex relationship between interrogatives, declarative statements, and Scripture."[190] Moreover, he has noted Paul's technique of verbal association, namely, taking a scriptural word and using it to develop his discussion thematically.[191] Most importantly, he finds that as Paul calls upon Scripture to approach the issues at hand and to substantiate his argument, it actually directs and molds the argument.[192] Rightly he concludes "that Paul's use of Scripture and the literary structure of the discussion in Romans 9-11 are inseparable . . . ."[193] It is our contention that the connection is even more profound than Aageson realizes.

It remains for us to take note of the literary character and rhetorical features of Romans 9-11. Badenas has probably summed this up best.[194] He identifies five features of Paul's style in Romans 9-11: (1) antithesis and paradoxes; (2) oscillation; (3) dialectical argumentation; (4) chiasmus; (5) an epistolary character.[195] For

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[189] See Aageson, "Scripture and Structure," for a standard demonstration of this assertion. Aageson's contribution is a bit disappointing, however, because of its vagueness and some obvious conclusions. While the insights noted below are important, he fails to see that broad OT contexts and themes are at work in Paul's use of Scripture.

[190] Ibid, 268.

[191] Ibid, 271. He further notes Paul's technique of using a participial form of a scriptural term to enunciate a theological principle.

[192] Ibid, 180, 273. However, I think it unlikely that Paul developed his theology on these matters in the process of dictating Rom 9-11 as Aageson and so many others would have it. It seems much more likely that Paul had prayed and thought long and hard about these issues of intense personal concern, and which were of profound significance for his missionary theology and calling.

[193] Ibid, 288.

[194] Badenas, *Christ the End of the Law*, 87-90. See his treatment for descriptions and demonstrations of these features.

[195] Badenas includes Paul's use of the diatribe under this last feature. It is now well recognized that, "The so-called diatribe is not a literary genre but rather a series of rhetorical devices" (Donfried, *Romans Debate*, lxx; cf. idem, "False Presuppositions," 112-19). This method of dialogue with an imaginary interlocutor was a pedagogic tool used in the ancient philosophical schools. Paul's use of this device does not indicate a lack of address to a concrete historical situation or a necessarily polemic intention, but underscores his educational and protreptic purposes. Its use also does not argue against the midrashic nature of Paul's composition, since the diatribe is not incompatible with midrash and "the rabbis tended to borrow the rhetorical patterns of their day" (Stegner, "Rom 9-11," 42). On the diatribe, see further, S. K. Stowers, *The Diatribe and Paul's Letter to the Romans*; D. F. Watson, "Diatribe"; Stanley E. Porter, "Diatribe."

Badenas, the main significance of these features is that they warn the exegete against isolating any statement or section from the rest so that Paul's argument is deemed inconsistent, and encourages the interpretation of every part of the passage in light of the whole context. Consequently, they suggest that Paul's argumentation is cohesive.

We shall take up the question of the consistency of Romans 9-11 in due course, but would now like to draw attention to the feature Badenas appears to identify as the most basic pattern of Pauline thought, viz., oscillation (# 2 above), because it strikes us as a distinctively scriptural manner of expression. Oscillation "consists in 'moving between two poles . . . back and forth and back again.' "[196] Indeed, "in Rom 9-11 Paul's argument advances in successive 'waves' or restatements."[197] I would suggest that the oscillating pattern of Paul's rhetoric witnesses to his prophetic and apocalyptic orientation in the composition of these chapters.[198] For recapitulation is a characteristic feature of prophetic and apocalyptic literature.[199]

Paul stands in the biblical tradition of the OT prophets, bringing a word from God to those he addresses. As the OT prophets were covenant messengers who proclaimed the blessings and curses of the covenant to God's people, and often spoke

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[196] Badenas, *Christ the End of the Law*, 88, citing John J. Collins, "Chiasmus," 579. Collins was apparently the first to suggest oscillation as the basic pattern of Paul's thought in this insightful article published in 1963.

[197] Badenas, ibid, now citing J. M. Österreicher, "Israel's Misstep and Her Rise: The Dialectic of God's Saving Design in Rom 9-11," 320. See Badenas, idem, 233 n. 66, for a list of "[s]ome of the more obvious 'retakings.' "

[198] Both strands of orientation have been observed from other perspectives. For the prophetic orientation of Paul's stance in Rom 9-11, see below in this ch., as well as the exegesis of 9:1-9 in chs. 3 and 4 below. Cf. Craig A. Evans, "Prophet, Paul As." The apocalyptic character of Rom 9-11 has been demonstrated by Johnson, *Function of Apocalyptic*, who observes that Paul's line of thought "is profoundly structured by the apocalyptic categories of eschatological salvation, God's wrath and wealth of mercy, and the destiny of the people of God" (175).

[199] Beale, 135-37. This orientation argues for the consistency of Rom 9-11, for as John B. Taylor has noted in his commentary on Ezekiel concerning the apocalyptic-prophetic chapters 38-39, repetition "in different language and in fuller detail . . . is typical of Hebrew poetry and of the kind of semi-poetical writing which is used in these oracles. It is fond of repetition and delights to revert to previous statements and enlarge on them, even though the result is to destroy all sense of consecutive arrangement. Failure to appreciate this has led many western commentators to find . . . contradictions and inconsistencies . . . where this is quite unnecessary" (247).

of the eschatological restoration of Israel,[200] so Paul writes in the time of the inaugurated eschatological restoration as the official representative (i.e., apostle) of Jesus the Messiah, the Lord and mediator of the New Covenant. He brings a word of God which defends the faithfulness of God's past word to Israel in his present word to both Jew and Gentile alike in the gospel.

Some Hermeneutical Considerations Relating to Romans 9-11

Should We Read Romans 9-11 Forward or Backward?

Among the majority of scholars who find Paul's argument in Romans 9-11 to be consistent, generally either ch. 9 or ch. 11 is taken as a foundation from which to work and to evaluate the other.[201] So the question most scholars have to answer, whether consciously or not, is which direction they will read Romans 9-11 in. Should we read the end in light of the beginning or vice versa? Mary Ann Getty, for one, argues that the passage should be understood through the lens of 11:25-32, which summarizes the whole.[202] This is the basic approach of many who find 11:25-32 to predict the salvation of ethnic Israel. On the other hand, those who understand this part of Romans 9-11 to affirm nothing other than the salvation of the Christian Church are likely to read this passage in light of chs. 9-10.

The issue does not only arise in connection to the relationship between chs. 9 and 11, but throughout the passage. For example, various scholars argue that Gentiles are not contemplated in 9:6ff., but only from 9:24 on.[203] And Brandenburger argues that 9:6a should not be interpreted according to the mystery of ch. 11, but according to its immediate context; nor is the remnant concept of 9:6-13 simply identical with

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[200] On the role of Israel's prophets as covenant messengers, see e.g., Stuart, xxxi-xxxii, and accompanying bibliography; Meredith G. Kline, *The Strucutre of Biblical Authority*, 57-62.

[201] Frank Thielman, "Unexpected Mercy: Echoes of a Biblical Motif in Romans 9-11," 170.

[202] Getty, "Paul and the Salvation of Israel," 459.

[203] See e.g., Rese, "Israel und Kirche," 212f.

that of 11:1ff.[204] Again, an underlying hermeneutical issue in such cases is whether one should read the passage backward or forward.

There is another approach to the question which claims that we need to read Romans 9-11 both forward and backward, and that any particular point in the argument must be interpreted with reference to the whole.[205] This more moderate position is surely correct in principle, but should not preclude that one direction take priority. That is, while the literary and rhetorical character of Paul's argument demands interpreting the parts in light of the whole, one direction of reading may carry greater interpretive weight. Indeed, we would argue that we should give greater relative weight to prior parts of Paul's argument in determining the meaning of later points, and that we can expect the latter to expand and supplement the former in a complementary manner, for reading/hearing a discourse takes place in a linear fashion. By definition, the reader experiences the beginning of an argument before the later parts, building a foundation upon which the latter parts are to be understood.

Reading forward is especially important for reading Paul's epistles, since they would have been experienced by most of the recipients audibly. They would not have had the luxury of referring to earlier parts of the argument easily. This is not to deny what we have already claimed as important for the likelihood of Paul's OT quotations functioning as pointers to their original contexts, namely, that Paul's audience would engage in multiple readings of Romans. Rather, it is to recognize that the natural way to both logically structure and hear a discourse is linearly.[206] Yet I am not arguing that we should ignore the significance of latter portions of Romans 9-11 for understanding earlier parts, only that priority of interpretive importance should be given to what is prior.[207]

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[204] Brandenburger, "Paulinische Schriftauslegung," 17f.

[205] Badenas, *Christ the End of the Law*, 87-90, is representative of this approach. His analysis of the literary character of Rom 9-11 described above is a convincing argument in its favor.

[206] Even chiastically structured compositions generally have a logical development that is crucial to correct understanding. Later parts of chiastically structured discourses still rely on earlier parts, but not vice versa. Reliance on earlier material is probably the critical point in this whole issue and recognition of this fact is probably the foundation of what it means to give interpretive priority to "reading forward."

[207] It is one thing to articulate a methodological principle, and another to apply it sensitively, for exegesis is more art than science. There is no precise methodological formula for how one relates former and latter parts of an argument. The appropriateness of an interpretation can only be judged by

This principle also applies to Romans 9-11's relationship to the earlier parts of the epistle. Hence, the tragedy of readings that isolate chs. 9-11 from chs. 1-8. They are doomed to misunderstand Romans 9-11 because they ignore the foundation upon which it is based.

The Interpretive Significance of Paul's Other Epistles

Another question which sometimes operates on the level of presupposition, and rises to the surface of discussion only in passing,[208] is the question of the relevance of Paul's other epistles for interpreting Romans 9-11.[209] Some, who maintain that significant development took place in Paul's thought,[210] might be inclined to think, for example, that Galatians is of little help for understanding what Paul wrote to Rome. Others, who emphasize the contingency of Paul's epistles,[211] might be inclined to a similar conclusion based on different circumstances that elicited Paul's discourse in each letter. For instance, one might contend that Galatians is polemical and that Paul is harsher and more exaggerated in his statements there, but that in Romans he is not dealing directly with opponents, and is therefore calmer, more reasoned, and truer to his real theology. Against all of this, we would argue that Galatians and Paul's other epistles are indeed of value for interpreting Romans. We cannot concur with the opinion that Paul's thought underwent significant development, though that question is far too involved to entertain here. Even if Paul's

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the sense it makes of the text, and the relationship of former and latter parts of Rom 9-11 is one of the challenges of sensible exegesis, fraught as this passage is with dialectical complexity. Other exegetical factors play a part in one's analysis of the text. Thus, I would understand 11:25-32 in light of Rom 9 and Paul's redefinition of Israel, while at the same time maintain that Gentiles are conceptually present in 9:6ff., due to the preceding context of Rom 1-8, the logical structure of Paul's argument, and the OT background of 9:6ff.

[208] This is true of all three hermeneutical considerations covered in this section.

[209] See e.g., Schmitt's (*Gottesgerechtigkeit*) contentions that too much weight should not be given to other Pauline texts for interpreting Rom 9-11 (p. 72) and that it is invalid to interpret Rom 9 by Gal 4:21ff. due to differing subject matter, context, and intention (p. 82).

[210] For a brief treatment of development in Paul's theology as a hermeneutical issue, see G. R. Osbourne, "Hermeneutics/Interpreting Paul," 394; cf. L. J. Kreitzer, "Eschatology," 260f.

[211] J. Christian Beker, *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought*, is well known for emphasizing this aspect of the Pauline corpus; cf. the focused treatment of Kreitzer, ibid, 255f. Cf. also Schmitt's comments regarding Rom 9 and Gal 4:21ff. noted in note 209 above.

theology did change considerably, that would not mean that his other epistles are of little value for interpreting Romans. What is needed is a responsible use of other Pauline epistles that is sensitive to their meaning in their own contexts vis-à-vis Paul's argument in Romans. The same is true of the differing contexts of Paul's epistles. We must avoid the uncritical practice of simply assuming that similar language indicates equivalent meaning. Nevertheless, there is an a priori likelihood that what an author has said elsewhere on a topic or related topics will shed light on any given treatment, even if he has changed his mind or is arguing with a different purpose or in a different context.

Hence, we submit that the best approach is to make careful and selective use of Paul's other epistles. The situation is much the same as with other parallels—we must avoid "parallelomania" and press for substantive parallels.[212] A point should be established as much as possible from evidence in the text of Romans and corroborated/enhanced where possible from other epistles; when evidence is lacking in Romans, other Pauline epistles become all the more important. The value of theories which discount Paul's other writings for interpreting Romans is not to be found in their method or conclusions, but in the caution they inspire to handle other Pauline texts carefully with exegetical sensitivity.

Individual and Corporate Perspectives in Romans 9-11

The nature of Paul's social orientation toward reality is a hermeneutical issue in Pauline studies generally. It is the type of issue that one carries convictions about based on a scholarly impression of first century culture, the New Testament writings, and other socio-historical data, and consequently brings this conviction in the form of presupposition to the task of exegesis. This presupposition then affects one's reading of Paul, a presupposition which has often simply been carried over automatically from individualistic western culture. An individualistic reading of Paul has long been the overwhelmingly dominant approach, until only recently with the appearance of the

[212] See the seminal essay of Samuel Sandmel, "Parallelomania."

work of E. P. Sanders and the ensuing "new perspective on Paul."[213] Sanders' work helped to usher in a far greater appreciation of the concept of covenant in Paul's thought resulting in a far greater emphasis on corporate over against individual concerns, particularly concerning the relationship of Jews and Gentiles in the Church of Christ.[214] Now, the corporate perspective is widely accepted, and may even be called the firm consensus among NT scholars.[215]

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[213] See especially, E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion*, and J. D. G. Dunn's influential commentary on Romans (especially 1.lxiii-lxxii). While the new perspective has enjoyed a precarious consensus over the last decade, it is now under increasing attack for ironically misrepresenting first century Judaism. See e.g., D. A. Carson, P. T. O'Brien, and M. Seifrid, eds., *Justification and Variegated Nomism. Vol. 1: The Complexities of Second Temple Judaism*; Charles Talbert, "Paul, Judaism, and the Revisionists"; Andrew A. Das, *Paul, the Law, and the Covenant*; Seyoon Kim, *Paul and the New Perspective: Second Thoughts on the Origin of Paul's Gospel*; Peter Stuhlmacher and Donald A. Hagner, *Revisiting Paul's Doctrine of Justification: A Challenge to the New Perspective*; Simon J. Gathercole, *Where Is Boasting? Early Jewish Soteriology and Paul's Response in Romans 1-5*; Francis Watson, "Not the New Perspective"; cf. Mark Adam Elliott, *The Survivors of Israel: A Reconsideration of the Theology of Pre-Christian Judaism*. Karl P. Donfried has indicated to me in personal correspondence that he regards the major development in scholarship on Romans at this time to be the increasing distance between many scholars and the work of the "new perspective." For a recent, concise, and helpful survey of scholarship on Paul and the Law, see Veronica Koperski, *What Are They Saying about Paul and the Law?* (note the valuable select, annotated bibliography on pp. 130-38, as well as the sensible discussion of the center of Paul's thought on pp. 93-103 [ch. 6]).

[214] Gary W. Burnett has documented the increasing emphasis on the group in NT studies in *Paul and the Salvation of the Individual*, 1-6. This important study seeks to redress what Burnett regards as an overemphasis on the collective nature of Paul's thought to the exclusion of individual concerns in recent NT research. While it might at first appear that Burnett is seeking to vindicate the older, individualistic approach to Paul, this is not the case. He acknowledges the corrective to an individualistic approach as beneficial and offers a more balanced account of Paul's thought which gives an important place to the individual within the community. As important and welcome as Burnett's corrective is, it tends to suffer from what many approaches to this issue do—a failure to identify the nature of the relationship between the group and the individual in a way that integrates them properly. Burnett regularly operates on the all too typical "individual vs. the group" mentality, although he strikes a much better balance in this regard than most (for a concise statement of the right balance, see E. Earle Ellis, "How the New Testament Uses the Old," 212f.). For a convenient discussion of the present state of the question of the relationship between individual and community in biblical studies, see Shannon Burkes, *God, Self, and Death: The Shape of Religious Transformation in the Second Temple Period*, 17-29 (pp. 244-49 for conclusions from the study). Burnett identifies the other major contributing force in the prevalence of collective over individual concerns as the use of the social sciences in NT studies beginning around the same time as Sanders' study appeared.

[215] See Burnett, *Paul*, 1-2. Interestingly, a related monograph published in the same year as Burnett's study decries the extreme overemphasis in Pauline scholarship on individual concerns in Paul's thought: Sang-Won (Aaron) Son, *Corporate Elements in Pauline Anthropology: A Study of Selected Terms, Idioms, and Concepts in the Light of Paul's Usage and Background.* Son seems unaware of the recent trend in scholarship to which Burnett responds. Nevertheless, Son's study is important for its extensive treatment of the topic and its attempt to articulate the relationship between the individual and the group in Paul's thought, an articulation sorely lacking in much Pauline scholarship as mentioned below. Moreover, despite the research situation correctly observed by Burnett, there still seems to be a significant amount of naively individualistic interpretation afoot in Pauline studies.

This corporate perspective is probably nowhere more in evidence than in Romans 9-11. Yet a few voices have risen up in protest against this tide of corporate appreciation in the interpretation of these chapters.[216] There is some justification for these protests in that many advocates of a corporate perspective seem to advance a vague conception of Paul's corporate concerns which does justice to the importance of group identity and the relationship between Jews and Gentiles, but ignores the implications for individuals that Paul's argument so obviously has.

What is needed is an appreciation of the collectivist character of Paul and his first century socio-historical milieu that integrates and recognizes the role of the individual. Given the scope of this topic, which would require a monograph of its own, we cannot pursue the question in detail here.[217] We must be content to limit our comments to what we deem important for our purposes here. First, we must recognize that Paul's thought was thoroughly covenantal, focused on the fulfillment of the covenant purposes of God in Christ and their consequences for Jews and Gentiles. Second, for Paul and virtually all Jews (and non-Jews in Mediterranean and Hellenistic culture) of his time, the group was primary and the individual secondary. This is an essential point to grasp for interpretation of Paul and the NT. Modern westerners tend to view social reality in the opposite way: the individual is primary and the group secondary. So the individual is viewed as standing on his own, and corporate concerns are subordinated to individual concerns. One's view of the group is conditioned by one's view of the individual so that the group both draws its identity from the individuals in the group and is seen as merely a collection of individuals. But I would contend that Paul's (and his culture's) perspective was essentially corporate. The individual was not viewed as standing on her own, but was seen as embedded in the group to which she belonged. Corporate concerns generally took precedence over individual concerns, and when it did not, this was judged as wrong. Such corporate interest can be seen in Paul's primary concern for love and unity dominant in all his

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[216] See the excursus on "The Translation of Romans 9:6b and the Corporate Nature of Election" in ch. 4 below. It is significant that even Burnett, *Paul*, 18, regards Rom 9-12 as solidly collectivist and finds it necessary to argue that Paul's concern for collective matters in these chapters "does not make up the sum total of Paul's thinking in Romans."

[217] For recent monographs on this topic see Burnett, *Paul*, and Son, *Corporate Elements in Pauline Anthropology*; cf. the literature cited in the excursus mentioned in the previous note.

letters. The Pauline corporate perspective found individual identity based in the group rather than vice versa.

None of this means that in first century Mediterranean and Hellenistic perception the individual was non-existent or that individuals had no self-consciousness or individuality or selfishness. Quite the contrary, a balanced corporate perspective addresses these very individual characteristics in subordinating them to collective concerns. Nor does Paul's corporate perspective mean that he had no interest in individual salvation. He had no interest in the salvation of the individual *as an individual alone*. Rather he was concerned with the individual as embedded in the people of God. Individual concerns are seen as corporately embedded. Once this is seen, then much of what Paul says can and must be applied to the individual—the individual who lives in community and whose identity derives from the covenant people of God. Much of what Paul says—his calls to unity, his exhortations to loving attitudes and actions, and even his description of salvation history—must apply at the individual level. It is individuals who are saved, individuals who love, and individuals who unite. However, for Paul and others of his first century context, it would not have been individuals considered in and of themselves who so acted and were so treated, but individuals who acted and were treated as members of a group. As Howard Clark Kee has so aptly stated, "Although an act of decision could align the individual with one or another of . . . [the] competing factions within Judaism in this period, the outcome of the decision was a mode of community identity."[218]

I would argue that here, as with so much of Paul's thought, the Old Testament provides the most suitable background for understanding his perspective. Drawing on the latest research, Gary Burnett has recently described the Old Testament view of social reality well:

> Kaminsky . . . suggests that it is always the case that the "individual's very self-understanding was derived from his or her relationship to the community". It is the individual as a member of the community where the emphasis lies, not the individual as an "autonomous entity before God."
>
> This is not to deny, however, that individual ideas exist within the Hebrew Bible; they do so, however, not as a progression from older

[218] Howard Clark Kee, *Knowing the Truth*, 5.

> corporate ideas, but alongside them as complementary. . . . Both [collective emphases and individual responsibility] are important, but individualism only in so far as it is closely related to community life.[219]

This is precisely Paul's view.

All of this has considerable import for interpretation of Romans 9-11. We must recognize that Paul's primary concern involves the corporate relationship between Jews and Gentiles and the true identity of the people of God as well as their defining characteristic(s). Moreover, he calls for a loving community orientation which prioritizes the concerns of the group above the concerns of the individual. What Paul says about Jews, Gentiles, and Christians, whether of their place in God's plan, or their election, or their salvation, or how they should think or behave, he says from a corporate perspective which views the group as primary and those he speaks about as embedded in the group. These individuals act as members of the group to which they belong, and what happens to them happens by virtue of their membership in the group.

The Consistency of Romans 9-11

Until relatively recently, the consistency of Paul's argument in Romans 9-11 was simply taken for granted. But now it is one of the liveliest areas of debate concerning the passage. Many may still take Paul's consistency for granted, and the majority does still regard him as coherent, but the vocal and influential minority who judge Paul inconsistent cannot be ignored.[220] The greatest problem that has been

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[219] Burnett, *Paul*, 76; his citations here are of J. S. Kaminsky, *Corporate Responsibility in the Hebrew Bible*, 153.

[220] Those who argue that Paul is consistent include: Dunn, 518f.; Stuhlmacher, 144; Kim, *God, Israel, and the Gentiles*, 143; Chilton, "Romans 9-11"; Campbell, "Divergent Images"; Gaston, "Israel's Enemies," 99; Badenas, *Christ the End of the Law*, e.g., 89f.; Klumbies, "Israels Vorzüge"; Schreiner, 474; John G. Gager, *Reinventing Paul*, 64f.; idem, "Paul's Contradictions—Can They Be Resolved?"; Bence, 162; Wright, *Climax*, 231-57; B. Klappert, "Traktat für Israel (Römer 9-11)"; Luz, *Geschichtsverständnis*, 400-02 (seemingly); Österreicher, "Israel's Misstep" (with great appreciation for its dialectical character); Bruce; Brandenburger, "Paulinische Schriftauslegung," 43-47; Theobald, "Kirche und Israel," e.g., 10; Richardson, *Israel*, 132 n. 4; Chae, *Paul*, 250-88 (summary statements on 250f., 286f.); Eichholz, *Theologie*, 292; Kraus, *Das Volk Gottes*, 291 n. 132 (seemingly, following Siegert, *Argumentation*); Westerholm, "Paul and the Law," e.g., 225; Frank Thielman, "Unexpected Mercy: Echoes of a Biblical Motif in Romans 9-11"; Wagner, *Heralds*; T. E. van Spanje, *Inconsistency in Paul? A Critique of the Work of Heikki Räisänen*; E. Elizabeth Johnson, "Romans 9-11: The Faithfulness and Impartiality of God," esp. 213-16; Douglas J. Moo, "The Theology of Romans 9-11:

claimed against Paul's coherence in Romans 9-11 is the alleged contradiction between chs. 9-10 on the one hand, and ch. 11 on the other.[221] In Romans 9-10, Paul asserts that Israel has no claim to salvation based on ethnicity, allowing only salvation for believers/the called, while in ch. 11:11-32 he appears to claim that ethnic Israel will be saved based on God's faithfulness to his word. Some see these as two contradictory ways of defending God's faithfulness. In his review article on this question, F. Refoulé identified a number of tentative solutions to this alleged discrepancy:[222]

(1) Paul suddenly receives the revelation while writing/dictating;
(2) Paul speaks of the salvation of all Israel already in ch. 9;
(3) 9:1-29 speaks only of the inclusion of Israel;
(4) The passages in question are addressed to different audiences;
(5) (All) Israel = remnant (the majority view);
(6) There is a distinction between potential election and real election;
(7) Romans 4 speaks of those of the law, i.e. unbelieving Jews, as heirs along with those of faith (the view of a minority of commentators).

A Response to E. Elizabeth Johnson," e.g., 241; Bell, *Provoked*, 56-58; Cranfield, 501; Piper, *Justification*, 25-30; Mohrmann, "Semantic Collisions," 205-07. F. Refoulé, "Cohérence ou incohérence de Paul en Romains 9-11?" finds there to be an impasse in the state of research on this question, though he is sympathetic to viewing the chapters as consistent (noting the parallelism between 9:1-13 and 11:25-36 argued for by Philippe Rolland and J. D. G. Dunn on pp. 76f.). Those who argue that Paul is inconsistent include: Watson, *Paul*, 170; Beker, "Romans 9-11," 44-49 (esp. 48); Segal, *Paul*, 276-84; idem, "Paul's Experience"; Heikki Räisänen, *Paul and the Law*, 264; idem, "Paul, God, and Israel: Romans 9-11 in Recent Research," 192ff.; idem, "Römer 9-11"; idem, "Romans 9-11 and the 'History of Early Christian Religion' "; Dinkler, "The Historical and the Eschatological Israel," 116; Jan Lambrecht, "Israel's Future According to Romans 9-11: An Exegetical and Hermeneutical Approach," 49; idem, "Paul's Lack of Logic in Romans 9,1-13: A Response to M. Cranford's 'Election and Ethnicity' "; C. K. Barrett, "Romans 9.30-10.21: Fall and Responsibility of Israel," 101; Schmithals, 326; E. Gräßer, "Zwei Heilswege? Zum theologischen Verhältnis von Israel und Kirche," 227, 229 (cautiously); G. Lüdemann, *Paulus*, 35; Walter, "Römer 9-11," 176; Müßner, "Gesetz-Abraham-Israel," 207 (seemingly); R. Schwarz, "Israel und die nichtjüdischen Christen im Römerbrief (Kapitel 9-11)," 161 (seemingly). Some opt for a middle ground of some sort, speaking of paradox or the like, such as Meeks, "Trusting an Unpredictable God"; Kaylor, *Paul's Covenant Community*, 162 ("apparently contradictory"); Davies, "Paul and the People," 145-50.

[221] The specific locus of the alleged contradiction is stated variously with more specificity: e.g., between 9:1-13 and 11:25-32 (Thielman, "Unexpected Mercy," 169); between 9:1-23 and 11:11-36 (Räisänen, "Römer 9-11," 2930); between ch. 9 and 11:25-32 (Refoulé, "Cohérence," 54); between chs. 9-10 and 11 (Bell, *Provoked*, 56, though he quickly gets more specific). These are just examples, and the scholars cited here may well express the matter variously.

[222] Refoulé, "Cohérence," 54-66. Refoulé identifies representatives of these proposed solutions as well.

We would add three more items to this list: (8) (all) Israel = the Church of Jews and Gentiles;[223] (9) interpolation;[224] (10) intentional ambiguity.[225]

More broadly, Thielman has identified two approaches: (1) contradiction due to nationalistic loyalty/ethnic devotion; and (2) consistency, advocated by those who "generally settle on one passage as a foundation from which to work and seek to explain the other passage in terms of it."[226] Obviously, this is an issue that hinges on detailed exegesis of the text. Here, we can only offer the general tenor of our exegesis with respect to the question of Paul's consistency in Romans 9-11—that Paul's argument is carefully reasoned and coherent.[227]

On the broader hermeneutical question of Paul's consistency, we should comment further. In so doing, we might draw attention to the case of Heikki Räisänen, one of the foremost advocates of Pauline inconsistency in Romans 9-11 and

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[223] Ibid, 77, discusses this concept in a later section of the article as the eschatological view of Israel.

[224] As in Plag, *Israels Wege zum Heil*, 66ff.

[225] See C. H. Cosgrove, *Elusive Israel: The Puzzle of Election in Romans*, esp. ch. 2; cf. note 100 in ch. 4 below. Cf. also the provocative approach to Pauline rhetoric in general of Mark D. Given, *Paul's True Rhetoric: Ambiguity, Cunning, and Deception in Greece and Rome*, who argues that Paul uses sophistic argumentation, involving ambiguity, cunning, and deception(!), in order to promote the truth in an apocalyptic world filled with deception. While he helpfully shows that the old hard and fast distinction between philosophic and sophistic argumentation is not so hard and fast, I find his thesis unconvincing that Paul sought to mislead people into the truth. There are other considerations apart from the Hellenistic rhetorical schools that impinge on Paul's rhetoric, such as his Jewish religious and ethical background, not to mention Christian conviction. Moreover, his method tends to work against the interpretive process, and strikes me as subject to the same criticism we have made of Heikki Räisänen below, viz., it fails to embrace the hard work of wrestling with the complexity of Paul's thought on its own terms. This can be seen in his treatment of Rom 9:1-5 (pp. 159-68), which amounts to a compendium of competing interpretations of these verses (cf. the review of Samuel Byrskog in *RBL*, who furnishes further criticisms in an overall positive review, some of which are more significant than Byrskog himself seems to realize).

[226] Thielman, "Unexpected Mercy," 170. Thielman actually identifies a mediating position as well, which encompasses a number of suggestions, but which all ultimately find Paul's argument inconsistent, even if only implicitly. We might say that this group finds Paul's inconsistency understandable/excusable. Some are hesitant to outrightly accuse Paul of inconsistency.

[227] Cf. recent analyses of Rom 9-11 which also find that Paul's use of the OT suggests that his argument is consistent: Wagner, *Heralds*; Thielman, "Unexpected Mercy"; Chilton, "Rom 9-11." Badenas' (*Christ the End of the Law*, 87-90) structural observations mentioned in our section on structure above also strongly support the coherence of Paul's argument.

elsewhere.[228] If R. B. Matlock is correct that Räisänen's *Paul and the Law* "has been reacted against more than engaged with,"[229] this may be because most scholars suspect that Räisänen's approach rashly jumps to the conclusion of contradictions in Paul's thought, without doing the hard work of trying to understand Paul on his own terms. Most experienced exegetes know that apparent contradictions or seeming incomprehensibility in an argument often hold the keys to unlocking an author's intention. The quick label of inconsistency tends to bring the interpretive process to a halt, and can actually prevent true understanding at the very point where it must be found—if there is the commitment present to do the hard work of attempting to understand another. Of course, the possibility of contradiction must be left open, but should only be turned to as a last resort and at the end of rigorous investigation.

This leads us to the articulation of a hermeneutical principle: the exegete should assume consistency of thought unless the evidence forces him to posit contradiction.[230] Such a presupposition is basic to any understanding of communication. It is the courtesy we would all desire from others. Rather than a hermeneutic of suspicion, I am advocating a hermeneutic of love, giving Paul the benefit of the doubt and treating him as we would want to be treated.[231]

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[228] See E. Elizabeth Johnson, "Romans 9-11: The Faithfulness and Impartiality of God," 214. Indeed, Räisänen's consistent charges of inconsistency in Paul have provoked an entire monograph describing, critiquing, and refuting his work: Spanje, *Inconsistency in Paul?*

[229] R. B. Matlock, Review of *Inconsistency in Paul? A Critique of the Work of Heikki Räisänen*, by T. E. van Spanje. Cf. the remark of Stephen Westerholm, *Israel's Law and the Church's Faith: Paul and His Recent Interpreters*, 100, referring to Räisänen's position on Paul and the Law: " 'At this point, a reader may be inclined to ask how a reasonably intelligent man like Paul could have managed to contradict himself on so many counts within the limits of time imposed by our common mortality' " (cited by Koperski, *Paul and the Law*, 35).

[230] Cf. Badenas, *Christ the End of the Law*, 82: ". . . it seems also methodologically preferable to attribute the difficulties of Rom 9-11 more to our ignorance of its background than to the inconsistencies of Paul's thought"; J. D. G. Dunn, "Works of the Law and the Curse of the Law (Galatians 3:10-14)," 523: " '. . . such explanations [of inconsitency] . . . are not to be ruled out in principle, of course; but as a way of making sense of the text they must rank as hypotheses of last resort, second only to speculative emendation of the text as disagreeable to good exegesis' " (cited in Koperski, ibid, 40).

[231] On this, see Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Is there a Meaning in this Text? The Bible, the Reader, and the Morality of Literary Knowledge*, esp. chs. 4 and 7; G. K. Beale, "Questions of Authorial Intent, Epistemology, and Presuppositions and Their Bearing on the Study of the Old Testament in the New: a Rejoinder to Steve Moyise," 178, following N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God. Christian Origins and the Question of God*, 64.

In the case of Romans 9-11, there are several plausible solutions to the apparent contradiction between chs. 9 and 11. My own position runs counter to the prevailing approaches. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, I think it best methodologically to take Romans 9 as the foundation for ch. 11 and to understand the latter in light of the former. Thus, I agree with Wright's basic approach, which takes Romans 11 to describe the salvation of the Church of Jews and Gentiles in Jesus the Messiah, and to convince a majority Gentile church in conflict over Jew-Gentile issues of a mission which includes—and I would stress, prioritizes—Jews.[232] The fact that Paul began his discussion of the whole matter by redefining Israel as those who believe in Jesus Christ (or at least believing Jews) should alert us to the probability that Paul has thus laid the foundation for understanding the salvation of Israel described at the end of the discussion.

Nevertheless, as we have noted in chapter one, exegesis is a matter of probabilities. And even if I am wrong in holding this minority view, this should not argue for the inconsistency of Romans 9-11. There are a number of other solutions which are more plausible than contradiction. Methodologically, these are preferable because they make sense of what Paul says and are based on reasonable exegesis.

The other major alleged contradiction sometimes raised in relation to Romans 9-11 is between 9:6-29/11:1-10 and 9:30-10:21. It is maintained that in 9:6-29 Paul argues for God's absolute sovereignty in election and reprobation (or showing mercy and hardening), while in 9:30-10:21 he argues that Israel has freely chosen to rebel against God and is therefore responsible for its own guilt. In other words, God has hardened Israel, but Israel is responsible for her own hardening. But this is a classic theological problem found in all monotheistic religions that believe in an omnipotent God. And it is a matter of considerable debate whether it really is a problem or not. It seems quite unfair to employ this issue against Paul in a charge of inconsistency. Moreover, there are questions as to the precise nature of the divine hardening and whether ch. 10 really advocates Israel's responsibility and guilt at all (though I think it does). Furthermore, we will argue that Paul does not in fact argue for an unconditional predestination in 9:6-29, but for God's right to choose those who believe in Christ as

[232] Wright, *Climax*, 231-57; idem, "Romans and the Theology of Paul," 56-62.

his covenant people, and to give them the blessings of Israel's fulfilled promises while excluding Jews who do not believe in Christ.

A Review of Literature Related to the Use of the Old Testament in Romans 9-11[233]

Treatments of Paul's use of the OT in Romans 9-11 prior to Richard Hays' groundbreaking study, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, tended to focus on what Hays called "essential technical tasks of scholarship"[234] rather than the meaning-effects of Paul's OT quotations and allusions. Sanday and Headlam's 1895 commentary furnishes an example of just such a treatment.[235] In their essay on "St. Paul's Use of the Old Testament"[236] they give special attention to Romans 9-11, ignoring serious engagement with the original contexts of Paul's quotations and attending to matters such as textual form, introductory formulas, similarity to rabbinic writings, various uses OT passages are put to, and the appropriateness of Paul's exegesis. They came to conclusions such as that Paul's use of the OT was similar to the rabbis of his time and that he ignored the original contexts of his allusions in faulty exegesis which was nevertheless the correct interpretation of the spirit of the OT. Although such an approach was standard up to the publication of Hays' book, it

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[233] The following selective review of literature favors (though not exclusively) studies that are especially relevant for the present investigation's focus on Rom 9. Studies which are especially relevant to Paul's use of the OT in Rom 9-11 and have not been reviewed below include: J. A. Battle, "Paul's Use of the Old Testament in Romans 9:25-26"; R. Bring, "Paul and the Old Testament: A Study of the Ideas of Election, Faith and Law in Paul with Special Reference to Rom ix:30-x:21"; R. E. Clements, " 'A Remnant Chosen by Grace' (Romans 11:5): The Old Testament Background and Origin of the Remnant Concept"; J. D. G. Dunn, " 'Righteousness from the Law' and 'Righteousness from Faith': Paul's Interpretation of Scripture in Romans 10:1-10"; A. W. Hall, "Paul's Use of Isaiah's Interpretation of Israel in Romans"; W. S. Hall, "Paul as a Christian Prophet in his Interpretation of the Old Testament in Romans 9-11"; Douglas C. Mohrmann, "Semantic Collisions at the Intertextual Crossroads : A Diachronic and Synchronic Study of Romans 9:30-10:13"; F. Müßner, "Die Psalmen im Gedankengang des Paulus in Röm 9-11"; James M. Scott, "Restoration of Israel"; Mark A. Seifrid, "Paul's Approach to the Old Testament in Rom 10:6-8"; Shiu-Lun Shum, *Paul's Use of Isaiah in Romans: A Comparative Study of Paul's Letter to the Romans and the Sybilline and Qumran Sectarian Texts*; Christopher D. Stanley, " 'The Redeemer Will Come ἐκ Σιών': Romans 11.26-27 Revisited"; Florian Wilk, *Die Bedeutung des Jesajabuches für Paulus*. Doubtless more could be added to this list.

[234] Hays, *Echoes*, 9. See ch. 1 above, pp. 2ff., for Hays' description of these technical tasks and further reflection on this research situation.

[235] Sanday and Headlam, 302-07. Cf. the insightful and somewhat similar treatment of Cranfield, 862-70.

[236] Ibid, 302.

was as early as 1952 with the appearance of C. H. Dodd's landmark work, *According to the Scriptures: The Substructure of New Testament Theology*, that there was a hint of a deeper wrestling with Paul's use of Scripture in Romans 9-11, which Dodd considered to be a striking example of Paul's method.[237]

C. Müller's 1964 contribution, *Gottes Gerechtigkeit und Gottes Volk: Eine Untersuchung zu Römer 9-11*, showed a greater than usual sensitivity to Old Testament background and Jewish tradition in its attention to creation tradition[238] and covenant lawsuit[239] in Paul's argument. However, his contention that Paul's creation thought replaced the covenant concept in his thinking kept him from tapping the full potential of his approach.[240] His work may be seen as inadvertently calling for an alternative approach, represented by N. T. Wright,[241] which advocates and builds upon the prominence of covenant in Paul's argument.

We now come to a sort of turning point in the study of Paul's use of the Old Testament in Romans 9-11 in the work of two scholars who showed a greater general sensitivity to Paul's scriptural interpretation: Johannes Munck in *Christ and Israel: An Interpretation of Romans 9-11*, which appeared in English in 1967, and Nils A. Dahl in his essay, "The Future of Israel," which appeared in English in 1977.[242] However, Munck's and Dahl's importance lies not as much in their handling of Paul's use of the OT as in their calls for greater scholarly attention to this crucial aspect of Paul's argument in Romans 9-11. In his introduction to his comments on Romans 9:25-29, Munck wrote,

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[237] Page 18. Dodd's comment was only a hint, since he did not give significant attention to Rom 9-11. But in the context of his programmatic study it points toward the type of intertextual work which is now being done on these important chapters. For a more detailed description of Dodd's approach, see ch. 1 above, pp. 10f.

[238] See e.g. pp.27f.

[239] Se e.g. pp.68ff.

[240] See e.g. p.51. Cf. Leander E. Keck, "What Makes Romans Tick?" 24, for a point similar to Müller's made more generally and recently.

[241] *Climax*, 231-57. See below on Wright's contribution.

[242] Munck's book was originally published in 1956 as *Christus und Israel—Eine Auslegung von Röm. 9-11* (Copenhagen: Ejnar Munksgaard [Acta Jutlandica, Publications of the University of Aarhus, Theology Series 7], 1956), and Dahl's essay in *Israel, Kirken og verden* (Ed. M. Saebo [Oslo: Land og Kirke (Gyldendal), 1972]).

> Interpreters have frequently transgressed with regard to Paul's use of the Old Testament . . . . The correct procedure is a serious treatment of Paul's use of quotations or whole phrases from the Old Testament as a deliberate quotation of biblical texts. His interpretation of these texts may be surprising, but instead of giving rise to criticism it should make the commentator sit up and pay attention. By taking his use of the Old Testament texts as an indication of his understanding of them, one may penetrate more deeply into Paul's relationship to the Old Testament.[243]

Even more important and programmatic were Dahl's remarks (in English) some ten years later: "Scholars rarely consider Paul seriously as an interpreter of Scripture. We still have no detailed investigation of Paul's use of the Old Testament in Romans 9-11, comparing it to other Christian and Jewish interpretations of the passages quoted, and examining their wording in textual tradition and in translations."[244] Scholarship is only now coming to terms with Dahl's vision and conducting the type of investigation he outlined. The present study stands in the current stream of scholarship carrying out this research. It is now apparent that the task is far greater than Dahl's comments might imply and will require many investigations to do the topic justice. Indeed, we are hard pressed to fit a detailed study of Paul's use of the OT in Romans 9:1-9 alone into the space available.

In a rarely noticed essay published in 1975, "God's Promises and Universal History: The Theology of Romans 9," James D. Strauss showed a remarkable degree of sensitivity to the general Old Testament background of Paul's argument and the original contexts of his allusions. His perceptive but brief treatment of OT texts and contexts vis-à-vis Paul's discourse moved further toward what we now call an intertextual exegesis. Not too long after Strauss' essay came a real advancement in the study of Paul's use of the OT in Romans 9-11.

Taking up the challenge of distinguished scholars such as Dahl and Munck to give serious attention to Paul's interpretation and use of Scripture, P. E. Dinter became one of the first students of Paul to pay close attention to his interpretation of Scripture as a key to understanding his argument in Romans 9-11. His unpublished

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[243] Munck, *Christ and Israel*, 71.

[244] Dahl, "Future," 138.

doctoral dissertation, "The Remnant of Israel and the Stone of Stumbling in Zion according to Paul (Romans 9-11)," completed at Union Theological Seminary in 1979, exhibits many of the characteristics of current methodological approaches to the study of Paul's use of the Old Testament. He gives attention to the original contexts of certain Old Testament quotations as well as the history of their exegesis in Judaism, is aware of the complexity of the LXX textual tradition, and though lacking the terminology, essentially addresses the meaning-effects of some of Paul's Old Testament quotations in Romans 9-11. But as the title indicates, Dinter's focus is on Paul's understanding and use of the Old Testament remnant motif and his interpretation of the Isaian 'stone of stumbling.' He gives significant attention only to Paul's use of Isaiah 28:16 and 8:14, and examines all of 9-11, whereas our focus is on Romans 9:1-9 and every Old Testament allusion made by Paul therein. We do, however, share Dinter's concern for exegesis of the text, a concern also shared by John Piper and mixed with detailed analysis of the OT background of Romans 9:14-15 in his article of the same year as Dinter's study, "Prolegomena to Understanding Romans 9:14-15: An Interpretation of Exodus 33:19." The description of Piper's approach contained in the title of his article is also an apt description of one crucial aspect of current intertextual methodology—the detailed interpretation of Paul's OT allusions in their original contexts as prolegomena to understanding his writings.

The year 1982 saw a helpful cataloging of Paul's quotations in Romans 9-11 in their order of appearance, and classified according to the division of the OT in which they are found, by the hand of A. Maillot in his article, "Essai sur les citations vétérotestamentaires continues dans Romains 9 à 11, ou comment se servir de la Torah pour montrer que le 'Christ est la fin de la Torah'." This contribution to the more technical side of scholarly inquiry into Paul's use of the OT found that Paul most often referred to the LXX, but maintained that he did rely on Hebrew sometimes.[245] Though a common (but not universal) assumption in the past, this latter assertion is now a point of some dispute. While B. D. Chilton allowed for Paul's occasional use of Hebrew in a somewhat recent article,[246] the growing trend in

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[245] Maillot, "Les citations vétérotestamentaires," 72.

[246] Chilton, "Rom 9-11," 35 n. 9. See also Craig A. Evans, "Paul and the Hermeneutics of 'True Prophecy': A Study of Rom 9-11," for the assertion that there is evidence of Paul following the MT over the LXX in the passage; cf. Badenas, *Christ the End of the Law*, 92; Piper, *Justification*, 78;

Pauline studies has been to assume that Paul actually made use of Greek texts that had been revised toward Hebrew exemplars in cases where his citations agree with the MT against the LXX.[247] Maillot also concluded that Paul altered the form of his quotations for simplicity and in support of his argument and that the coherence of his quotations shows that he did not work from memory but rather made textual adaptations.[248] Maillot furthermore offered an explanation for Paul's choice of OT texts: he chose texts which contained a type of Israel and what was spoken of Israel in the Torah.[249] This coheres with the recent emphasis on story in Paul's use of Scripture.[250] Finally, Maillot concluded, as Barnabas Lindars would in his 1987 article, "The Old Testament and Universalism in Paul," that Paul's specific use of Scripture was original to him.[251]

In the year following Maillot's article, John Piper published the first edition of his important study, *The Justification of God: An Exegetical and Theological Study of Romans 9:1-23*. As the subtitle indicates, it is characterized by a concern for an exegesis of Romans 9:1-23 and the theology which arises from this exegesis. Such a concern for exegesis and theology also characterizes the present investigation, which

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Mohrmann, "Semantic Collisions," 130, 161. And more broadly, cf. Ellis, *Paul's Use*, 19f.; L. J. Greenspoon, "Old Testament Versions, Ancient," 753f.; Berkley, *Broken Covenant*, 61; and see the following note.

[247] See Stanley, *Paul and the Language*, 6, 41-48; and because of special attention to Rom 9-11, especially Wagner, *Heralds*, 16f. n. 60, 344f. Indeed, Scott J. Hafemann, *Paul, Moses, and the History of Israel: The Letter/Spirit Contrast and the Argument from Scripture in 2 Corinthians* 3, 191 n. 7, can now refer to this as the consensus view. This trend is not without dissenters; Wagner (idem) discusses the work of T. H. Lim, *Holy Scripture in the Qumran Commentaries and Pauline Letters*, who argues that Paul did use Hebrew in his quotations of Scripture. Moreover, in a very recent monograph published in the same year as Wagner's, Shum, *Paul's Use of Isaiah in Romans*, 175f., judges that Paul probably did know and use Hebrew in his study of Scripture (particularly, Isaiah), and claims that this is the view of most scholars; see the references he cites on p. 176 n. 15. And in his recent thesis on Rom 10, Mohrmann, ibid, cautiously favors Paul's use of Hebrew. See also the previous note.

[248] Maillot, "Les citations vétérotestamentaires," 72, thus providing support for the thesis of Stanley's later major study (*Paul and the Language*) of Paul's general citation practice.

[249] Ibid.

[250] In, e.g., the work of Hays (*Echoes*), N. T. Wright ("Romans and the Theology of Paul"), Sylvia C. Keesmaat (*Paul and his Story: (Re)interpreting the Exodus Tradition*), Carol K. Stockhausen ("2 Corinthians 3 and the Principles of Pauline Exegesis"), and Douglas C. Mohrmann ("Semantic Collisions); cf. Ben Witherington, III, *Paul's Narrative Thought World: The Tapestry of Tragedy and Triumph*; R. Penna, "Narrative Aspects of the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans."

[251] Maillot, "Les citations vétérotestamentaires," 73. But cf. Barnabas Lindars' (*New Testament Apologetic*, 243) earlier judgment that Paul did not shape the group of remnant texts including Hos 2:25 (Eng. 2:23); 2:1 (Eng. 1:10); Isa 10:22 in Rom 9:25ff.

is distinguished by the conviction that Paul's use of the OT is the key to the exegesis and theology of Romans 9. Yet, Piper's study is notable for its attention to the OT background of Paul's argument. He devotes an entire chapter to "Exodus 33:19 in its Old Testament Context,"[252] another whole chapter to "The Righteousness of God in the Old Testament,"[253] attends to "The hardening of Pharaoh in the Old Testament context,"[254] and considers "The traditions behind Romans 9:20, 21."[255] Moreover, he is sensitive to OT background and Jewish tradition throughout. Nevertheless, his attention to Paul's OT allusions is uneven and his analyses of OT texts are open to question at various points. Often, his treatment of OT texts are governed by theological questions which restrict his focus and keep him from dealing with the texts in their own right, thereby limiting the insight he might otherwise receive into Paul's argument. For example, his consideration of the traditions behind Romans 9:20, 21 is intended to show that Paul deals with individuals rather than merely nations.[256] Furthermore, Paul's use of the OT is not the driving concern of Piper's study as it is in this one, and there is little exploration of exegetical traditions outside the OT available to Paul. In sum, we might say that Piper's investigation understandably lacks an intertextual approach to exegesis, though it comes close to such an approach. He does give attention to the meaning-effects of Paul's use of Scripture at points, but his study is not characterized by such a concern.

The following year, 1984, saw a number of studies which addressed Paul's use of Scripture in Romans 9-11. The two most important were probably James W. Aageson's unpublished Oxford thesis, "Paul's Use of Scripture: A Comparative Study of Biblical Interpretation in Early Palestinian Judaism and the New Testament with Special Reference to Romans 9-11,"[257] and Hans Hübner's *Gottes Ich und Israel:*

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[252] Piper, *Justification*, 75-89. Cf. Piper's article, "Prolegomena to Understanding Romans 9:14-15: An Interpretation of Exodus 33:19," mentioned above.

[253] Piper, *Justification*, 103-22.

[254] Ibid, 159-71.

[255] Ibid, 194-99.

[256] Ibid. This, together with the temporal/eternal implications of Paul's arguments, often governs Piper's treatment of Paul's use of Scripture.

[257] Cf. Aageson's two later articles (from 1986 and 1987 respectively) adapted from his thesis: "Scripture and Structure in the Development of the Argument in Romans 9-11" and "Typology,

Zum Schriftgebrauch des Paulus in Römer 9-11. Often referred to, Aageson's study has a focus which is much broader than Romans 9 or 9-11. As the title indicates, Aageson was concerned to compare Paul's biblical interpretation with that of contemporary Judaism. Although Dinter's work was available to him, Aageson does not follow his method. There is very little attention to the original contexts of Paul's scriptural allusions and no concern for meaning-effects. Exegesis of Romans 9-11 is also largely ignored. This study fits into that category which Hays has described as focusing on the technical tasks of scholarship, though it might be more accurate to see this as a transitioning work between technical tasks and meaning-effects. The major focus is on setting Paul within his first century context. One of Aageson's major assertions, commonly accepted today, is that Paul was truly a man of his time who used the interpretive methods of contemporary Judaism in interpreting Scripture. Aageson's other major assertion, also commonly accepted now (though by no means universally accepted), is that Paul's understanding of Scripture is fundamental to his argument in Romans 9-11, and that the very structure of his presentation was shaped by his method of scriptural argumentation. Though important to the study of Paul's use of the Old Testament, and to the study of Romans 9-11, Aageson's study is very different from the focus and methodology of the present investigation. Recent work on Paul's use of the Old Testament, while building on insights of scholars such as Aageson who set Paul in the context of first century Jewish hermeneutics, has pursued more fruitful avenues of study, going deeper than generalizations about ancient interpretive methods, and paying attention to Paul's specific and actual interpretive activity as a key to understanding his discourse. This focus also distinguishes our study from Aageson's.

Hübner's *Gottes Ich und Israel* is much more exegetical in approach than Aageson's contribution. The bulk of the study is taken up with the interpretation of Romans 9-11. Given the fact that one of Hübner's major goals in the study is to determine whether Paul's argument about the hardening and final salvation of Israel is

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Correspondence, and the Application of Scripture in Romans 9-11," and his more popular 1993 study of Paul's use of Scripture in general, in which he was able to take account of the advent of intertextuality in Pauline studies: *Written Also for Our Sake: Paul and the Art of Biblical Interpretation*.

determined by Scripture or whether the gospel determined Paul's use of Scripture,[258] there is surprisingly little detailed attention to the original contexts of Paul's OT allusions. But he does pay considerable attention to more formal aspects of Paul's *Schriftgebrauch* and we may say that Hübner is more sensitive to the OT background than many previous treatments of Romans 9-11. There is a regular interaction with OT thought vis-à-vis Paul's argument. But there is no real attention to meaning-effects.[259] Like Aageson, he found that Paul's OT citations structured his train of thought.[260] Hübner's monograph is notable for the most comprehensive listing of OT quotations and allusions in Romans 9-11 with a verbal comparison of the texts of Romans, the LXX, and sometimes the MT.

William Richard Stegner's important article, "Romans 9:6-29—A Midrash," also appeared in 1984, making significant contribution to an assessment of the structure of 9:6-29 and laying stress on what is now an important aspect of intertextual exegesis—the identification of Jewish exegetical traditions that Paul might follow.[261] The purpose of the article "is to show that Romans 9:6-29 is a midrash both because of its midrashic form and because of its content."[262] He eschews a formal definition of midrash, and shows convincingly that the passage is similar to rabbinic midrashim in both form and content. He also makes a good (but not airtight) case for the preservation of specific exegetical traditions contemporaneous with Paul in later rabbinic midrashim.[263]

Yet another article of note appearing in 1984 is G. K. Beale's "An Exegetical and Theological Consideration of the Hardening of Pharaoh's Heart in Exodus 4-14 and Romans 9." This article is quite similar in approach to Piper's article,

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[258] Hübner, *Gottes Ich und Israel*, 12.

[259] This is not surprising, however, for in a later article, "Intertextualität—die hermeneutische Strategie des Paulus: Zu einem neuen Versuch der theologischen Rezeption des Alten Testaments im Neuen," Hübner thoroughly rejected Hays' intertextual approach.

[260] Ibid, 13.

[261] Cf. Stegner's more recent article, "Jew, Paul the," which repeats much of the content of the earlier article. See also our treatment of the structure of Rom 9-11 above.

[262] Stegner, "Rom 9:6-29," 38.

[263] See pp. 100f. above, and esp. note 184. For more on Stegner's article, see the treatment of rabbinic literature related to Gen 18:10, 14 and 21:12 in ch. 4 below.

"Prolegomena to Understanding Romans 9:14-15," referred to earlier. Beale conducts a contextual exegesis of each hardening passage in Exodus 4-14 and considers the meaning-effects for Romans 9. However, there is very little by way of exegesis of Romans 9; as Beale himself says, he makes "only brief comment . . . about Romans 9 . . . at the conclusion" of his discussion.[264] Nevertheless, the article helps to redress the lack of attention generally paid to Paul's OT allusions in their original contexts, and pointed forward to a more fruitful approach to analyzing Paul's use of the OT.

The final contribution from 1984 for our consideration is Craig A. Evans' "Paul and the Hermeneutics of 'True Prophecy': A Study of Rom 9-11."[265] He does not give attention to the meaning-effects of OT allusions, but argues that Paul's use of Scripture in Romans 9-11 to call Israel to account for her unfaithfulness stands squarely in the tradition of Israel's biblical prophets. He demonstrates how Israel's prophets employed the hermeneutic of prophetic criticism, turning Israel's own tradition and history to the theocentric task of judgment against her. Paul's citation of some of the harshest OT prophetic judgment passages against his own people follows the same biblical hermeneutic.[266]

E. Brandenburger's 1985 article, "Paulinische Schriftauslegung in der Kontroverse um das Verheissungswort Gottes (Röm 9)," explicitly indicates interest in Paul's scriptural interpretation. He found that Paul argued in the realm of OT wisdom tradition in 9:19-21,[267] and that his language in 9:22ff. is typical of apocalyptic wisdom.[268] The basis of his scriptural argumentation was not salvation history, but God as the universal Lord of the world,[269] seeking not to present a historical survey, but a total scriptural presentation.[270] The high point of 9:6-29 comes

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[264] Beale, "Hardening," 130.

[265] See now Evans' more recent essay, "Paul and the Prophets: Prophetic Criticism in the Epistle to the Romans (with special reference to Romans 9-11)," which repeats the thrust of the earlier study.

[266] Cf. Österreicher, "Israel's Misstep," 321.

[267] Brandenburger, "Paulinische Schriftauslegung," 11.

[268] Ibid, 36. Cf. Johnson, *Function of Apocalyptic*.

[269] Ibid.

[270] Ibid, 14.

in the prophetic quotations of vv. 22-29.[271] Throughout, Brandenburger emphasizes Paul's use of Scripture as proof for his assertions. The function of the first course of discussion (9:6b-13) is to show from Scripture how the calling and promise of God are true and to show how the people of God are constituted and to clarify who are the children of God.[272] Brandenburger also finds Paul's doctrine of justification by faith at the core of his argument. But it is expressed in the language of Scripture[273] and interpreted as creation theology.[274] Even the incidental scriptural interpretation of 9:11f. substantiates the message of justification with creation theology.[275] On the oft-treated topic of the legitimacy of Paul's scriptural interpretation, Brandenburger notes that Paul's interpretation is frequently at odds with historical-critical exegesis of the same texts.[276] He himself finds that Paul does occasionally import the meaning of the passage he is interpreting on the basis of Christ and the doctrine of justification; indeed, at decisive places.[277] While Brandenburger's analysis of Romans 9 is more attuned to the OT background of Paul's discourse than many other analyses and pays attention to the function of Paul's Scripture citations, he does not give detailed attention to Paul's OT quotations or to his actual interpretation of Scripture or to the meaning-effects on his argument.

A brief but impressive treatment of Paul's use of the OT in Romans 9-11 came from an unexpected source in Robert Badenas' 1985 monograph, *Christ the End of the Law: Romans 10.4 in Pauline Perspective*.[278] Badenas begins by noting that Paul's heavy quotation of the OT in Romans 9-11 has been generally overlooked in exegesis of the passage.[279] He then makes helpful observations concerning the order of the

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[271] Ibid, 13.

[272] Ibid, 19.

[273] Ibid, 34.

[274] Ibid, 41. Cf. p. 35.

[275] Ibid, 40-41.

[276] Ibid, 41-42.

[277] Ibid.

[278] Badenas, *Christ the End of the Law*, 90-92.

[279] Ibid, 90.

quotations and other formal matters. He concluded that

> Paul generally simplifies the OT text, or draws from its main idea. He seems more concerned with the idea than with the words, although sometimes his arguments are based upon the words (10.15-18). But it is evident that he looked more for the 'spirit' than for the 'letter' (9.33; 10.5-8, 13, 21).[280]

He also found that "Paul interprets the OT in the light of the Christ event (10.6-9, 10-13).[281] But the most important implication for Badenas regarding Paul's Scriptural quotations is probably that it suggests that his argument was "intended to persuade his audience of the continuity between the teaching of the Torah and the Christian message."[282] When Badenas turns to the actual exegesis of Paul, he takes Paul seriously as an interpreter of Scripture and conducts what may be characterized as an intertextual exegesis of Romans 10:5-8, giving attention to Jewish exegetical traditions and emphasizing attention to the original context of Paul's OT quotations as crucial for a correct understanding of both his Scripture use and his argument.[283] Thus he does attend to the meaning-effects of Paul's citation of Leviticus 18:5 and Deuteronomy 30:12-14. Badenas goes beyond viewing Paul's OT citations as mere proof-texts, and argues that "his quotations are references to whole contexts."[284] However, attention to original OT contexts and other intertextual matters are not as detailed as one would hope. Nevertheless, Badenas' investigation represents a real contribution to the intertextual exegesis of a portion of Romans 9-11.

A few years later, in 1988, B. D. Chilton wrote an article entitled, "Romans 9-11 as Scriptural Interpretation and Dialogue with Judaism," which also took Paul seriously as an interpreter of Scripture. Indeed, according to Chilton, Paul's interpretive activity

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[280] Ibid, 92. Cf. p. 124.

[281] Ibid. Cf. p. 125.

[282] Ibid.

[283] See Badenas, *Christ the End of the Law*, 118-33.

[284] Ibid, 124.

distinguishes Romans 9-11.[285] Chilton joins the many scholars who find Paul's fundamental argument to be drawn from the Torah.[286] Not as popular a contention is Chilton's claim that Paul generally attends carefully to the original sense of the passages he cites.[287] He characterizes Romans 9-11 as a "carefully orchestrated argument from all the main sections of the Hebrew canon" in which "logic and interpretation . . . interpenetrate to a remarkable degree."[288] Yet Chilton's study does not delve deeply into the original contexts of Paul's citations. He himself is quite sensitive to the relevant OT background and his comments are insightful. But this is not a detailed consideration of Paul's use of the OT and should probably not be classed as a true intertextual investigation, though it approaches such. It is an appropriate prelude to Hays' programmatic work, to which we now turn.

We have already discussed the general approach of Richard Hays to Paul's use of the OT in his study of 1989, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, in our introductory chapter.[289] We need not cover the same ground here, but will discuss Hays' contribution to the study of Paul's use of the OT in Romans 9-11, especially chapter 9. Hays asserts that Romans 9-11 is actually the heart of Romans. He points out that Romans 9-11 is similar to a lament psalm in structure. In harmony with the letter's overall purpose, "Romans 9-11 is an extended demonstration of the congruity between God's word in Scripture and God's word in Paul's gospel."[290] His analysis of Romans 9 conceives of Paul's quotation of Gen 21:12 in 9:7 as programmatic, suspending many OT passages in a complex "intertextual web." The key terms of the Gen 21 quote are recapitulated in quotations from other OT texts that create an *inclusio* encompassing verses 6-29. He points out that the Gen 21 quote is followed by a pesher style commentary, which "cites a text line by line and glosses each line

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[285] Chilton, "Rom 9-11," 28.

[286] Ibid, 29. Chilton continues: "but the nature of his reasoning, he [Paul] claims, is in line with that of the Prophets."

[287] Ibid.

[288] Ibid, 31.

[289] See ch. 1 above.

[290] Hays, *Echoes*, 64.

with a brief explanation."[291]

Hays believes that Paul's use of the potter/clay metaphor "alludes powerfully" to Jeremiah 18's parable.[292] He rightly notes that the image is not merely a rebuke to silence for impertinent questions or a demonstration of God's absolute power to do as he pleases. Taking his cue from the parable Hays sees Paul as suggesting through the allusion the idea of the potter's power as creative rather than destructive.

> The parable, spoken in prophetic judgment upon Israel, is simultaneously a summons to repentance and a reassurance of the benevolent sovereignty of God, persistently enacted in his love for his people Israel even in and through the pronouncement of judgment. . . . The reader who recognizes the allusion will not slip into the error of reading Rom. 9:14-29 as an excursus on the doctrine of predestination of individuals to salvation or damnation, because the prophetic subtexts keep the concern with which the chapter began—the fate of Israel— sharply in focus.[293]

It is worth noting that Hays points out that like other allusions and echoes earlier in the text, this allusion to Jeremiah 18 anticipates Paul's later argument. This highlights how subtexts can actually help shape Paul's argument and point toward his next rhetorical move. There is a pattern in Paul of his OT allusions foreshadowing the next stage of his argument: "an unvoiced element of the explicitly cited text subliminally generates the next movement of discourse."[294]

As Paul moves on in his argument, Hays points out how in 9:24 he picks up on the vocation motif of his initial OT citation in 9:7 with the word "called," and hangs the Hosea quotation onto it (9:25-26). Here, Hays contends that Paul has given a revisionary interpretation to the Hosea prophecy, because in its original setting it refers to the restoration of sinful and wayward Israel, while Paul refers it to the Gentiles being made God's people. Hays dismisses the notion that Paul might be making analogical use of Hosea, and insists that Paul is arguing that God spoke his

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[291] Ibid, 65.

[292] Ibid.

[293] Ibid, 66.

[294] Ibid, 70. Cf. ch. 5 below, pp. 368f.

intention through Hoesa to call the Gentiles. Hays proceeds to suggest that Paul has represented the Jewish people in the rejected roles of Ishmael, Esau, and Pharaoh. But therefore, they are themselves included in the "nonpeople" God calls and loves, which is the conclusion Paul will work out in ch. 11. "Thus, if in Romans 9 and 10 Paul deconstructs Scripture's witness to Israel's favored status, Romans 11 dialectically deconstructs the deconstructive reading, subverting any Gentile Christian pretension to a position of hermeneutical privilege."[295]

As for Paul's citation of Isaiah in 9:27-28, Hays sees an ambiguity about it, for it is a prophecy about Israel. He suggests that it is a word of hope showing that God calls Jews (as the Hosea passage was to prove that God calls Gentiles). Finally, Hays refers to Paul's echoing of Gen 21:12 again in 9:29 closing "an intertextual circle opened in 9:7."[296] While Hays' investigation of Romans 9-11 is obviously intertextual, it is far from detailed, and rather than offering a definitive account of Paul's interpretive activity, serves to call for further study of this rich and complex repository of Pauline Scripture interpretation. Indeed, Hays himself consistently calls for "the detailed exegesis of particular texts"[297] which "attend . . . to the meaning-effects produced by Paul's allusions and intertextual juxtapositions."[298] Furthermore, Hays' treatment of Romans 9-11 gives little attention to exegetical traditions which could be relevant to Paul's use of Scripture.[299] The present study offers the type of detailed investigation of Romans 9:1-9 demanded by Hays' work and broader developments in intertextual exegesis.

With the appearance of Hays' *Echoes of Scripture* there has been a decisive turn towards attention to Paul's use of the OT in Romans 9-11 and an intertextual approach to the same. The year prior to Hays' study, J. D. G. Dunn's commentary on Romans appeared, exhibiting a greater concern for Paul's interpretation of the OT

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[295] Ibid, 67.

[296] Ibid, 68.

[297] Richard B. Hays, "On the Rebound: A Response to Critiques of *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*," 79.

[298] Idem, "Crucified with Christ," 335, note 53.

[299] Cf. Craig A. Evans' friendly criticism of Hays in his review article, "Listening For Echoes of Interpreted Scripture."

than many previous commentaries,[300] but not quite taking an intertextual approach. More recent commentaries have been able to take into account Hays' approach in general and his analysis of Romans 9-11 in particular.[301] Still we have no commentary that gives the type of attention to Paul's use of the OT demanded by his argument in Romans 9-11. This is understandable given the focus and scope of typical commentaries, but the situation has left us with a lack of detailed intertextual exegesis of Paul's most Scripture-laden argument in any of his epistles. The present investigation aims to help fill this gap in Pauline studies. For more concentrated focus on Paul's use of the OT in Romans 9-11 we must turn to other types of studies.

In his 1990 article, "On Trusting an Unpredictable God: A Hermeneutical Meditation on Romans 9-11," Wayne Meeks recognizes that Paul's interpretation of Scripture, which he characterizes as "misreading," is a determinative feature of his rhetorical strategy and constitutive rather than merely illustrative of his argument. Meeks depends on Hays' approach to Paul's use of Scripture in his relatively brief review of the argument of Romans 9-11 and highlights what he regards as Paul's idiosyncratic scriptural interpretation. Here is no detailed analysis of the meaning-effects of Paul's scriptural allusions in Romans 9-11, as the article's subtitle alerts us, but an analysis that is sensitive to an intertextual appreciation of Paul's rhetoric and the demands that the original contexts of the Scriptures of Israel place upon his argument. Meeks concludes that Paul's use of Scripture is interpretive, social, and eschatological.[302]

N. T. Wright has made a major contribution to Pauline studies and our understanding of Romans in his important 1992 work, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology*, as well as his more recent essay, "Romans and the Theology of Paul."[303] In his chapter on Romans 9-11 in the former work,[304] Wright displays a significant sensitivity to Paul's use of the OT which informs his

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[300] Oss, "Paul's Use of Isaiah," 71 n. 2.

[301] E.g., Moo, Schreiner.

[302] Meeks, "Trusting an Unpredictable God," 118-24.

[303] Cf. his unpublished Oxford doctoral dissertation of 1980, "The Messiah and the People of God: A Study of Pauline Theology with particular Reference to the Argument of the Epistle to the Romans."

[304] Wright, *Climax*, 231-57. Cf. "Romans and the Theology of Paul," 56-62.

understanding of Paul's argument. His engagement with Paul's interpretive activity is all too brief throughout, yet his insightful approach is suggestive and demands further interaction with Paul's intertexts and Jewish tradition.[305] Another notable aspect of Wright's approach is an appreciation of the narrative aspects of Paul's interaction with Scripture.[306] Given Wright's lack of detail regarding Paul's specific allusions, his chief contribution is his focus on covenant and related themes in Paul's argument. Paul is a covenant theologian who believed "that the covenant purposes of Israel's God had reached their climactic moment in the events of Jesus' death and resurrection."[307] Thus, the δικαιοσύνη τοῦ θεοῦ is "God's own covenant faithfulness."[308]

> The main subject matter of Romans 9-11, then, is the covenant faithfulness of God, seen in its outworking in the history of the people of God. . . . He is arguing, basically, that the events of Israel's rejection of the gospel of Jesus Christ *are* the paradoxical outworking of God's covenant faithfulness. Only by such a process—Israel's unbelief, the turning to the Gentiles, and the continual offer of salvation to Jews also—can God be true to the promises to Abraham, promises which declared *both* that he would give him a worldwide family *and* that his own seed would share in the blessing.[309]

The basic approach of Wright's bold and compelling vision finds support in the results of our research.

The same year that Wright's *Climax of the Covenant* appeared, Douglas A. Oss completed a Ph.D. dissertation at Westminster Theological Seminary on "Paul's Use of Isaiah and Its Place in His Theology, with Special Reference to Romans 9-11." While Oss does not limit himself to Paul's use of Isaiah in Romans 9-11, it is here that he bases his assessment of Paul's "exegetical methods and hermeneutical

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[305] See, e.g., his general comments in *Climax*, 235f. and his more specific comments on Paul's use of Isaiah 2:3, 27:9, 59:20f., and Jer 31:34 on pp. 250f.

[306] See "Romans and the Theology of Paul," 56.

[307] Wright, *Climax*, xi.

[308] Ibid, 241.

[309] Ibid, 236.

commitments."[310] He argues: "that Isaiah was the primary scriptural substructure for Paul's argument not only on the basis of his extensive use of Isa-citations . . . but also because of the function of Isaiah in Paul's argument which goes beyond just the citations";[311] that Paul "does not alter the original sense of the language [of his citations] as much as he exercises great freedom in shifting the application," sometimes using Isaian language descriptively rather than theologically;[312] Paul's interpretive activity comes to expression both implicitly through his choice or alteration of text form and explicitly through his comments, which usually entail "some level of escalation of the meaning in the light of Christ";[313] "Paul also uses citations as part of his literary structure," the language of the citation usually serving to advance Paul's argument;[314] and, Paul rarely uses Scripture only as proof text. Oss also found that the primary conceptual function of Paul's Isaian citations in Romans 9-11 is demonstration of "the eschatological salvation/hardening of Israel and/or the Gentiles."[315] Moreover, Isaiah seems to have influenced Paul toward the conviction of the superiority "of faith over against empty keeping of the law."[316] For Oss,

> the one area in which Isaiah was clearly more influential than any other OT book is Paul's theology of Jew and Gentile in Christ. When speaking of the substructure of Paul's theology, we may rightly conclude that Isaiah is the substructure of Paul's theology of eschatological salvation. Indeed, Rom 9-11 is Paul's redemptive-historical exposition of the Isaian exile and return motif. The eschatological salvation which has come in Christ constitutes the redemptive-historical fulfillment of Isaiah's expectation.[317]

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[310] Oss, "Paul's Use of Isaiah," 4.

[311] Ibid, 129. The following description of his argument follows his own summary of his chapter on Paul's use of Isaiah in Rom 9-11 on pp. 129-31.

[312] Ibid.

[313] Ibid.

[314] Ibid.

[315] Ibid, 130.

[316] Ibid.

[317] Ibid.

Here we have a significant contribution to the type of work which needs to be done on Paul's use of the OT in Romans 9-11. There is an extended consideration of Paul's exegetical and hermeneutical activity based on an analysis of specific intertexts with some consideration of the semantic significance for Paul's argument. However, while there is a strong awareness of the original OT contexts, detailed attention to those contexts is lacking and there is virtually no attention to exegetical traditions concerning the texts Paul cites. Furthermore, the limited focus on Isaiah and significant attention to other matters related to Paul's use of Isaiah invite a more comprehensive and concentrated treatment of Paul's use of the OT in Romans 9.[318]

Frank Thielman adopts Hays' intertextual approach in his examination of the apparent contradiction between Romans 9:6-13 and 11:25-32 in his 1994 article, "Unexpected Mercy: Echoes of a Biblical Motif in Romans 9-11." By looking to the original contexts of Paul's scriptural quotations in Romans 9:6-13, Thielman finds that Paul had the narrative contexts of his citations in mind and that these contexts reveal the motif of unexpected mercy which Paul also advances throughout his argument in Romans 9-11, first in reference to the unexpected inclusion of the Gentiles (9:1-11:10), and then in reference to the re-inclusion of ethnic Israel (11:11-32). Other literature of Paul's time also noticed the motif of unexpected mercy in Genesis as well. Therefore, far from being contradictory, Paul's argument is carefully constructed and balanced. Once again, analysis of the OT texts and relevant exegetical traditions is not very detailed. Nevertheless, Litwak has judged Thielman's effort a fruitful application of Hays' approach to elucidate a difficult text.[319]

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[318] We should note that since the early 1990's, a spate of M.Th. theses have been completed on Paul's use of the OT in Rom 9-11 at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, especially due to the influence of G. K. Beale, who directed the M.Th. program there for many years and has himself made significant contributions to the use of the OT in the NT, especially in Revelation. Each one focuses on a specific passage within Rom 9-11 for an intertextual examination very similar to the methodology of the present investigation. These include: Tsuneo Maejima, "God's Wrath Against Israel: Paul's Use of The Old Testament Texts in Romans 11:7-10" (1992); Billy Kee-Hum Park, "God's Sovereign Election and Rejection: Paul's Use of the Old Testament in Romans 9:10-13" (1992); Robert David Keay Jr., "A Proposal Concerning Paul's Use of Hosea in Romans 9: Canonical-Traditional-Contextual" (1998); Elizabeth E. Shively, "An Analysis of Paul's Use of Deuteronomy 30:12-14 in Romans 10:6-8" (1998); and Terri-Lynn W. P. H. Tanaka, "Paul's Use of the Old Testament in Romans 9:19-23" (2000). While these studies are limited in space and detail as masters theses, they are still important to consider while analyzing Paul's use of the OT in Rom 9.

[319] K. D. Litwak, "Echoes of Scripture? A Critical Survey of Recent Works on Paul's Use of the Old Testament," 273.

Richard Bell largely ignores Hays and his contribution to the study of Paul's use of the OT in his 1994 monograph, *Provoked to Jealousy: The Origin and Purpose of the Jealousy Motif in Romans 9-11*. But he relies on C. H. Dodd's approach to the subject in his book, *According to the Scriptures*, which in some ways adumbrated Hays. Specifically, he provisionally embraces Dodd's basic contentions that Paul favored certain sections of the OT and that he could point to the broad original contexts of his quotations.[320] Like Hays, Bell takes the Song of Moses (Deut 32) to be a determinative influence on Paul's argument and theology in Romans 9-11. The whole Song lies in back of Paul's argument, and not only the verses he quoted. Bell conducts a detailed review of the use of the Song in Jewish and Christian tradition, though his treatment of the OT context is rather slim,[321] and demonstrates that it was the primary source of Paul's jealousy motif in Romans 9-11 and his theology of "the election and fall of Israel, her jealousy for the Gentiles, and then the salvation of Gentiles and Jews."[322] This work does not cover Romans 9 in depth or Paul's use of the OT there.

Daniel Jong-Sang Chae claims to "adopt Paul's use of the OT as a crucial interpretative key for his argument in the letter [to the Romans]"[323] in his 1997 monograph, *Paul as Apostle to the Gentiles: His Apostolic Self-Awareness and Its Influence on the Soteriological Argument in Romans*. Based on his judgment that Paul modifies the texts and contexts of his quotations, he proposes to "compare the original texts/contexts and Paul's modifications in order to grasp his intent for appealing to and modifying these OT passages."[324] Given Chae's focus, the most important characteristic of Paul's use of the OT in Romans 9-11 is that "he chooses some of the

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[320] Bell, *Provoked to Jealousy*, 201-09.

[321] Ibid, 209-84. See pp. 209-17 on the Song in the OT. The thinness of Bell's treatment lies in the lack of detailed exegesis of the Song in its own right.

[322] Ibid, 360.

[323] Chae, *Paul as Apostle to the Gentiles*, 13. On Rom 9-11 see Chae's ch. 5, "The Equality of Jew and Gentile in the Plan of God," pp. 215-88. Another 1997 work deserves at least a note of acknowledgement for its sensitivity to and perceptive use of OT background when dealing with passages from Rom 9-11: C. H. Cosgrove, *Elusive Israel: The Puzzle of Election in Romans*.

[324] Ibid, 13f.

most severely critical passages in the OT" to apply to Jews, and "he applies to *Gentiles* some of the passages most affirmative of Israel."[325] Indeed, Paul "never applies the OT to accuse Gentiles but rather to explain *Israel's* unbelief and the Gentiles' faith and inclusion in the true people of God."[326] Chae's study cannot give the type of detailed attention to Paul's use of the OT that his argument in Romans 9-11 requires because of its own specific focus, but it shows that some basic intertextual methodology is beginning to find its way into Pauline scholarship as part of the fundamental method of interpreting Pauline texts.

J. Ross Wagner has written an important and recent monograph published in 2002, which gives significant attention to Romans 9-11 entitled, *Heralds of the Good News: Isaiah and Paul "in Concert" in the Letter to the Romans*.[327] As a student of Richard Hays, Wagner brings a sophisticated intertextual reading of Paul's interpretive activity to his study of Paul's reading of Scripture which gives prominent attention to meaning-effects. As a recent contributor to the mass of literature on Romans 9-11 and Paul's use of Scripture, he has availed himself of the latest research in these and related areas, including LXX textual criticism. He has interacted with the work of Koch, Stanley and Timothy Lim, building on their insights while offering important correctives at various points. Because his study generally pays close attention to the context of Paul's argument in Romans, he is better able to make text critical judgments that turn on internal evidence, as is so often the case.[328] Although Wagner does devote significant attention to Romans 9-11 and to the meaning-effects of Paul's use of Scripture, his focus is at the same time much broader and more specific than the present investigation, as revealed by his title. Wagner's focus is broader in that it is concerned with the book of Romans (particularly chapters 9, 10, 11, and 15). Yet it is narrower in that Wagner focuses his attention on Paul's use of Isaiah. This narrower focus brings Wagner to devote serious attention not only to Paul's use of specific Isaian texts, but also to broader issues of Isaian influence on

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[325] Ibid, 218; emphasis his. Cf. p. 286.

[326] Ibid; emphasis his.

[327] Originally submitted as a doctoral thesis at Duke University in 1999 under the title, " 'Who Has Believed Our Message?': Paul and Isaiah 'in Concert' in the Letter to the Romans."

[328] See his claim to this effect: Wagner, *Heralds*, 13f.

Paul and his gospel and his ministry. In his words, he explores "the dynamic relationship between Paul's reading of Isaiah and his understanding of the gospel, including his own apostolic calling."[329] Wagner's focus on Paul's use of Isaiah in Romans places his investigation on a related but separate track from the present study, which focuses on Romans 9:1-9, investigates every Scriptural allusion there, and has the exegesis and theology of this smaller passage as its main goal, the implications of which are then applied to broader questions of exegesis in Romans, theology, and Pauline Scripture use. The comprehensive nature of the present investigation within Romans 9:1-9 with respect to Paul's use of the Old Testament provides for a unique position from which to analyze Paul's argument and the theology which flows from it. Understanding Romans 9:1-9 better will then help us to understand Romans 9-11 better, and indeed the epistle as a whole. This type of in-depth investigation is impossible in a study like Wagner's due to the larger amount of material covered, and narrower concern for Isaian influence. As one might expect, there is significant similarity to Oss' thesis discussed above, but Wagner's study is more exegetically oriented and much more detailed.[330]

We have now come to the end of our selective survey of scholarship on Paul's use of the OT in Romans 9-11. It should be clear that Pauline scholarship is only now taking Paul seriously as an interpreter of Scripture and attending to his use of the OT in all its semantic significance for his discourse. Romans 9:1-9 has never been exposed to a comprehensive analysis of Paul's use of Scripture which gives significant attention to the Old Testament contexts of his allusions, exegetical traditions of the passages he alludes to, and the relevant text forms of his allusions, while attending to the meaning and function of Scripture within the passage, and incorporates the results of this analysis into a thorough exegesis of the passage. The present investigation intends to do exactly this, contributing to the current surge of research in this area and yielding greater understanding of Romans 9:1-9, and therefore Romans 9-11, the epistle as a whole, Paul's theology, and his use of Scripture.

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[329] Wagner, "Paul and Isaiah," iv.

[330] Cf. also Florian Wilk, *Die Bedeutung des Jesajabuches für Paulus*, which is even broader in scope than Wagner's thesis; Shum, *Paul's Use of Isaiah*. Surprisingly, Wagner shows no awareness of Oss' contribution.

Chapter Three

Paul's Use of the Old Testament in Romans 9:1-5

While Romans 9:1-5 is steeped in the Old Testament, there is only one significant allusion to a specific biblical text in these verses. Most commentators recognize an allusion to Exodus 32:32 in Romans 9:3 even though there is no verbal similarity between the two texts.[1] Indeed, Cranfield considers it highly likely that Paul had Exodus 32:31-32 in mind,[2] Munck was of the opinion that there could "be no doubt" about the parallel,[3] and Wiles claims that Paul "must have had" Moses' intercession in mind.[4] Yet the allusion has never been fully explored for the significance it might have for Paul's argument. In accordance with the methodological procedure laid out in chapter one, this chapter will delve into this important background by (1) a detailed exegesis of Exodus 32:32 and its context (chs. 32-34) followed by (2) a comparison of the text of Romans 9:3 with the textual tradition of Exodus 32:32 followed by (3) a survey of the relevant ancient interpretive traditions surrounding Exodus 32:32. Finally, we will (4) examine the New Testament context of Exodus 32:32, which amounts to an exegesis of Romans 9:1-5 in light of our research into its Old Testament background and associated interpretive traditions. Our analysis will show more clearly than ever before that Paul did allude to Exodus 32:32 and its context, and that this allusion is important for a full understanding of Romans 9:1-5 and its context.

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[1] See Moo, 559 n. 21.

[2] Cranfield, 454.

[3] J. Munck, *Christ and Israel: An Interpretation of Romans 9-11*, 29.

[4] Gordon P. Wiles, *Paul's Intercessory Prayers: The Significance of the Intercessory Prayer Passages in the Letters of St. Paul*, 256. We could multiply references to such statements, as e.g., the assertion of L. T. Johnson, 145, that the allusion is unmistakable, and the comment of J. D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 504 n. 25, that an echo of Ex 32:32 is almost certain. Käsemann, 258, who finds the parallel tempting and admits that the majority of exegetes hold to it, is one of the few to actually argue against it, claiming that there is no evidence for it.

The Old Testament Context of Exodus 32:32

Exodus 32:32 appears in one of the most foundational passages in all of the Old Testament, Exodus 32-34. Indeed, it functions for Israel in the scriptural history as Genesis 3 does for mankind.[5] It records "the paradigm of apostasy,"[6] more than that, the paradigm of fall and restoration canonically recapitulated in passages such as Deuteronomy 32 and frequently in the prophets.[7] Moreover, the importance of chapters 32-34 for the book of Exodus can hardly be overstated. Durham's comments are to the point: "It is a tight narrative . . . permeated by the central theological concern of Exodus . . . . If a narrative paradigmatic of what Exodus is really about were to be sought, Exod 32-34 would be the obvious first choice."[8]

Though not uncontested,[9] the tendency among recent interpreters is to take Exodus 32-34 as a unity in its final, canonical form.[10] This is in fact the only approach that makes sense if we want to understand Paul's use of these chapters, for he was certainly not interested in their tradition-historical prehistory, literary sources, or redactional stages, nor did he question their historicity. We should "join Paul in positing the Mosaic authorship, historical accuracy, and above all, divine authority of Exod. 32-34" and "seek to read the text as a narrative with *direct* theological import and relevance for his world-view. Such a synchronic reading of Exod. 32-34, with a

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[5] See Scott J. Hafemann, *Paul, Moses, and the History of Israel: The Letter/Spirit Contrast and the Argument from Scripture in 2 Corinthians 3*, 228ff., for insightful development of this parallel. Cf. Fretheim, 279. Houtman, 608, wittily labels the episode of the golden bull-calf as "Israel's original sin."

[6] R. W. L. Moberly, *At the Mountain of God: Story and Theology in Exodus 32-34*, 46.

[7] As Durham, 418, comments: "That these chapters are paradigmatic of Israel's relationship with Yahweh throughout the OT is . . . obvious, and the farthest thing from coincidence."

[8] Durham, 418. In the introduction to his commentary, Durham argues that the central and unifying theme of Exodus as a whole is "the theology of Yahweh present with and in the midst of his people Israel" (xxi). He goes on to identify two themes arising from this main concern: (1) Deliverance/Salvation/Rescue, and (2) Covenant, "the provision of a means of Response to Deliverance" (xxiii). Cf. G. H. Davies, 48.

[9] According to Houtman, 605.

[10] See the commentaries for the varying source-critical suggestions. Durham, 417, helpfully gives a concise summary of general source-critical approaches to these chapters, and concise summaries for individual passages throughout the relevant sections of his commentary; see also the commentary of Brevard Childs for similar source-critical summaries of scholarship.

focus on its final narrative form and explicit theological themes, is the necessary first step in approaching Paul's reception of this text"[11] in Romans 9. Therefore, the parts of Exodus 32-34 must be interpreted with reference to one another, and similarly, the whole should be interpreted against the larger context of the book, and indeed the whole Old Testament. Moreover, Exodus 32-34 is a narrative, and should be interpreted with sensitivity to its character as story.[12]

When approaching Exodus 32-34, it is important to recognize that Israel had only just been constituted a nation through their covenant with the Lord at the time of their sin with the golden bull-calf (Ex 19-31, esp. chs. 19, 20, 24).[13] Moses is still receiving additional covenant stipulations and the covenant documents/tablets of the Law when the people break the covenant at its very heart, transgressing the commandments YHWH deemed important to repeat after the initial revelation of the Law at Mount Sinai, the prohibition against other gods and the making of idols (Ex 20:3ff., 23).[14] Moreover, Moberly has pointed out that "after the covenant ratification ceremony in Ex. 24, the people were in principle ready to move off from Sinai to the

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[11] Hafemann, *Paul*, 194, speaking with reference to Paul's use of Ex 32-34 in 2 Cor 3; emphasis his. See pp. 191-95 for Hafemann's whole treatment of this issue, which represents our approach well. His study is notable for its attention to Ex 32-34 with a view toward Paul's use of the passage. His treatment of Ex 32-34 is a contribution to OT exegesis in its own right, and is an example of the type of work that needs to be done in Pauline studies. Moberly, *Mountain*, 15-43, devotes a whole chapter to methodology in narrative interpretation and the related questions of the prehistory and final form of the text.

[12] Evidence of the narrative character of Ex 32-34 may be observed in the titles of several recent studies on the passage or which give significant attention to it such as Martin Ravndal Hauge, *The Descent from the Mountain: Narrative Patterns in Exodus 19-40*; Moberly (see n. 6 above); H. C. Brichto, "The Worship of the Golden Calf: A Literary Analysis of a Fable on Idolatry"; R. E. Hendrix, "A Literary Structural Analysis of the Golden-Calf Episode in Exodus 32:1-33:6." Moberly's study is a standard demonstration of sound exegesis sensitive to the narrative character of the text. Houtman, 627-29, gives a concise account of the nature of the narrative in Ex 32, including scenes and actors. Hauge, idem, 21-96 (esp. 64-96), provides numerous narrative parallels between Ex 32-34 and 19-40, and within Ex 32-34 on pp. 156-89.

[13] Cf. Moberly, *Mountain*, 44f. It is well recognized that עֵגֶל specifically denotes a bull-calf, although it is traditionally rendered "calf." See, e.g., Osborn and Hatton, 751; Moberly, *Mountain*, 196 n. 8; William L. Holladay, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, 264; Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, s.v. Some, such as Moberly (ibid) and Hafemann, *Paul*, 195 n. 22, purposely retain the designation "calf" because of its familiarity. But perhaps the time has come to break with tradition for the sake of precision as Houtman has done in his commentary. Nevertheless, we will retain the more traditional rendering when discussing extra-biblical material that does so.

[14] For Ex 20:23 as a variation of the first two commandments, see Durham, 319.

land which Yahweh would give them where they would live as his people."[15] Furthermore, the absolute holiness of YHWH has been emphasized in the narrative prior to Exodus 32-34. The people may not approach the mountain of his presence lest they die; they must consecrate themselves even to see him at a distance; they could not bear the awesome sound of his voice and tokens of his presence (Ex 19:10-13; 20:18-21). If they could not bear his presence in blessing, what could be expected when they had transgressed his covenant in the most blatant way possible?

The narrative progresses forward from the occurrence of the most disastrous of problems, threatening the very existence of the nation, to its resolution through a series of intercessions by Moses on behalf of the people amidst a back and forth contrast of events on top of the mountain in the divine sphere and at the bottom of the mountain in the human sphere. The narrative as a whole abruptly interrupts the book's course of events. The next step in the story was to be the construction of the Tabernacle followed by the conquest of the Promised Land. But Israel sinned and called all into question. It is a situation that must be resolved. Its abruptness works to highlight these chapters in the broader narrative and complements their central role.

We may divide Exodus 32-34 into nine sections:[16]

32:1-6	Israel sins with the golden bull-calf.
32:7-14	The Lord threatens destruction and Moses intercedes.
32:15-29	Moses breaks the covenant and brings its judgment upon Israel.
32:30-33:6	Moses intercedes a second time and YHWH restores the promise of land but in merciful judgment withdraws his presence, bringing the people to penitent mourning.
33:7-11	Moses enjoys the presence of YHWH in acute intimacy, while the people are separated from his presence and worship him from afar.
33:12-23	Moses intercedes a third time, receiving the pledge of the restoration of YHWH's presence to the people and a (limited) revelation of his glory.

[15] Moberly, *Mountain*, 45.

[16] Moberly (ibid, 5f., 44-115) and Hafemann, *Paul*, 196-225, offer relatively similar structures. In my opinion, Moberly unnecessarily divides 32:15-29 into three subsections and Hafemann unnecessarily divides the discussion between YHWH and Moses in 32:7-14 into two parts. The placement of 34:10 is difficult because it goes both with what precedes and what follows. Therefore, Moberly treats the verse on its own (93ff.). But it seems best to take it with the rest of the divine speech it begins in recognition that the whole speech is a response to Moses' final petition found in 34:8-9 (itself a response to the theophanic revelation of YHWH). Of course, there are many valid ways of dividing the material, as a perusal of various commentaries will show. But we take the one offered here to represent the units of thought most accurately.

34:1-9	The revelation of YHWH's glory, preparation for covenant renewal, and Moses's fourth and final intercession.
34:10-28	Renewal of the covenant, including stipulations and tablets.
34:29-35	The renewed covenant and the glory of YHWH mediated through Moses.

Moses' intercessions, interspersed throughout the narrative and providing its basic structure,[17] unfalteringly seek to gain back all Israel lost through its sin, from its literal existence to the presence of YHWH in their midst along with the election that accompanied that presence. Both YHWH's mercy and Moses himself become the key to the resolution of the problem posed by Israel's sin.

Exodus 32:1-6

Ex 32:1-6 records Israel's sin with the golden bull-calf. Moses' long stay on the mountain gave rise to the people's desire for "a god who will go before us" (אֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר יֵלְכוּ לְפָנֵינוּ; 32:1). It is for this purpose that they gathered against (עַל) Aaron,[18] to secure the presence and image of YHWH to lead them into the Promised Land. In offering the absence of Moses as the reason (כִּי) for their demand, they signal that they seek in part a substitute for Moses.[19] It is not that the people regarded Moses as a god or as YHWH. Rather, "Moses is the one who uniquely mediates Yahweh's guidance and leadership to the people" and "the calf is a challenge to Moses' leadership; it is a rival means of mediating Yahweh's presence to the people."[20] Therefore, while the plural אֱלֹהִים could indicate that the people

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[17] Cf. Hafemann, *Paul*, 225.

[18] Contra Houtman, 631. עַל could mean "to" in this context, but the derisive tone of the people and their wicked intent suggests hostility. Durham, 415f. and Childs, 564, support this rendering, while Moberly, *Mountain*, 46, and Hafemann, *Paul*, 196, offer a mediating position regarding קהל על to mean "gather to" with ominous connotation. Cf. Num 16:3; 20:2.

[19] So Moberly, *Mountain*, 46-48; Hafemann, *Paul*, 196-98; Houtman, 640; George W. Coats, "The King's Loyal Opposition: Obedience and Authority in Exodus 32-34," 95.

[20] Moberly, ibid, 46. He later points out that the parallelism between 32:1-6 and 25:1-9 suggests, "The calf thus functions not only as a parallel to Moses, but also to the ark/tabernacle" (47).

sought gods to replace YHWH with, it is more likely that it refers to a physical image of YHWH meant to embody and mediate his presence.[21]

So Aaron collected the people's golden earrings and fashioned a molten bull-calf (32:2-4).[22] 32:4b gives expression to the horror of what has happened in the people's attribution of deity and the glory of the Exodus to the idol with the fateful words: "This is your god, Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt." The echo of 20:2 in these words gives a further sickening twist to the idolatry—perhaps worse than forsaking YHWH for other gods, they have equated him with a manmade statue![23] The whole episode culminates in worship of the bull-calf with a cultic feast-orgy,[24] the utter depths of perversity from a biblical perspective.

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[21] There are five reasons for this: (1) the term אֱלֹהִים can be used with either a singular or plural verb in reference to YHWH (A standard observation; Childs, 556, contrasts the plural in 1 Kgs 12:28 and the singular in Neh 9:18. Hafemann, *Paul*, 196, gives a number of other references. Coats, "Loyal Opposition," 94f., thinks the plural indicates construction of multiple calves.); (2) it is the absence of Moses, the one who led Israel out of Egypt as YHWH's mediator, that prompts the demand; (3) the people view the bull-calf as the god who brought them up out of Egypt (32:4); (4) the worship of the bull-calf took the form of a feast to YHWH (32:5-6); and (5) cult statues in Mesopotamian religion were used to invoke a divine presence (see Hafemann, *Paul*, 197 n. 27).

[22] The variety of difficult questions surrounding the construction of the bull-calf need not concern us here. For a concise yet thorough description of the syntactical and exegetical problems in 32:4, see Childs, 555f. Houtman, 637, adds that ויצר could also be derived from יצר, though this would require an emendation of the MT's pointing. Though the issues are not easily resolved, the traditional rendering seems best in my judgment and can be made sense of. I would translate 32:4a: "He took from their hand and fashioned [from צור] it [i.e., the gold of 32:3] with a metalworking tool [חֶרֶט] and made it a molten bull-calf." For the rendering of חֶרֶט as "metalworking tool," see Durham, 415f.

[23] The actual function of the golden bull-calf is disputed, whether it was conceived of as (1) a throne for YHWH (so James Plastaras, *The God of Exodus: The Theology of the Exodus Narratives*, 238; for representatives of each option see Hafemann, *Paul*, 198 n. 33, who identifies this as the predominant interpretation,); (2) an image of another god; (3) an image of YHWH (O. Eißfeldt's conception [referred to in Houtman, 625] of a likeness on a standard would fall under this last option, though it seems an unwarranted suggestion). The third option is the view advanced above and is the only option with solid evidence in the text, namely, the designation of the bull-calf image as the god who rescued Israel from Egypt (32:4-5, 8).

[24] Houtman, 642f., makes a good case for taking לְצַחֵק to refer to cultic dancing/merriment rather than sexual play as it is often taken. He could have strengthened his case by noting that 32:19 specifically says that the people were dancing. Nevertheless, the facts that (a) צחק can connote sexual play, (b) sexual activity frequently took place in ancient cultic contexts, and (c) (as pointed out by Childs, 566) 32:25 describes the people's activity as out of control, suggest that sexual activity was part of the merriment (along with feasting, dancing, etc.) described generally in 32:6. In support of the sexual connotation here see Childs, 556, 566.

Exodus 32:7-14

If there was any doubt that Israel's behavior was a reprehensible violation of the covenant only recently established, it is completely removed by YHWH's response recorded in 32:7-10. He informs Moses of Israel's sin, revealing that they had acted corruptly (שׁחת) and quickly turned aside from the way he commanded them, his covenant way. Even the way he refers to Israel as "your people whom you brought up from the land of Egypt" (עַמְּךָ אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלִיתָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם; v. 7) implies that their election is in danger. It soon becomes clear that Israel's idolatry threatens not only her election, but her very existence as well.[25] YHWH observes that Israel is corrupt in its character, calling them a stiff-necked people (עַם־קְשֵׁה־עֹרֶף; v. 9), that is, obstinate and rebellious. Then he directs Moses to leave him *in order that* his anger might burn against them and therefore destroy them and make Moses into a great nation. So YHWH proposes exterminating Israel and starting the nation over with Moses.

It might seem that Moses himself exhibits a stiff neck in refusing YHWH's command to leave him alone. But the command is directly connected to a purpose clause. Therefore, this is more of an offer to Moses that is contingent upon his response, and thus an invitation to respond, rather than a literal command.[26] Yet, even though YHWH invites Moses to intercede on behalf of Israel and awaken his mercy so as to overcome his judgment, his offer to Moses appears sincere. Moses' response

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[25] Hafemann, *Paul*, 198, notes under his treatment of 32:1-6 that Israel's idolatry already implicitly annulled their position as God's chosen people.

[26] This minimizes the tension upon which Coats' article, "Loyal Opposition," is based. Nevertheless, the article is filled with insight, and Moses' intercessory activity may still rightfully be dubbed "loyal opposition" since it sets itself against YHWH's justified judgment on his people, albeit based on YHWH's own character. It is worth noting that Moses himself "commands" YHWH with an imperative (שׁוּב) in v. 12, but in context this must be understood as a request. Moberly, *Mountain*, 50, notes the remarkable fact that YHWH "makes his action in some way dependent on the agreement of Moses." Cf. Hafemann, *Paul*, 199, who follows Brichto, "Golden Calf," 9, and also understands the command as an invitation to intercede similar to the pattern found in prophetic discourse. Taking the arguments of Moberly and Hafemann/Brichto together with our observations above yields a strong case. Cf. the dialogue between YHWH and Abraham in Gen 18, the context of which is alluded to by Paul in Rom 9:9

will largely determine Israel's fate. Fortunately for Israel, Moses took up YHWH's invitation. He sought YHWH's favor (פנה + הלה; 32:11) for his people (32:11-13).

Through his opening question, Moses suggests that YHWH should not destroy his people, furnishing two of four supporting reasons: (1) Israel's identity as YHWH's people, an implicit argument which runs through Moses' entreaty and is raised by his manner of speaking of Israel (a) as "your people" (עַמֶּךָ; 32:11f.) in contrast to YHWH's designation of them as Moses' people (32:7), and (b) as the descendants of the fathers; and (2) YHWH's deliverance of Israel from Egypt, i.e., the Exodus in which he had already bestowed grace and favor upon them (21:11).[27] Moses follows with a second question providing the third reason supporting his request: YHWH's glory/reputation, which could be mistakenly maligned by the appearance of evil intent towards Israel from the beginning (32:12a).[28] Only after these two loaded questions does Moses directly state his request (32:12b): "Turn from your burning anger and relent (הִנָּחֵם) concerning the harm (הָרָעָה) to your people!"

Now, Moses culminates his petition by offering his strongest argument—YHWH's own word of promise to the fathers (32:13): "Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, your servants who you swore to by yourself, and promised to them, 'I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land which I said, "I will give to your seed and they will inherit forever." ' " Moberly has noted insightfully that Moses "uses the special name 'Israel' instead of Jacob, thus claiming God's promise in all its fullness."[29] Thus, Moses' "clinching argument"[30] is YHWH's faithfulness to his word. While it lies beyond the scope of our discussion to examine the logical relationships between Moses' four arguments in detail, we may say that they all tie in

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[27] Cf. Durham's (429) helpful summary of the four grounds supporting Moses' supplication, which differs somewhat from our description. The significance of mentioning the Exodus seems much less to do with the trouble YHWH went to on Israel's behalf as Durham suggests (cf. Ps.-Philo, *LAB* 12:9) than with the precedent of grace bestowed it provides, an argument that figures prominently in principle for Moses in his last two intercessions (33:12-23; 34:9) where he pleads for mercy for Israel based on the favor he himself had received from YHWH.

[28] Coats, "Loyal Opposition," 97, curiously argues that Moses does not appeal to YHWH's reputation and collapses this Mosaic argument into the final one of promise. Cf. Hafemann, *Paul*, 199 n. 37.

[29] Moberly, *Mountain*, 50.

[30] Donald E. Gowan, *Theology in Exodus: Biblical Theology in the Form of a Commentary*, 224.

to YHWH's faithfulness to his relationship with his covenant people, most fittingly summed up by reference to his covenant promise to the fathers. And so Moses' prayer proves successful. He convinces YHWH to turn from his stated intention of destroying Israel (32:14).

It is commonly assumed that Moses' arguments practically force YHWH to assent to his request. This assumption generally attaches to the appeal to YHWH's faithfulness since it is Moses' climactic argument. It is thought that Moses has shown YHWH that if he were to carry out his plan to destroy Israel, then he would violate his promise and become unfaithful.[31] But this is not borne out by the text. Moberly is correct to say, "Yahweh's faithfulness to his promise, to which Moses appeals in v. 13, becomes the reason why Yahweh spares the people,"[32] but it does not necessarily follow that it was an inescapably persuasive reason. That is, YHWH could have gone through with his proposed actions to exterminate Israel and start over with Moses and still remain true to his promise to the fathers.[33] Indeed, YHWH himself alludes to the promise to Abraham in his proposal to Moses (cf. Gen 12:3 and Ex 32:10)![34] He still would have fulfilled his promise of descendants and land to Abraham and his seed through Moses, though destroying the nation would not lie comfortably with the spirit of the promise. Nevertheless, the text in no way presents YHWH as proposing evil, only to be restrained by Moses. Rather, his mercy is exalted and will find its most sublime expression later in the narrative (33:19; 34:6-7).

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[31] Both Hafemann, *Paul*, 200, and Coats, "Loyal Opposition," 98, go so far as to contend that it would be an evil act on God's part to carry out his intention. Coats states that "Moses himself labels God's intention to destroy as an evil," but this is to miss the semantic complexity of the Hebrew רָע, which can denote far more than moral evil. It can mean harm or distress as it almost certainly does here. Indeed, it can refer to harm imposed by YHWH as judgment for violating the covenant (Deut 29:19-20; Eng. 29:20-21). Moses is not accusing God of contemplating moral evil, but beseeching him to relent from justified punishment/harm. Hafemann himself admits that Moses fully assents to YHWH's assessment of the character of the people as wicked. The flexibility of רָע can be seen by a comparison with 32:12, where it does refer to moral evil as it is connected with the Egyptians' potential *false* perception of YHWH's character should he destroy Israel, viz., that he planned to destroy them all along and led them to the mountains for that purpose.

[32] Moberly, *Mountain*, 50.

[33] Fretheim, 286, and Gowan, *Theology in Exodus*, 224f., are among the few to recognize this point, as does Midrash Rabbah Exodus 44:10 (see the translation by S. M. Lehrman, *Midrash Rabbah: Exodus*, 515).

[34] Cf. Moberly, *Mountain*, 50; Fretheim, 286.

Thus, rather than obliged to spare, YHWH is free to destroy Israel. They deserve it. But he is gracious and compassionate, and this is why Moses' arguments prove persuasive with him. This in no way mitigates the importance of Moberly's point that YHWH's faithfulness serves as the basis of his mercy here.[35] But it is to recognize that in this instance YHWH's mercy also serves as the basis of his faithfulness. He could have chosen a different way to be faithful to his word. But it was his propensity to show mercy that led him to choose this way, the way of mercy. The fact that virtually everyone agrees that YHWH's mercy is one of the dominant themes of Exodus 32-34 should render it no surprise that this motif surfaces so strongly at this point.

Nevertheless, we should not lose sight of the important theme of YHWH's faithfulness to his promise found here. Indeed, as our discussion has shown, YHWH's faithfulness is intimately connected to his mercy in Exodus 32. It is this "theme of Yahweh's faithfulness to his promise despite seemingly impossible obstacles . . . evident in other JE stories, most notably the Abraham cycle (Gen 12-25) . . ." that enables Moberly to suggest "an interpretation of Ex. 32-34 also in terms of a challenge to Yahweh's promise and the vindication of his faithfulness. The challenge is particularly potent in that it arises not from external danger . . . but from the sinfulness of God's own people . . . ."[36] Needless to say, YHWH rises to the challenge and proves faithful.

This merciful expression of YHWH's faithfulness highlights the significance of Moses' role as intercessor to an even greater extent than usually acknowledged. For Israel's fate does rely on his intercession. Thus, we find here the traditional theological tension between divine sovereignty and human will/action.[37] The passage at hand presents a dynamic interaction between divine and human roles as YHWH limits his determinations to some extent by granting Moses a decisive role. Yet

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[35] Ibid.

[36] Ibid, 52.

[37] This aspect of the text has been highlighted by Moberly, *Mountain*, 51-52; Gowan, *Theology in Exodus*, 222-27; Fretheim, 283-87; Coats, "Loyal Opposition," who all come to relatively similar conclusions as ours below. Besides the obvious intercessory context, such reflections tend to revolve around YHWH's command to Moses to leave him alone, understood as some sort of invitation to help determine the outcome of the situation (32:10) and the statement that YHWH did relent (traditionally, "repent"; 32:14).

YHWH remains in control. Every decision rests finally with him even as he makes himself open to Moses' influence.

At this point in the narrative it is unclear what exactly will become of Israel. On the one hand, they have sinned so grievously that YHWH was about to destroy them. On the other hand, Moses has convinced YHWH not to do so, at least for the time being. But he has made no commitment concerning their fate, the comment of 32:14 being editorial comment and not part of the inner narrative (cf. 32:30), and in any case lacking the idea of permanent commitment. What is Israel's status now? It does not take long to see that all is not well with Israel as the narrative turns to find Israel's only advocate pronouncing judgment upon her!

Exodus 32:15-29

Moses descends from the divine sphere at the top of the mountain to the sin-soaked reality of the people at the bottom. The text emphasizes the divine origin and character of the two tablets of the testimony carried by Moses down the mountain (32:15-16). When Moses sees the idol and the idolatrous festivity, he became enraged as was YHWH, and smashes the tablets, indicating the breaking of the covenant between YHWH and Israel. The covenant is annulled by the covenant mediator.[38] Israel is no longer YHWH's people, their election nullified.

Moses goes on to destroy the bull-calf completely and punish the people by forcing them to drink its remains. Then Moses turns to Aaron. Their exchange highlights the sinful character of the people and Aaron's culpability in leading the people astray.[39] Moses then wastes no time in bringing further judgment on the people, assuming the role of prophet and calling for all who are faithful to YHWH to gather to him, and then charging those who gathered, the Levites, to kill the guilty

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[38] This is the standard interpretation of Moses' smashing of the tablets. See Moberly, *Mountain*, 53 (who indicates that this is the standard view); Hafemann, *Paul*, 202; Durham, 430; Fretheim, 287; Gowan, *Theology in Exodus*, 227; Davies, 233; Clements, 208; Noth, 249; Cole, 218; Plastaras, *The God of Exodus*, 240.

[39] Childs' (570) contrast of Aaron and Moses is quite eloquent, even if bordering on being sacrilegious: "Aaron saw the people 'bent on evil'; Moses defended them before God's hot anger (v. 11). Aaron exonerated himself from all active involvement; Moses put his own life on the line for Israel's sake. Aaron was too weak to restrain the people; Moses was strong enough to restrain even God."

among the people.[40] These Levites seem to represent a faithful remnant.[41] They are clearly approved and can hope to obtain the blessing of the Lord (32:29). While the story of the Levites' actions is shrouded in obscurity, "The key to understanding the episode is to appreciate that its central concern is a life-or-death faithfulness to Yahweh. . . . The primary significance of the story is to show that death is the penalty for unfaithfulness to Yahweh and the covenant, whereas blessing (v. 29b) is the reward for faithfulness."[42] The necessity of slaying brothers and sons probably stresses "the costliness of faithfulness to Yahweh."[43]

The sharp contrast between the Levites and the people as a whole intensifies the problem that has resulted from the people's idolatry. As things stand, the covenant has been nullified and three thousand people have been slain. Israel's fate is still very uncertain. This becomes clear as a new section begins and Moses draws attention to the magnitude of the people's sin and expresses an uncertain hope of making atonement for them ("perhaps [אוּלַי] I can make atonement for your sin"; 32:30).

Exodus 32:30-33:6

We have now arrived at the section in which Paul's allusion in Romans 9:3 lies, Moses' second intercession on behalf of Israel. The covenant remains broken due to the people's sin and there is no telling what further measures YHWH will take against Israel. The purpose of Moses' intercession is to make atonement (כפר; 32:30) for Israel's sin and thus restore Israel's relationship with YHWH and all that their covenant relationship with him promised.[44]

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[40] It is not clear whether the Levites killed only other Levites or anyone they found involved in idolatry, but the latter seems far more likely. See Moberly, *Mountain*, 55, on the question. Childs, 571, describes Moses as taking the role of prophet here, pointing to his use of the prophetic idiom (rare in the Pentateuch), "Thus says the Lord," in proclamation of the divine word of judgment.

[41] Moberly, ibid; Hafemann, *Paul*, 203.

[42] Moberly, ibid.

[43] Ibid.

[44] The LXX may stress the break between YHWH and Israel, and the need for their relationship to be reestablished by using θεός instead of the usual translation for YHWH, κύριος; see J. W. Wevers, *Notes on the Greek Text of Exodus*, 536.

Moses begins his intercession with a confession of the immensity of Israel's sin with the golden bull-calf (32:31). This confession lays greater stress on Moses' ensuing request and thus implicitly appeals to YHWH's mercy. Moses begins to ask YHWH to forgive the people's sin, but never completes the thought, because in an emotive appeal he places himself on the line for the people he represents. He breaks off his request in mid-sentence to present the most powerful reason he could personally offer—his own life: "But now, if you will forgive their sin—and if not, blot me out please from your book which you have written" (32:32).[45] The effect is to ground Moses' request with the deterrent of his death, essentially saying, "If you will not forgive Israel, then blot me out of your book." Moses does not offer his life as a substitute for the people here, but throws his lot in with them.[46] Moses requests to suffer the fate of the people with them if YHWH will not forgive them. Thus, he attempts to make his life the price YHWH must pay for releasing his wrath on Israel.

Moses' entreaty relies on his own favor with YHWH as well as his own innocence in the matter of the golden bull-calf. He may also be alluding to his former conversation with YHWH in which YHWH offered to begin anew with Moses as the father of the chosen people and Moses refused this request.[47] We may note an escalation here. In his first intercession, Moses refused YHWH's offer and pleaded in behalf of Israel. Here in his second intercession, Moses builds on YHWH's favor towards him evidenced in the exclusive offer of the covenant blessing and asks to be numbered with the transgressors. There is great power in this request, for even though YHWH could righteously start over with Moses, he could not fulfill his promise to Abraham if Moses too perished.

We should also take note of the role of the remnant in Moses' petition. As Hafemann has pointed out, "after the judgment against those most directly involved

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[45] The Samaritan Pentateuch, LXX, and Tg. Ps.-J. ease this anacoluthon—and therefore must be considered secondary—by supplying an extra entreating imperative: "If you will forgive their sin, *forgive*." Cf. Durham, 426, 432. It is surprising that Durham represents haplography as as serious an option as stylistic expression here.

[46] Cole, 221, says that if Moses offers himself as a substitute, then we may compare Paul in Rom 9:3, but our interpretation of the text makes for just as solid a connection and gives us a better understanding of what Paul means. See our treatment of the NT context below.

[47] Cf. Cole, 221.

has been executed, Moses can appeal to the faithful 'remnant,' as embodied in himself, as the basis for God's subsequent mercy." [48] Thus, Moses' intercessory and mediatorial identification of himself with the people of Israel carries an even greater depth and potency than usually perceived.

Interpreters generally take Moses' request to be blotted out of YHWH's book (32:32) to refer to the book of life/the living, which contains the record of those who are alive and may have its general background in ancient registers of citizens and the like. To be blotted out of it means death.[49] This interpretation is adequate for understanding the general thrust of Moses' request, but fails to grasp its specific import.

The context of Exodus and the Pentateuch as a whole suggests that YHWH's book (סֵפֶר) proper is the book of the Law/Covenant which he wrote through Moses.[50] This is the book of the covenant, which contained all the words of YHWH (Ex 24:4), that Moses had only recently read to the people at the ratification of the covenant, when they accepted it and committed themselves to it with the words, "All that YHWH has spoken we will do and obey" (Ex 24:7). The reference to the book of the covenant in Exodus 24:7 is especially relevant for understanding the reference to YHWH's book in 32:32 because it is the last prior mention of a book in Exodus and because the context of covenant ratification is directly related to the context of Exodus 32-34. Faithfulness to this book of the covenant would bring blessing/life while unfaithfulness to it would bring curse/death.[51]

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[48] Hafemann, *Paul*, 205. This observation is true as stated, but Hafemann's broader argument goes too far in claiming that this point obligates YHWH to grant Moses' request and that "the people now remaining can be considered to be under the umbrella of those who, like Moses, remained faithful."

[49] See e.g., Driver, 356; Gowan, *Theology in Exodus*, 227, 286 n. 19. Cf. Houtman, 672; Clements, 209. Durham, 432, may be closer to the mark in suggesting "a reference apparently to a register of those loyal to Yahweh and thereby deserving his special blessing." See below.

[50] For the book of the covenant, see Ex 24:7; cf. Deut 29:21; 31:26 which contain the collocation of covenant and book of the Law. For the book of the Law or some such similar phrase, see Deut 28:58, 61; 29:21; 29:27 (referred to only as "this book"; בַּסֵּפֶר הַזֶּה); 30:10; 31:24, 26. Cf. Tg. Neofiti Ex 32:32. Robert Hayward notes that Exodus Rabbah 47:9 takes God's book as the Book of the Law (Martin McNamara and Robert Hayward, *Targum Neofiti 1: Exodus*, 133).

[51] In addition to Ex 20:5-7, see the references in the previous note with their contexts for examples. Cf. Ex 17:14: "YHWH said to Moses, 'Write this as a memorial in the book and place it in the ears of Joshua, that I will surely blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven." Moses understood this as an oath by YHWH to wage war against Amalek from generation to generation (17:16), implying a

Deuteronomy 29:19-20 (Eng. 29:20-21) is especially revealing for understanding the meaning of Moses' request in Exodus 32:32, speaking of the idolatrous person:

> YHWH will not be willing to forgive him, but then the anger of YHWH and his jealousy will smoke against that man, and every curse which is written in this book will lie on him, and YHWH will blot his name out from under heaven, and YHWH will set him apart for harm (לְרָעָה) from all the tribes of Israel according to all the curses of the covenant which are written in this book of the Law.

In this passage, YHWH's book is associated with his blotting out of the idolater, an action that is equated with no forgiveness, wrath, and pouring out the curses of the covenant written in the book of the Law upon him. Elsewhere, the end result of this judgment is said to be destruction/extermination (Deut 28:61).

Drawing all of this together with the context of Exodus 32, I would suggest that YHWH's book in Exodus 32:32 is the registry of the elect covenant people,[52] a sort of companion document to the book of the covenant. To be blotted out from this book would mean being cut off from the covenant and its people and to bear the curse of the covenant, the ultimate end of which is death, the blotting out of one's name from under heaven. Thus, in Exodus 32:32, Moses asks YHWH to cut him off from the covenant and pour out its curses upon him along with the rest of Israel if he refuses Moses' request to forgive them.

YHWH's response to Moses' prayer is somewhat unclear and has been interpreted alternatively as either a denial or concession to Moses' request.[53] But perhaps its significance lies somewhere between these two extremes. On the one

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killing of his descendants as long as they exist. So here we have the opposite idea than in Ex 32:32—being recorded in a (note here, the) book for blotting out.

[52] Fretheim, 290, makes a similar suggestion (a "reference to those who are God's elect people"), citing Ezek 13:9 and Mal 3:16. Cf. Durham's view in note 49 above, and the view of R. H. Charles, *The Book of Enoch*, 131-33 ("a register of the citizens of the Theocratic community" with only temporal associations). Note Ps 69:29 (LXX 68:29; Eng. 69:28), Dan 12:1, and the covenant registry on the sealed covenant document in Neh 9:38ff.

[53] See Moberly, *Mountain*, 57f., on the two alternatives. Most interpreters take the former view; Hafemann, *Paul*, 205f., opts for the latter.

hand, YHWH's response constitutes a formal denial of Moses' request.[54] Even so, YHWH does not answer Moses' request directly. Rather, he focuses his comments on identifying who he will punish—the sinners (32:33f.). The implicit contrast with Moses' request that he forgive the people's sin is obvious enough: no, he will not forgive them, but will blot out from his book whoever sinned against him, cutting them off from the elect people and subjecting them to the deadly curse of the covenant.

On the other hand, Moses has obtained some favorable disposition from the Lord for the people. Even though he will punish the guilty, he charges Moses to lead the people to the Promised Land and promises that his angel will go before them, implying guidance and success in the conquest (cf. 23:20ff.; 33:2). Moses has finally won a permanent existence for Israel along with the restoration of the vital land promise. But these concessions are not unrestricted. YHWH ends this portion of his response (32:33-34) as he began it, with a declaration that he will punish the guilty (32:34b), yielding a chiasm:

A: 32:33	YHWH will punish the one who has sinned
B: 32:34a	The command to Moses to lead the people to the Promised Land
B: 32:34b	The promise of the angel to lead/guide Israel to the Promised Land
A: 32:34c	YHWH will punish the people

The accent lies on the exterior members of the chiasm—punishment for the sinners. These stand in adversative relationship to the central members, which grant the promise of land back to the people as well as the necessary angelic guidance. Despite granting some of Israel's promises back, implying their continued existence and a measure of forgiveness, YHWH will punish the guilty. That the emphasis lies here with the denial may be seen in the following verse (32:35), which functions as part of

[54] Hafemann, ibid, fails to see that Moses' request is just that—a request. YHWH's response shows that Moses' request is refused, presumably because it is incompatible with the divine justice. Hafemann mistakenly assumes that YHWH somehow *must* operate on the terms Moses has laid out.

the answer to Moses' plea, an action following upon the verbal response and interpreting it. YHWH struck the people in some way, probably with a plague.[55]

Excursus: Individual and Corporate Perspectives in Exodus 32-34

In response to Moses' request for forgiveness for the people, YHWH declared that he would punish the individuals who had sinned. Here we can see the tension between the collective and the individual we discussed with respect to Romans 9-11 in chapter two above. There is an obvious reference to individuals in Exodus 32. But as we articulated in chapter two, such reference should be understood from a corporate perspective. Houtman goes so far as to deny any real individual sense to this passage.[56] But this is an example of the sort of over-emphasis on the collective to the exclusion of the individual we mentioned. It is better to recognize both the individual and corporate elements and their proper relationship.

In the passage under consideration, there is a focus on the individual, but not individuals considered in and of themselves as would be the case in modern western thought. It is probably an indication of our individualistic perception of reality that even allows us to find tension between the individual and corporate perspectives. The individuals referred to by YHWH are embedded in the covenant community and YHWH's action toward them determines their relationship to the collectively charactered covenant and its community. At the same time, the individual's relationship to the covenant and its community determines his fate. To be blotted out from YHWH's book is essentially to be cut off from the covenant and subjected to its fatal curse. Moreover, even individual language is corporately oriented, as the singular references throughout the passage (e.g., 33:3) applied to the nation reveal. Furthermore, just as Moses' request was put corporately on behalf of the people, the punishment of the guilty is ultimately pictured in corporate terms as the punishment of a group: "lead the people . . . . I will visit their sin upon them" (32:34).

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[55] There is uncertainty concerning the significance of 32:35, whether it is a summary of YHWH's judgment on the people so far, an additional judgment as we have taken it above, or as a summary statement describing the content of 33:1-3. One could combine the first and last of these views as well. On the first two views, see Moberly, *Mountain*, 59, who favors the second as we do.

[56] Houtman, 673f.

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YHWH is not finished with Moses or the people. After the notice of the stroke against the people (32:35), he resumes his dialogue with Moses.[57] He expands on the instruction to Moses to lead the people to the Promised Land and the promise of the angel-guide. The ray of hope shining through the first part of YHWH's response (32:33-34) to Moses' second intercession is now substantially darkened. It might have seemed that YHWH was restoring the former promise of a guiding angel in whom YHWH's name would dwell (Ex 23:20ff.).[58] But his judgment continues to fall. While he will still grant the Promised Land to Israel and even send his angel before them, his presence will not go in their midst: "but I will not go up in your midst, for you are a stiff-necked people, lest I destroy you on the way" (33:3).

This is a devastating blow, indeed, the worst possible judgment that could fall, apart from absolute annihilation. As Durham comments,

> In the place of his Presence, there was to be only Absence. It is a punishment . . . that negates every announcement, every expectation, every instruction except those now being given. There will be no special treasure, no kingdom of priests, no holy nation, no Yahweh being their God, no covenant, no Ark, no Tabernacle, no Altar, no cloud of Glory.[59]

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[57] It is unclear (and unimportant) whether this is to be understood as the same dialogue or a separate occasion.

[58] While the position that the angel now promised to Israel is different than the one previously promised is strongly opposed by some, such as Childs, 588; Moberly, *Mountain*, 61; Gowan, *Theology in Exodus*, 228, it seems clear that the guiding angel now at least functions differently. The angel will now not mediate YHWH's presence, though he represents him and makes it possible to say that YHWH will drive out the inhabitants of the Promised Land (33:3). It is remarkable that some interpreters say that such a scenario goes beyond the text, since in 23:20f., before the sin with the golden bull-calf, YHWH's presence was said to be in the angel (for YHWH's name = his being and presence), but now the angel promise is directly connected to a pointed denial of YHWH's presence. Moberly's solution of the Tabernacle as that which is being denied is ingenious, but misses the importance of YHWH's presence in the angel. His suggestion rather shows that both the presence-mediating angel and the Tabernacle are now denied to Israel by this statement, though the text only mentions the angel. It is therefore ironic that Moberly charges our view with going beyond the text.

[59] Durham, 437.

The supreme blessing of the covenant people was YHWH's presence. It is what made them his people, the determination, sign, and seal of their election. Thus, in denying his presence to Israel, YHWH is essentially confirming the covenant as broken and the abrogation of Israel's election.[60]

It is certainly correct, with most interpreters, to see the denial of YHWH's presence as a judgment upon Israel. But Hafemann has correctly seen that this is also an expression "of divine mercy which makes it possible for Israel to continue on as a people."[61] Indeed, the logical structure of 33:3 reveals that the emphasis actually lies on the merciful character of YHWH's judgment, for its purpose is that the people would be spared destruction, since their sinful condition would elicit YHWH's judgment.

Nevertheless, the devastating consequences of the withdrawal of YHWH's presence laid heavy on Israel and becomes the focus of the narrative (33:4-6). The news of this judgment plunged them into the darkest grief, described by Durham as "the grief that only death can bring . . . . bitter and hopeless grief. . . . abysmal."[62] The people went into mourning upon hearing this grievous news (הַדָּבָר הָרָע הַזֶּה), expressing their great grief by not putting on their ornaments, symbols of festivity[63] and the type of material they used to make the golden bull-calf. 33:5-6 give an explanation for the people's response of grief.[64] We are told,

For Yahweh had said to Moses, "Say to the sons of Israel, 'You are a

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[60] See also Durham, 417f.; Fretheim, 294; Houtman, 685f., on YHWH's presence as the determiner of election. The text indicates this significance to YHWH's presence in 33:16 and 34:9.

[61] Hafemann, *Paul*, 208; emphasis removed. Though seldom seen, Fretheim, 294, also sees it and perceptively relates it to Israel's status of non-election here based on the principle annunciated in Amos 3:2.

[62] Durham, 436-37.

[63] Durham, 434f., 437, helpfully translates עֲדִי as "festive dress."

[64] The Hebrew conjunction וְ beginning 33:5 is best taken causally as in most translations (see NASB; RSV; NRSV; KJV; NKJV; NIV). More technically, וְ is probably explanatory here, but the practical function of the explanation (common for explanations) in this context is causal. See Holladay, *Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon*, 84f., on the various semantic options for וְ.

> stiff-necked people. If I go up in your midst for one moment, I would destroy you! Now, take off your ornaments from upon you in order that I may know what I will do with you.' " So the sons of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments from Mount Horeb.

This expansive repetition clearly emphasizes its content, not only by repetition, but also by intensification. After stressing the hardened sinfulness of the people, the text adds the detail that YHWH could not be with the people *for even a moment* without destroying them. Moreover, the divestment of the people's ornaments is now described (33:6) with the same verb (נצל) used for the despoiling of the Egyptians (3:22; 12:36), suggesting that they have lost what they gained in the redemption of the Exodus and that their sin has left them in the same condition as divinely condemned Egypt.[65]

YHWH's command for the people to despoil themselves appears to be a call for repentance, for its stated purpose is to enable YHWH to make a (favorable) decision about Israel. Repentance is here laid down as a condition for any hope of a significant future for Israel.[66] In addition to expressing the pain of YHWH's judgment upon them, Israel's grief also indicates repentance,[67] accompanied as it is by obedience to YHWH's command, and followed by sincere faith displayed in the matter of the Tent of Meeting (33:7-11) and heartfelt obedience in the building of the Tabernacle (chs. 35-40).

The repetitive character of 33:4-6 brings the emphasis of the narrative to rest on Israel's great sorrow at the loss of their election/the presence of YHWH. Their act of self-spoiling testifies to the fact that they have brought this judgment upon themselves. Their election and future are still in grave danger. Yet YHWH has offered

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[65] See Moberly, *Mountain*, 61. Cf. Hafemann, *Paul*, 208.

[66] So Houtman, 680.

[67] Moberly, *Mountain*, 60f., argues that the people have not repented, but that their attitude has shown some improvement. His citation of Num 14:39 is not as significant as the context of Exodus, which shows an obedient response of the people. Num 14:39, though using the same verb for mourning, is of a different incident and merely highlights a different reaction to YHWH's judgment in a different situation. Israel's disobedience in Num 14:40ff. reveals that their sorrow in v. 39 was not true repentance, while their obedience in the Exodus context reveals true repentance. Childs, 589, and Houtman, 678ff., 691f., take Israel's grief as repentance, and Tg. Ps.-Jon. interprets going to the Tent of Meeting as repentance.

a ray of hope by inviting them to repent and declaring that he is still undecided concerning their fate. The door has been opened for Moses to intercede once again.

Exodus 33:7-11

This next section records the setting up of the temporary Tent of Meeting for the periodic mediation of YHWH's presence and guidance and for communion between Moses and YHWH. Its main significance is twofold in accordance with the dual themes of YHWH's judgment and mercy in the previous section, but now with an emphasis on God's mercy.[68] In judgment, YHWH withholds his presence from Israel. Therefore, Moses sets up the Tent in which he would meet with the Lord "outside of the camp, far from the camp" (מִחוּץ לַמַּחֲנֶה הַרְחֵק מִן־הַמַּחֲנֶה; 33:7). The contrast between Moses' special, intimate relationship with YHWH and the people's separation from the all-important presence stresses the provision of the tent as an act of judgment.

However, the provision of the Tent is even more so an act of mercy, for through it YHWH grants Israel a limited measure of access to his presence and guidance, mediated through Moses. Moreover, YHWH's periodic visits to the Tent provided the opportunity for the people to worship, albeit from afar. Perhaps most importantly for the broader development of the narrative, the Tent of Meeting provides the "medium through which Moses can meet with God on the way to the promised land, so that continual access to God is now assured, while the intimate

[68] Both Moberly, *Mountain*, 63, and Hafemann, *Paul*, 209-11, see the dual significance of the Tent, while John Piper, *The Justification of God: An Exegetical and Theological Study of Romans 9:1-23*, 79 n. 5, completely misses its merciful role. It is remarkable that so many interpreters find 33:7-11 disruptive to the narrative when it plays such an important role to its development. Even Durham, 439ff., who is sensitive to the complexities of narrative interpretation, finds the location of these verses "an unfortunate placement" (442). By contrast, Moberly, ibid, and Hafemann, *Paul*, 210 (assuming he mistakenly refers his comments to 32:30-33:6), view it as the turning point in the narrative, and Hauge, *Descent from the Mountain*, 73, states, "Given the preparation of vv. 4-6, the formal connection provides scant support for the traditio-historical separation introduced in v. 7 from the context." Hafemann's comments (209-11) on these verses are incisive. Fretheim, 295f., offers a unique and unconvincing interpretation which argues that 33:7-11 recalls a past practice to bring hope to the present situation.

nature of Moses' contact with YHWH is the basis upon which Moses' final intercession can be made."[69]

Exodus 33:12-23

We have now come to Moses' third and climactic intercession, which also contains Paul's second allusion in Romans 9 to the context of Exodus 32-34 (cf. Ex 33:19 and Rom 9:15, 18). He will finally secure the object of his relentless pursuit. Moses begins his petition by drawing attention both to YHWH's previous command to lead the people to the Promised Land (33:12; cf. 33:1) and to the opposing fact, demanding a response, that YHWH had not informed Moses who would accompany him. Determining the exact meaning of Moses' concern has been a notorious problem for interpreters. Moses' contention is typically understood as a request to know the identity of either an earthly guide or the angel who will lead them, whether he will mediate the divine presence or not.[70] Any approach to Moses' concern must relate to YHWH's presence, since YHWH's answer (33:14) addresses this very issue and all would agree that the essence of Moses' overall petition in 33:12-17 is for YHWH's presence with the people (and all that implies). Yet, YHWH *has* told Moses the identity of the angel; he will not mediate the divine presence (33:1-3).

Therefore, I would suggest that, in one sense, Moses is asking to know the status of the people YHWH is sending with him, whether they are his elect people or not.[71] For while YHWH has told Moses who will go with him as a guide, he has

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[69] Hafemann, *Paul*, 210. However, Moses' third intercession is not his last if one accepts 34:9 as another intercession.

[70] Plastaras, *The God of Exodus*, 263, sees Moses' request in 33:12 to be for a literal guide through the desert, answered through the provision of Hobab the Midianite recorded in Num 10:29-32, whereas Cole, 225, asserts that if an earthly assistant is meant, then Joshua was the answer. G. H. Davies, 240, and Kaiser, 483, take the reference to be to the identity of the angel. Against the reference being to a guide of any sort, see the convincing arguments of Moberly, *Mountain*, 69. But his own suggestion that Moses' request refers to the shrine of YHWH's presence is also off the mark, based as it is on his erroneous view that the Tabernacle was the presence of YHWH denied to Israel in 33:3 (see note 58 above). His argument concerning the preposition עִם has some merit, but is far from decisive. It is better to understand the ambiguous reference to YHWH going to relate to his presence with Moses verses his presence with the people, as this theme is prominent throughout the narrative.

[71] Cf. the similar suggestion of Enns, 580. But contra Enns, the issue is not "who will be left after the purge of 33:5," but, what is Israel's identity; are they/will they be God's people. Our suggestion is supported by the end of 33:13 in the LXX, which reads ἵνα γνῶ ὅτι λαός σου τὸ ἔθνος τοῦτο, on

specifically stated that the people's fate, and therefore their identity, is uncertain (33:5). Thus Moses' statement does not make a false assertion, but contributes to his request that YHWH reverse his decision not to go with the people, and rather dwell in their midst. This is tantamount to requesting that he take Israel again as his elect covenant people, and thereby restore to them all the blessings of election, for his presence constitutes election.

Having stated the problem, Moses begins to present further considerations that will serve as additional bases of his petition, reminding YHWH that he himself had said—thus appealing to his faithfulness to his word—"I have known you by name and you have indeed found favor in my sight" (33:12c). To know by name indicates a special, intimate knowledge of favor and election. Moses is YHWH's chosen covenant mediator and confidant. It is this favor that Moses appeals to as the basis of his request, which he has made indirectly in describing the problem, but now, in 33:13, begins to make directly.

James Muilenburg has drawn attention to the prominence of the verb "to know" (ידע) in 33:12-17 along with its covenantal connotations.[72] Moses continues to act as the covenant mediator,[73] and as Muilenburg says, "It is a *covenantal* knowing, a knowing between Lord and servant, between King and subject, between Suzerain and vassal."[74] There is a depth to the Hebrew ידע that defies any simple definition.[75] The word surely sounds a strong note of intimacy here. But the covenantal implications of the word have seldom been recognized in this passage, and

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which see Wevers, *Greek Text of Exodus*, 548. There is more to this request than we are stating explicitly here (hence, my allusion to another sense to Moses' request); see below for a deeper appreciation of what Moses is asking vis-à-vis knowing who YHWH will send.

[72] James Muilenburg, "The Intercession of the Covenant Mediator (Exodus 33:1a, 12-17)." This article focuses on the role of ידע in the context of a consideration of the whole passage. For treatment of ידע, see pp. 159f., 176-81, and for observation of its frequency in the passage, see p. 160. We will go substantially beyond Muilenburg, but he is one of the few (and perhaps the first) to lay such heavy stress on the covenantal connotations of ידע in this passage.

[73] Ibid, 179.

[74] Ibid; emphasis his.

[75] See ibid, 159, on this point.

merit special attention, as they tie in so well with the covenantal context of Exodus 32-34[76] and shed new light on the meaning of the exchange between Moses and YHWH.

In covenantal contexts, ידע can mean, "to acknowledge as a covenant partner."[77] This exact definition does not work for each of the six occurrences of ידע in 33:12-17, but each occurrence is related to this basic covenantal sense of the term. Thus I would suggest that Moses' exclamation in 33:12 is best understood as pointing out the discrepancy between YHWH's stated intention to fulfill the covenantal land promise without the provision of his covenant presence: "Look, you are saying to me, 'Bring up this people,' but you yourself have not let me acknowledge as a covenant partner who you will send with me!" This alludes to Moses' role as the covenant mediator. Just as he broke/annulled the covenant as YHWH's representative, so he seeks to renew it.

When Moses speaks of YHWH knowing him by name (33:12c), he refers to more than just a special, intimate knowledge, but such knowledge within a covenant context. YHWH has chosen Moses as the covenant mediator, which is part of his favor towards him, but presently there is no covenant to mediate. When Moses asks to know YHWH's ways, he is asking to know his covenant ways for the purpose of knowing YHWH covenantally, that is, in intimate covenant relationship, which necessarily confers YHWH's favor (i.e., the promises/blessings of the covenant), Moses' ultimate goal (33:13). We might translate 33:13 as follows: "And now, if,

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[76] Ibid, 160, points out that we are dealing with part of the *locus classicus* of the Sinaitic covenant.

[77] See Koehler and Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, s.v., and especially Gordon P. Hugenberger, *Marriage as a Covenant: A Study of Biblical Law and Ethics Governing Marriage Developed from the Perspective of Malachi*, 267-78, and the references he cites. Hugenberger gives a concise, helpful review of the evidence and discussion concerning the covenantal meaning of ידע, updating the discussion and arguing convincingly against critiques of the covenantal sense originally proposed by Herbert B. Huffmon, "The Treaty Background of Hebrew yada' "; Herbert B. Huffmon and S. B. Parker, "A Further Note on the Treaty Background of Hebrew yada'." Hugenberger astutely extends Huffmon's conclusions beyond treaty contexts. We would add that the covenantal sense of the term need not designate a mere formal, impersonal, legal relationship, but as Hugenberger's combination of the covenantal meaning of ידע with its sexual meaning implies, it can denote an intimate covenantal relationship. See below. Even if our original exegesis regarding the covenantal sense of ידע is incorrect, the main lines remain valid and compatible with standard treatments of the passage. Hugenberger, idem, 271, suggests that God may be the object of covenantal knowing in Ex 33:12, 17.

please, I have found favor in your eyes, let me please know your covenant ways in order that I may acknowledge you as a covenant partner in order that I may find favor in your eyes." Thus, Moses is requesting a restoration of the covenant that he mediated, but now modified so as to be principally a covenant between him and YHWH, and then through him, with the people.[78]

Moses' final argument begs the point at issue a bit: "Consider also that this nation is your people" (33:13). He appears to be offering up Israel's history for consideration. They have been YHWH's people and really have no other identity, even though he does not now acknowledge them. It is probably no coincidence that YHWH grants Moses' request based on the first two reasons he offered—(1) Moses' special election / his role as covenant mediator; (2) YHWH's favor towards Moses—and ignores this third and final ground for his petition (33:17). Israel is corrupt and has no standing with YHWH. Everything depends on Moses and his relationship with the Lord as well as the character of YHWH himself.

YHWH's initial response to Moses's request is ambiguous, amounting to a partial concession. He says simply, "My presence will go and I will give rest to you" (33:14). This is in essence a promise on YHWH's part to go with Moses personally and give him rest,[79] for the second person pronoun (לָךְ) is singular, and Moses' response in 33:15-16 shows that he has not yet obtained what he is after, YHWH's presence with Israel and all that means, viz., renewal of the covenant and its promises.

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[78] See below on 34:10-28 on this modification to YHWH's covenant with Israel. It is interesting to note that while Moses offers YHWH's favor as a reason for granting his request, he also makes a request that will give him more favor with YHWH and therefore result in even more intercessory leverage, a point seen clearly by Hafemann, *Paul*, 212, though we continue to take issue with Hafemann's contention that Moses' intercession somehow obligates YHWH to act as he requests, albeit for YHWH's own glory. Moses' arguments are persuasive to YHWH, but not inescapably so; the entire dialogue and narrative exalts God's mercy. Our interpretation of the text makes the relationship between Moses' past favor with YHWH and the favor he seeks clearer; he is saying basically, "if I have found favor with you so as to be chosen as the covenant mediator—and I have—then renew the covenant with me so that I may have the covenant blessing." At this point, the favor of YHWH's offer to make Moses the father of the covenant people is probably also in view. Indeed, Moses seems to be building on that offer, essentially accepting the offer to be the primary covenant partner, but insisting that Israel be included.

[79] For this type of approach, which finds a focus on Moses to the exclusion of the people, see Moberly, *Mountain*, 74f.; Hafemann, *Paul*, 213f.; Coats, "Loyal Opposition," 102. See Houtman, 698, against this approach. Some, such as Muilenburg, "Intercession," 173f., find the important question regarding YHWH's presence to be spatial, viz., whether it could leave Mt. Sinai and accompany Israel. For a different, theological development of the spatial aspect of YHWH's presence, see Plastaras, *The God of Exodus*, 244f.

Moses' counter-response presses for inclusion of the people. It is a masterful entreaty, beginning with equal ambiguity, and then identifying the people of Israel with Moses in increasing explicitness until the people are center stage and their fate and identity intertwined with Moses.

> And he said to him, "If your presence is not going, do not bring us up from here. For how then will it be known that I have found favor in your eyes, I and your people? Is it not in your going with us, so that we will be distinguished, I and your people, from all the people who are on the face of the earth? (33:15-16)

It is now absolutely clear what Moses is after—the presence of God with Israel as the elect people of God. Verse 16 reveals that YHWH's presence signifies the divine favor and election.

Finally, YHWH grants Moses' request on the basis of Moses' favor and election before him (33:17). As Moberly has said, the concession

> not only confirms Moses' special status, but makes the favoured position of Israel both mediated through, and dependent upon, Moses. . . . [T]he restoration of Israel and the renewal of the covenant does not put Israel in a position identical to that before its sin. Henceforth it is dependent upon the mercy of God mediated through Moses as the primary recipient of that mercy.[80]

Yet, Moses has not finished his intercession. He now dares to ask, "Show me, please, your glory!" (33:18).

In making this bold request, Moses is essentially asking that YHWH now fulfill his promise, revealing his covenant ways to him in order to establish the covenant and its blessing (cf. 33:13), and bestowing his all-important presence (i.e., his glory).[81] So on the one hand, this is a basic repetition of the request of 33:13 and the next logical step for Moses to take. But on the other hand, Moses' request goes

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[80] Moberly, ibid, 75.

[81] Durham, 452, correctly regards כבוד (glory) as a virtual synonym of פנים (presence/face) in this context and states that Moses' request "is effectively a request that Yahweh demonstrate the reality of his promise to be present . . . ." Cf. Houtman, 700f, who understands Moses as seeking confirmation of the reality of YHWH's promise, and more eloquently on the point, Piper, *Justification*, 79-81.

beyond anything he has asked thus far. YHWH's glory (כבוד) refers to the very essence or presence of YHWH in all its fullness, something which may be called glory because of its supreme worth, beauty, and magnificence. The glory, goodness (טוב), name, face/presence (פנים), and being of YHWH are all used synonymously in 33:18-23, though the various words indicate various nuances of the one glorious reality they all seek to describe.[82] The variety of terms helps us to understand what Moses is asking and what YHWH grants. Moses asks to see—as the token and context of the establishment of a renewed covenant with Moses and Israel—YHWH himself, the very essence of his being, which is good and glorious and beautiful, and to be understood primarily in the realm of moral character and covenant. The fact that YHWH uniquely and characteristically appeared in theophanic glory to initiate covenants confirms our approach to Exodus 32-24,[83] as does the fact that the renewal of the covenant (34:1-28) in answer to Moses' request takes place in connection with the theophany here envisioned (though qualified by YHWH's response to follow).

There is another profound reason for Moses' daring request to see the Lord's glory. While he has obtained the promise of YHWH's presence and covenant for Israel, he has not procured a solution to the problem that YHWH's presence poses for Israel as a sinful people.[84] As we have seen, the denial of YHWH's presence was a merciful judgment upon Israel, for his presence could only mean destruction for them

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[82] See Piper, *Justification*, 84-88, for the argument that the glory, goodness, and name of YHWH are basically synonymous and that the manifestation of God's glory embraces the display of his goodness and the proclamation of his name. While Piper is correct to argue that the goodness of YHWH is moral rather than aesthetic here (86 n. 23), טוב probably does not lose its aesthetic character altogether. It is precisely YHWH's moral character that is aesthetically beautiful. Sarna, 214, is probably correct to take טוב to bear "a technical, legal meaning of covenantal friendship" found in ancient Near Eastern treaties and elsewhere in the OT (cited by Enns, 582), but the context requires that it mean more than this.

[83] On this phenomenon unique to Israel's Scriptures in the ancient Near East, see Jeffrey J. Niehaus, *God at Sinai: Covenant and Theophany in the Bible and Ancient Near East*, 108-117, 142-229 (esp. 108-10).

[84] Moberly, *Mountain*, 75f., and even more perceptively, Hafemann, *Paul*, 215. Moberly and Hafemann are more sensitive than most to the role of 33:18ff. in the overall narrative and better account for the turn the narrative takes in exalting Moses' mediatorial role. While it is a lesser concern of the narrative, we should not ignore the fact that Moses' personal desire to see YHWH's glory, which testifies to its supreme worth, is another reason for his bold request.

in their corrupt state (33:3, 5). Perhaps more than any, Hafemann has seen this crucial concern of the narrative:

> The answer to the problem of YHWH's presence is . . . a request that Moses himself now experience the solution to the problem! As a consistent development of the central role of Moses as the mediator of the covenant, Moses sees the answer to be a *private* theophany of the glory of God (33:18). Moses alone will experience the glory of God and then bring it back with him into the midst of his people, since in their hardened state they can no longer encounter it themselves.[85]

> YHWH's answer to Moses' request is again a partial concession and denial:

> And YHWH said, "I myself will cause all my goodness to pass by your face, and I will proclaim the name of YHWH before you. And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy." But he said, "You cannot see my face, for man will not see me and live" (33:19-20).

YHWH then goes on to describe the manner in which he will manifest this theophany and the provision he will make for Moses to experience it without dying (33:21-23). The denial of Moses' petition is that the revelation will be only partial. Moses will not be able to see YHWH's face directly. No person can endure that and live. But Moses will get to see YHWH's "back" (אֲחֹרָי). The language is obviously anthropomorphic here and impossible to apprehend in its exact meaning.[86] But the general sense is clear—YHWH's face (פנים) represents his full, unmediated presence, while his back represents a partial, restricted revelation.[87]

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[85] Hafemann, ibid. But Hafemann is wide of the mark in stating that this is "not a petition on behalf of Israel, or the hope that God will again dwell in her midst . . . ." It is all this, and as Hafemann has shown in the above quotation, more. It is not a case of either/or, but both/and. Hafemann's approach was already present basically, though not worked out in any exegetical detail, in Roger T. Forster, and V. Paul Marston, *God's Strategy in Human History: God's Sovereignty and Human Responsibility*, 51f.

[86] Moberly, *Mountain*, 80, well states, "It is difficult to comment upon the content of 33:20-23 without laying solemnly prosaic hands upon one of the most profound and mysterious passages in the whole OT." His following comments are also worth reading.

[87] Kaiser, 484, makes the interesting suggestion that אֲחֹרָי refers to the after-effects of YHWH's radiant glory; cf. Wevers, *Greek Text of Exodus*, 553, who speaks of the afterglow of YHWH's presence.

The text represents Moses as having a total theophanic experience, both visual and audible/verbal. 33:20-23 communicate the supreme and incomprehensible majesty of the glory of God and his infinite superiority over humanity. The verses also testify again to the mercy of YHWH, since he makes provision for Moses to experience as much of his glory as humanly possible. Relatedly, the passage bears witness once again to the status and glory of Moses, who has seen the glory of God. But as important as the visual manifestation granted to Moses is, the emphasis of the theophany contemplated here in 33:12-23 necessarily falls on what Moses hears as the interpretation of what he sees.

The concession Moses receives is even more important for the forward thematic movement of the narrative than the denial. YHWH will cause all his goodness, the fullness of the divine glory, to pass by Moses, who will be shielded by the hand of God until only his back may be seen. Accompanying this sensual experience will be the proclamation of YHWH's name, which is given a summary interpretation in 33:19, to be expanded during the actual theophany recorded in 34:5ff.[88] It is the summary explication of the divine name in Exodus 33:19 that Paul cites in Romans 9:15.

The summary meaning of YHWH's name (33:19, "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious . . .") is given in a tautologous idiom known as the *idem per idem* formula. The significance of the idiom as used here is twofold. First, it emphasizes the verbal idea through repetition. " 'The second verb serves as a predicate, and thus, like a cognate accusative, emphasizes the verbal action.' When, as here, the formula is repeated with two verbs of related meaning, then the statement of the verbal meaning—the mercy of God—is as emphatic as the Hebrew language can make it."[89] Second, by leaving the action unspecified, the formula emphasizes the freedom of the

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[88] See especially 34:6-7. On the two options for understanding the relationship between the first and second parts of 33:19, whether the latter part (grace and mercy) grounds or interprets the former (YHWH's name), see Piper, 84, who argues convincingly for an interpretive significance following especially the commentaries of Childs and George Bush against those of Keil and Delitzsch, Noth, and Beer; Houtman, 702, also opts for the interpretive view over against the causal.

[89] Moberly, *Mountain*, 77f., partly citing D. N. Freedman, "The Name of the God of Moses," 153.

subject to perform the action in whatever way he pleases.[90] However, the freedom envisioned is not arbitrary.[91] Arbitrariness, an action or choice based on nothing outside of the agent, is not inherent to the sense of the formula. Rather the idiom simply stresses the freedom of the subject without respect to the presence or absence of motivating factors or reasons. In principle, it could be used of either an arbitrary or conditioned choice. Any decision concerning the type of choice depicted must be determined from context.

Significantly, in every actual OT example of the idiom the context or circumstances would suggest that the choice/action envisioned would be, at least in part, based on factors external to the subject.[92] So, for instance, when Moses asks YHWH to send someone else as his messenger in Exodus 4:13, such a request would normally assume that the choice would be made partly on certain characteristics of the chosen one. But Moses uses the *idem per idem* formula because he does not care particularly who YHWH sends, as long as it is not him. He does not address the issue

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[90] I have here adapted John Piper's (*Justification*, 82) description of the idiom, who completely misses its emphasizing force and focuses exclusively on its connotation of freedom, thus impoverishing his understanding of the formula and Ex 33:19. Even his understanding of the freedom indicated by the idiom is faulty, for he appears to construe it as arbitrary or willful action/choice. See below on the question in general. Piper's mishandling of the formula and Ex 33:19 may well undo the very foundation of the main thesis of his study if G. K. Beale is correct to find his chapter on the passage to be the most important section of the book, and "the theological cornerstone for the entire monograph," the validity of which would validate the book's essential thesis (see Beale's review, pp. 191f.; quotation from p. 191).

[91] Moberly, *Mountain*, 78; Freedman, "Name," 153f.; Driver, 362f.; Cole, 226; Jacob, 974. More technically, the freedom envisioned is not necessarily arbitrary; the idiom does not address motivating factors whatsoever. As Driver, 363, comments, "All that is said here is that God is gracious to those to whom he is gracious: on the motives which may prompt Him to be gracious, the passage is silent." In contrast to Piper, Freedman seems to miss the libertarian connotations of the formula, focusing only on its emphasizing sense, and offering the translation, "I am the gracious one, I am the compassionate one."

[92] Piper, *Justification*, 82, lists the following texts as examples of the *idem per idem* formula: Ex 4:13; 16:2; 1 Sam 23:13; 2 Sam 15:20; 2 Kgs 8:1. Freedman, "Name," 153 n. 11, also mentions Ezek 12:25 in his list, and J. R. Lundbom, "God's Use of the *Idem per Idem* to Terminate Debate," 194, gives the most complete list, including Gen 43:14; Esth 4:16; the disputed Deut 9:25, 1 Sam 1:24, and Zech 10:8; and for NT examples, John 19:22 and 1 Cor 15:10. The *idem per idem* used in connection with the divine name (Ex 3:14) is a unique case and far too large a question to consider here in any detail. Suffice it to say that even if it were argued—and there is much debate on the question—that the formula in Ex 3:14 expresses the Lord's freedom to be what he chooses or to reveal what he chooses, this still does not assert that such will be without external motivating factors. The theology of the Book of Exodus as well as the other uses of the idiom would all suggest the opposite to be true. In any case, Ex 3:14 is especially relevant to 33:19 since both instances of the *idem per idem* formula are connected to YHWH's name and thus get at the essence of the divine nature. Indeed, Moberly, ibid, believes that a deliberate recollection of 3:14 is intended in 33:19; cf. Childs, 596.

of grounds for the choice he requests be made, though that there would be some ground(s) external to YHWH partly forming the basis of the decision would be taken for granted. When YHWH responds in 4:14 by choosing another to accompany Moses (not replace him), he does specify an external basis for his decision. Similarly, when one makes a choice about what to have for dinner as in Exodus 16:23, one typically makes the choice in part based on the character of the food chosen. The basis of YHWH's choice of whom he will be merciful to must be determined from the context of Exodus 32-34.[93]

J. R. Lundbom has drawn attention to the fact that the *idem per idem* formula is frequently used to terminate debate.[94] Moses has been entreating YHWH relentlessly on behalf of Israel, seeking to secure forgiveness and covenant blessing for the whole people in the aftermath of their sin, and if not, for as many as possible. Pushing on to the pinnacle of this pursuit, he has asked to see YHWH's glory. YHWH is now giving Moses the definitive answer to the petition he has urged all along in one way or another. It is crucial to understand that the request YHWH is responding to is essentially, as we have seen, a request to restore his presence and covenant to Israel as a people, granting them forgiveness for their sin. The grace and mercy mentioned has primary reference to a sinful nation that stands under the judgment of God, and to individuals secondarily as they are connected to the group.

It is also important to recognize a close parallel with Moses' prior intercession in 32:30-33:6, where YHWH told Moses the grounds for punishment. Moses asked YHWH to forgive the people and to cut him off from the covenant and its blessing along with them otherwise. But YHWH's response was to maintain that the guilty would be punished (and only the guilty). In 33:19, YHWH reminds Moses that he will be merciful to whom he chooses, recalling his earlier word that the guilty would be

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[93] This raises a significant drawback of Piper's chapter on Ex 33:19 in its OT context (*Justification*, 75-89), that is, he essentially isolates it in important ways from its broader context, despite the name of the chapter (he does give brief attention to the context of chs. 32-34, and then more but still brief attention to 33:12-34:9). He therefore fails to see important contextual factors for exegeting 33:19.

[94] J. R. Lundbom, "God's Use of the *Idem per Idem* to Terminate Debate"; cf. Moberly, *Mountain*, 78. Debate is probably too strong a word for describing the dialogue between YHWH and Moses in Ex 32-34. Lundbom misunderstands this discussion as a debate, and this leads his exegesis astray to some extent. It would be more appropriate to say that the *idem per idem* functions as a definitive word on the matter under discussion.

punished and pointing forward to the same basic point in part of the fuller explication of the name found in 34:7.[95]

As a fuller statement of the name of YHWH, 34:6-7 is especially important for understanding 33:19. It also stresses YHWH's mercy while revealing that he will certainly not clear the guilty,[96] another way of stating the principle of 32:33 ("whoever has sinned against me, I will blot him out of my book") and showing the basis on which YHWH dispenses mercy. The fact that the Hebrew text of 34:7 does not explicitly identify the character of those who receive either mercy or punishment should not be taken as an indication of indefiniteness in accordance with the *idem per idem* formula of 33:19,[97] for the context makes clear the character of the objects of YHWH's mercy and judgment.

The broader context of Exodus 32-34 consistently bears witness in this regard, most notably in Moses' second intercession (32:30-33:6), which we have just discussed, and in YHWH's demand for repentance as a condition of forgiveness followed by the people's repentance (33:4-6) and renewed commitment to the Lord

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[95] This is not to say that YHWH is merely agreeing to grant mercy to those who do not need it, but a typical expression of the OT principles of personal responsibility and the availability of forgiveness for those who maintain relationship with YHWH, even though they might sin (cf. Deut 24:16; Jer 18:1-10; Ezek 18). The sin referred to in 32:33 is the sin of apostasy, which cuts off covenant relationship.

[96] The usual translation of the Hebrew phrase of 34:7, וְנַקֵּה לֹא יְנַקֶּה is as I have taken it above: "but he will certainly not clear [the guilty]," but Piper, *Justification*, 85, argues that the infinitive absolute, which can strengthen the verbal idea by connoting either certainty (most commonly) or completeness *inter alia*, here emphasizes the completion of absolution; thus: "but he will not leave completely unpunished." But certainty is the more common meaning, and more importantly, 32:34 has already shown a concern for the certainty of punishment for the guilty. Moreover, comparison with the similar statement of Ex 20:5-6 suggests that certainty is more likely to be at issue rather than Piper's picture of incomplete forgiveness, since only two alternatives are presented there—love for those who love YHWH vs. punishment for those who hate him. Furthermore, the phrase in question clearly refers to certainty of punishment in Nah 1:3. Piper rightly notes that the order and expansiveness with respect to YHWH's grace in 34:6-7 vis-à-vis 20:5-6 produces the effect of emphasis on YHWH's grace; cf. Moberly, *Mountain*, 87f. For a translation of 34:6-7, see our treatment of 34:1-9 below.

[97] Note the text: ". . . forgiving iniquity, rebellion, and sin, but he will certainly not clear . . ." (נֹשֵׂא עָוֹן וָפֶשַׁע וְחַטָּאָה וְנַקֵּה לֹא יְנַקֶּה);contra Piper, ibid, 85f. Rather than trying to present an unconditional exercise of mercy and punishment, the text's technical indefiniteness is probably due to the fact that there is sin with both those who receive mercy and those who receive punishment. Unlike Ex 20:5-6, where the objects of YHWH's covenant faithfulness (חֶסֶד) are those who love him and keep his commandments, here the concern is with those who maintain covenant relationship with YHWH, who love him but sometimes do not keep his commandments, and so need his forgiveness. The close parallel of Ex 20:5-6 actually argues for the same conditions grounding YHWH's mercy and judgment in 34:6-7; see below. The LXX translation, while most likely expansive, surely captures the sense of 34:7, as do most modern translations: καὶ οὐ καθαριεῖ τὸν ἔνοχον.

(33:7-11). The immediate context (34:6-7) also reveals the identity of those who experience YHWH's mercy and punishment respectively. As implied by the covenantally charged context and terminology, those who maintain covenant relationship with YHWH will be able to find forgiveness. But those who are punished are those who have practiced iniquity as well as their posterity (who presumably follow in their path).[98] The close parallel of Exodus 20:5-6, surely alluded to here, provides important background for 34:6-7, establishing the textual presupposition that YHWH extends mercy to those who love him and generally keep his commandments, but punishes to the uttermost those who hate him and do not maintain covenant relationship with him.[99]

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[98] This is why it is only a superficial, technical omission with respect to the character of those who are punished. While their character as sinners is left overtly unstated, we are immediately told that YHWH punishes their iniquity. It is therefore necessarily the guilty who YHWH will punish; it is unnecessary to state this obvious fact explicitly. Moreover, it is noteworthy that the grammar of the text makes a separation between those who find forgiveness because of YHWH's covenant love and faithfulness, and those who are punished. Every verbal clause in the declaration of YHWH's character is participial except for the statement that he will not clear/leave unpunished. The chain of participles is broken by the infinitive absolute followed by the imperfect, which is in turn followed by another participial clause modifying the thought of the imperfect as opposed to the participles preceding it, which speak of YHWH's covenant loyalty and forgiveness. (I am indebted to Donna Petter, "Exodus 34:6-7: The Function and Meaning of the Declaration," 53 n. 148, for the observation that there is only one imperfect verb amidst a string of participles in Ex 34:7.) This argues against Piper's contention that the text speaks of incomplete absolution (see note 96 above), since the participles prior to the infinitive absolute speak of those who receive mercy, whereas the infinitive-imperfect construction is unlikely to modify those participles and their subjects, and the participle describing YHWH's punishment also decidedly does not describe those who receive YHWH's covenant mercy. This accords again with Ex 20:5-6, which pictures two distinct groups, those who receive mercy and those who receive punishment.

[99] It seems wide of the mark to argue, as Moberly, *Mountain*, 88 (cf. Piper, *Justification*, 85f., who also applies the idea to the stipulation of hating YHWH for punishment), that because the stipulation of an obedient response stated in Ex 20:6 is absent from 34:7, "Yahweh's mercy toward Israel is independent of their responding in the right way." There is some sense in this suggestion in that this omission is surely a response to the context of Ex 32-34 with its themes of sin, judgment, and mercy. However, this interpretation flies in the face of the context of Ex 32-34, as well as the rest of the Scriptures of Israel, where repentance and faith are always necessary for fully experiencing YHWH's grace. Moreover, to think that through this omission the text would attempt to overturn the principle of Ex 20:5-6 is overly subtle interpretation. It seems more balanced and makes more sense to take the stipulations of 20:5-6 as implicit in 34:6-7, which alludes to the former passage, and understand the omission of the stipulations to highlight YHWH's mercy and to reflect the new situation in which Israel has sinned (see note 97 above). Cf. the use of Ex 34:6-7 in Joel 2:12-14, where all reference to judgment is omitted from the former in a call to repentance (see Gowan, *Theology in Exodus*, 241). The purpose is not to assert that the Lord will accept the people regardless of their actions, but to emphasize his mercy to induce them to repent! The basic interpretation we are advocating, which understands the text in the context of Exodus and the Pentateuch to mean that YHWH extends mercy and forgiveness to those who have an obedient orientation that repents from sin, but punishes those who have an unrepentant, disobedient orientation, is virtually stated in Ex 20:5-6 and Deut 7:9 according to James L. Kugel, *Traditions of the Bible: A Guide to the Bible as It Was at the Start of the Common Era*, 725f., and is explicitly adopted by the targums Onqelos, Pseudo-Jonathan, and Neofiti on Ex 34:7.

The *idem per idem* formula of Exodus 33:19 expresses in the most emphatic terms that YHWH is above all gracious and merciful, and that he will decide who he will extend his mercy to. But his sovereign freedom in bestowing mercy is not arbitrary. The connotation of freedom communicated by the idiom of 33:19 leaves the grounds upon which YHWH bases his choice of who will receive his mercy unspecified. This, of course, does not mean that there are no considerations outside of his own will that condition his choice. The point is rather that he determines the conditions for the dispensing of his mercy (and punishment). He will show mercy to whom he will show mercy. The context of Exodus 33:19 discloses who it is that YHWH will have mercy upon—those who repent of their sin, maintain covenant relationship with him, and who are connected to his righteous and faithful servant (Moses). Yet, the absence of explicit conditions inherent in the *idem per idem* formula does imply that there is no merit in the objects of YHWH's mercy that *require* him to extend mercy to them. It is his free choice, based on whatever conditions he pleases to lay down. YHWH is both gracious and sovereign. This is the essence of YHWH's name, that is, his glory or goodness.

Exodus 34:1-9

This section begins the description of the renewal of the covenant procured by Moses' intercession and completes the account of Moses' third intercession by describing the fulfillment of YHWH's promise to pass by Moses in all his glory, proclaiming his name. 34:5-7 records the theophany proper, giving a fuller explication of YHWH's name: "Then YHWH passed before him and proclaimed, 'YHWH, YHWH, a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger, and abounding in covenant lovingkindness and faithfulness, keeping covenant lovingkindness for thousands, forgiving iniquity, rebellion, and sin. But he will certainly not leave unpunished, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, even on the children's children and on the third and on the fourth generation.' "[100] This definitive revelation

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[100] See our treatment of 33:19 above for more consideration of 34:6-7.

of YHWH conveys again the two contrasting themes of his mercy and judgment found throughout Exodus 32-34.

Moses responded to this supreme revelation of YHWH also in a two-folded way, first in worship, but second, with a final intercession: "If, please, I have found favor in your eyes, my Lord, let my Lord please go in our midst, even though[101] it is a stiff necked people, and forgive our iniquity and our sin, and take us as a possession" (34:9). His prayer is again founded on YHWH's favor towards him (who now completely identifies himself with Israel). Indeed, since knowledge of YHWH brings his favor (33:13), and Moses has received an unprecedented revelation of his glory, he may now appeal to unprecedented favor for the consummation of all he has pursued. Moses' request shows again that YHWH's presence is determinative of election, and that he seeks both that presence and the election for Israel, as well as the forgiveness required for them. It furthermore exalts YHWH's mercy once again.

Exodus 34:10-28

YHWH responds affirmatively to Moses' request by renewing the covenant. He promises miracles and success in conquest, and calls for obedience to the covenant stipulations given in 34:12-26, which "emphasize those particular aspects [of the covenant] which are relevant to the sinful tendencies which Israel has displayed."[102] Although the covenant has been renewed, it is significantly different in that YHWH has not made the covenant directly with Israel, but *with Moses* and with Israel (34:27), "that is, directly with Moses on the mountain, and *through* Moses with the people."[103]

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[101] See Moberly, *Mountain*, 89f., for the three main options for interpreting כִּי here in 34:9—causal, concessive, and emphatic concessive. Moberly himself reasonably opts for the emphatic concessive sense ("although indeed"), but then curiously goes on to treat it as though it carries a causal force; cf. Hafemann, *Paul*, 217 n. 90, for the same critique. Piper, *Justification*, 81, actually argues for a straightforward causal sense over against the usual concessive interpretation on the grounds that it is the more common force of the particle and the LXX translation (γάρ), both of which are weak arguments. Context is always determinative for a word's meaning, and ancient translations cannot count for much in such a case except as a very early interpretation. Context here clearly calls for a concessive meaning.

[102] Moberly, ibid, 96; emphasis removed. He correctly notes that the many covenant stipulations previously given in Exodus but not now specified are presupposed.

[103] Hafemann, *Paul*, 220f.; emphasis his.

"So the position of Israel in the restored covenant is not identical to what it would have been had the people never sinned. Henceforth their life as a people depends not only upon the mercy of God but also upon the intercession of God's chosen mediator."[104] The Lord's mercy toward Israel is now dependent on their identification with the faithful covenant mediator.

Exodus 34:29-35

This final section of the narrative brings the new state of affairs to a climax as it records Moses' return to the people and his continuing, though enhanced, function as the (now glorified) covenant mediator. After experiencing the glory of YHWH, Moses' face now radiates that same glory.[105] Thus, Moses brings both the new covenant inscribed on the stone tablets and the very glory of YHWH to the people. Moses' glorified countenance and escalated covenant-mediatorial role serves to substantiate his authority. But more than this, as Hafemann has argued, it presents the resolution to the problem of how YHWH can dwell in the midst of a sinful people.[106] Moses has become the mediator of both the covenant Law and YHWH's covenant presence.[107]

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[104] Moberly, *Mountain*, 106. See also pp. 75, 105.

[105] The Hebrew text literally says that Moses' face was horned (קָרַן), but most scholars agree that this must refer to shining light. Some have argued that horns and veil (מַסְוֶה) refer to the type of horned mask commonly worn by priests in ancient Near Eastern religion in identification with and representation of deity, but this position is untenable for a number of reasons; see especially Moberly, ibid, 107ff.; Hafemann, *Paul*, 221f, 224 n. 112. It is important to remember that neither the OT text nor Jewish tradition understood the glory on Moses' face to be fading as it is commonly held that Paul asserted in 2 Cor 3:7-18; it was conceived of as permanent. See Hafemann, *Paul*, especially 286-313, 347-62, on this point and the argument that Paul did not posit a fading glory either.

[106] Hafemann, *Paul*, 221-25. Hauge, *Descent from the Mountain*, 156-89, recognizes that Moses now mediates the divine presence, but missing this crucial point ascribes Ex 34 the function of a conclusion to Exodus in conflict with the conclusion of chs. 35-40, which culminates in the divine presence filling the Tabernacle (what Hauge calls the people's Tent of Meeting). The relationship of Ex 34 and 40 is best explained by recognizing that the former makes the latter possible. This renders Hauge's perceptive observations regarding the parallel roles of Moses in Ex 32-34 and the people in 35-40 more comprehensible—Moses' mediation of God's glory and mercy makes a more intimate relationship between YHWH and the people possible.

[107] Hafemann, *Paul*, 222.

At the sight of Moses' shining face, Israel was terrified, presumably because of the divine glory (cf. 20:18-21) and especially because of YHWH's statements that his presence would destroy the people (33:3, 5). Therefore, Moses would put a veil over his face unless before YHWH speaking with him or speaking YHWH's word to the people as the covenant mediator. Hafemann has again captured the theological thrust of the narrative at this point:

> Against the backdrop of the explicit statements of Exod. 32:9, 22 and 33:3, 5 and the function of the tent of meeting in 33:7-11, Moses' veiling himself should be seen as an act of mercy to keep the people from being destroyed by the reflected presence of God. The veil of Moses makes it possible for the glory of God to be in the midst of the people, albeit now mediated through Moses, without destroying them. . . . In view of the people's "stiff neck" and idolatry with the golden calf, Moses' veil is the final expression of YHWH's judgment and mercy, which runs throughout this narrative and ties it together theologically. The fact that the glory must be veiled is an expression of Israel's sinful state and God's consequent judgment; the fact that the glory is veiled is an expression of God's unexpected mercy."[108]

Thus, the narrative is brought to a conclusion. The problem of how YHWH can be in covenant with a sinful people and dwell in their midst has been resolved along with the fate of Israel and her election. YHWH's merciful character and the mediation of his covenant and glory through his faithful servant make it possible for Israel to participate in the covenant and its blessings through their connection and identification with Moses. The reason for the unusual use of the verb meaning "to have horns" (קרן; 34:29, 30, 35) to describe the glory shining from Moses' face now becomes clear. It is a contrasting allusion to the bull-calf, which the people designated for the mediation of YHWH's presence and blessing.[109] The allusion implies that rather than the people's choice, it is the man of YHWH's own choosing (Moses) who will mediate his presence and blessing. YHWH himself will fix the terms of his

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[108] Ibid, 223f.; italics removed. Intriguingly, Frank Thielman ("Unexpected Mercy: Echoes of a Biblical Motif in Romans 9-11") uses the same phrase that the quotation from Hafemann ends with—"unexpected mercy"—to characterize the essence of both Paul's argument in Rom 9-11 and the narrative contexts of his OT quotations in 9:6-13. For a description of Thielman's article, see the review of literature in chapter 2 above.

[109] See Moberly, *Mountain*, 108f.

salvation. In the words of 33:19, he will be gracious to whom he will be gracious, and show mercy to whom he will show mercy.[110]

Textual Comparison of Romans 9:3 and Exodus 32:32

We must now turn to a comparison of the text of Romans 9:3 and the textual tradition of Exodus 32:32:

Romans 9:3	ηὐχόμην γὰρ ἀνάθεμα εἶναι αὐτὸς ἐγὼ ἀπὸ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ὑπὲρ τῶν ἀδελφῶν μου τῶν συγγενῶν μου κατὰ σάρκα
Exodus 32:32 LXX	Καὶ νῦν εἰ μὲν ἀφεῖς αὐτοῖς τὴν ἁμαρτίαν, ἄφες· εἰ δὲ μή, ἐξάλειψόν με ἐκ τῆς βίβλου σου, ἧς ἔγραψας.
Exodus 32:32 MT	וְעַתָּה אִם־תִּשָּׂא חַטָּאתָם וְאִם־אַיִן מְחֵנִי נָא מִסִּפְרְךָ אֲשֶׁר כָּתָבְתָּ׃

The preceding comparison shows that there is no verbal similarity between Romans 9:3 and Exodus 32:32.[111] Nevertheless, the thematic coherence, volume, and recurrence of this allusion are so strong that most commentators recognize the parallel, as mentioned at the beginning of this chapter.[112] While the thematic

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[110] On the use of Ex 32-34, or parts of it, in the rest of the OT, see Gowan, *Theology in Exodus*, 240-43; Hafemann, *Paul*, 232-42; and Child's commentary. The golden bull-calf episode is referred to in Deut 9:7-21; Neh 9:18; Ps 106:19-23. Petter, "Exodus 34:6-7," 43 n. 108, 54 n. 152, has listed passages outside of Ex that parallel 34:6-7: Num 14:18-19; Deut 7:9-10; 1 Kgs 8:23; Neh 1:5; 9:27f.; Ps 86:15; 103:8; 145:8; Is 48:9; Jer 32:18; Dan 9:4; Joel 2:13; Jon 4:2; Mic 7:18-20; Nah 1:3.

[111] There is also no verbal similarity between Rom 9:3 and LXX Est 4:17, which has little claim to being a true allusion despite the contention of P. Bratsiotis, "Eine exegetische Notiz zu Röm. IX.3 and X.1." Despite the horror kissing the feet of a Gentile would be to a first century Jew, it does not compare to the horror that induces Paul's grief. There simply is not enough similarity between the two passages in the face of little support from other tests for detecting allusions (on which, see our introductory chapter). There is slightly more support for an allusion in Rom 10:1 since there is some faint verbal coherence, but not enough to convince. It is more likely that LXX Est 4:17 forms part of the general backdrop of Jewish tradition vis-à-vis the willingness to sacrifice in order to help the nation as seen in the references mentioned by Dunn, 525: Isaiah 53:5-6, 11; 4 Macc 17:22; Josephus, *Wars* 5.419; Str-B 3:261. Bratsiotis also mentions *Neg*., Mishna Tosephta 2, I. F. Siegert, *Argumentation bei Paulus: gezeigt an Röm 9-11*, 121, points to Num 11:15 as a parallel to Rom 9:3 along with Ex 32:32, but it has little to commend it beyond an extremely superficial similarity; it concerns Moses' complaint against the Lord rather than the self-sacrifice of the passage we are investigating.

[112] For the criteria and accompanying labels for detecting allusions, see our introductory chapter.

connection between the old and new context is obvious enough, the volume and recurrence of this allusion call for brief explanation.

The volume of the allusion is high, not for explicit repetition of words or structure, which are absent, but for its distinctive place among OT instances of intercessory prayer on behalf of Israel. Moreover, it occurs in one of the most prominent passages in all of the OT, central to the Book of Exodus, part of the *locus classicus* of the Sinaitic/Mosaic covenant, and the paradigmatic passage of apostasy and restoration. As for the recurrence of the allusion, we note that Romans 9:15 quotes Exodus 33:19 from the same context of Exodus 32-34.[113] Moreover, Paul's allusions to Exodus 32-34 elsewhere show that the passage was important to him and strengthens the likelihood of an allusion in 9:3 (see 1 Cor 10:7; 2 Cor 3; cf. Rom 1:23; Phil 4:3). Thus, Exodus 32:32 meets every test for a scriptural allusion discussed in our introductory chapter. There is strong warrant for treating it as such, and as we shall see, as a pointer to the broader context of Exodus 32-34.

There is very little difference between the MT and LXX of Exodus 32:32.[114] The only change of any real substance is the addition of an apodosis (ἄφες) to fill the anacoluthon of the MT in the first half of the verse.[115] But this is of no interpretive or theological import, and therefore testifies to the faithfulness of the LXX to the Hebrew text represented by the MT in this verse, which is also representative of the LXX translation of Exodus 32-34 in general.[116] Indeed, Hafemann has concluded that the LXX emphasizes the themes of God's presence in the midst of his sinful people, the problem this poses, and Moses' indispensable mediatorial role even more dramatically than the Hebrew textual tradition.[117]

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[113] Cf. Moo, 559, who notes that Paul alludes "to Moses' history and person elsewhere in Rom. 9-11 (e.g., 9:14-18; 10:19; 11:13-14)."

[114] See Wevers, *Greek Text of Exodus*, 517-73, for a full description of the differences between the Hebrew and LXX of Ex 32-34, including Septuagintal variants and with a concern for the translator's interpretation of the text. For a significant treatment of variations between the same, conducted with theological depth and a concern for Paul's interpretation of Ex 32-34, see Hafemann, *Paul*, 242-54. Wevers, idem, 537, lists several other minor changes in 32:32 not mentioned below (whether in the LXX text cited above or in the LXX textual tradition).

[115] See note 45 above on this Septuagintal addition.

[116] See the conclusion of Hafemann, *Paul*, 242.

[117] Ibid, 245f.

Interpretive Traditions Surrounding Exodus 32:32

The next step in our investigation of Paul's use of the Old Testament in Romans 9:1-5 is to survey the interpretive traditions surrounding Exodus 32:32 prior to or roughly contemporaneous with Paul. There are not many specific references to Exodus 32:32 in the relevant Jewish and Christian literature apart from the concept of the book of life. But there are many references to its broader context of Exodus 32-34, so much so, that we cannot explore all of them. We must content ourselves with exploring what we regard as the most relevant material to Paul's argument in Romans 9-11. Some important material must await a future analysis of the interpretive traditions surrounding Exodus 33:19.

Pseudo-Philo/Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum

Pseudo-Philo (Ps.-Philo) retells the story of Exodus 32-34 in chapter 12 of his *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* (LAB), written sometime around the first century.[118] LAB 12:4 confirms that the fulfillment of God's promises to Israel was threatened by Israel's sin with the golden calf. The Lord responded to the incident by asking Moses, "Are the promises that I promised to your fathers when I said to them, 'To your seed I will give the land in which you dwell'—are they at an end?' "[119] We may also observe that Ps.-Philo took the land promise of Gen 12:7 as representative of the Abrahamic

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[118] D. J. Harrington, "Pseudo-Philo: A New Translation and Introduction," 299, argues for a pre-C.E. 70 date, but Jacobson, 199-210, thinks a post-70 C.E. date decisive (see esp. pp. 199, 209), and fixes a loose *terminus ad quem* of the mid second century. Louis H. Feldman, "Prolegomenon," xxviii, notes a suggested *terminus a quo* of post-C.E. 70 and a *terminus ad quem* of C.E. 132. He points out that Pseudo-Philo intended his work to be taken as composed before the destruction of the Temple (see LAB 22:8).

[119] Harrington's translation; italics removed. M. R. James, *The Biblical Antiquities of Philo*, 111, understands the text similarly. But Jacobson, 111, 487, claims that both Harrington and James seriously misunderstand the text. He takes the Latin *complete* to mean "fulfilled," and translates, "What if the promises I made to your fathers had been fulfilled . . . ." While plausible, this does not yield any better sense. The relationship asserted by Jacobson to Deut 31:14-21 is not as important as the context of Ex 32, which LAB is interpreting, or the immediate context of LAB 12:4, which goes on to affirm that the Lord would forsake Israel (presently), but reconcile with them eventually. If Deut 31:14-21 is in view, it could just as well complement the consideration of the abortion of the promises, since the corrupt state of the people bears fruit, resulting in God's abandonment of them, before they even enter the land.

promises, found in Gen 12.[120] Thus, for Ps.-Philo, Israel's apostasy in Exodus 32 threatens the fulfillment of the Abrahamic promises.

Ps.-Philo depicts Moses as far more certain about the fulfillment of God's word and the restoration of Israel than the biblical account (LAB 12:6). Thus, the issue of the faithfulness of God's word is stressed even more by his interpretation of Exodus 32-34. As for the people of Israel, he took there to be a divinely recognized distinction among them over the relative degree of guilt in the worship of the golden calf: "if anyone had it in his will and mind that the calf be made, his tongue was cut off; but if he had been forced by fear to consent, his face shown" (LAB 12:7b).[121] This is a logical expansion of the biblical account based on the expressed conviction that those who committed the sin of apostasy would be punished, while those who did not would not be (Ex 32:30-35). Ps.-Philo appears to attempt to account for the fact that Exodus presents (1) the people as a whole as sinning with the bull-calf; (2) God as committing to punish all who sinned (32:33-34); and (3) only a portion of the people actually suffering punishment. Exodus does not explicitly address this question, but some type of distinction with respect to the degree of guilt among the people in the worship of the bull-calf is the logical implication of the text.[122]

Since Exodus 32:30-35 are particularly significant background for Exodus 33:19 and 34:6-7, it would seem that Ps.-Philo would understand these verses along the same lines as the targums, which teach that God's forgiveness is extended to those who continue to follow him in repentance while his punishment is extended to those who do not. But since he does not give an explicit interpretation for these verses, a more important observation is that LAB does not speak of the death of anyone for the idolatry of the calf. Rather, the tongues of the guilty are cut off. This puts the real focus of the question of punishment onto the question of whether Israel as a nation

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[120] Jacobson, 488, points out that this is actually a conflation of Gen 12:7; 17:8; Ex 32:13; 33:1.

[121] Harrington's translation. Jacobson, 496, notes an interesting version found in the targum on the Song of Songs 1:5, which reports that "when the Jews worshipped the calf, their faces became dark. But when they repented, their faces shone like angels.' [sic]."

[122] See Hafemann, *Paul*, 205, on this question. The most likely scenario given the data of the text would be that those directly worshiping the bull-calf were smitten for apostasy, but that the nation as a whole was also held guilty in the matter for passively going along with the sin, many perhaps attending the idolatrous feast, and not opposing this gross violation of the covenant, revealing their corrupt state.

will be cast away and destroyed, taken up in Moses' intercession on behalf of Israel (LAB 12:8-9).

Rather than the several Mosaic intercessions found in Exodus 32-34, Ps.-Philo presents only one, at the place where Exodus has Moses' second intercession (Ex 32:30-35). It appears to be an interpretive summary of the essence of Moses' several intercessions. It is striking that Moses begins by identifying Israel as the Lord's vine, since Paul speaks of Israel as an olive tree in Romans 11:17-24. Israel needs God's favor because it has lost its fruit and has not recognized its cultivator (12:8).[123] Israel's loss of fruit probably refers to its corruption or loss of righteousness through her apostasy (cf. Matt 3:7-11; Lk 3:7-9; Eph 5:9, 11). Her failure to acknowledge the Lord (i.e. the Cultivator) was the heart of her sin. Though he does not mention the covenant explicitly, Ps.-Philo's interpretation is consonant with our covenantal interpretation, which finds covenant recognition to be central to the problem of Exodus 32-34.

Moses' argument in LAB 12:8-9 is similar to that in Exodus 32:11-13, but there are significant differences relevant to Romans 9-11. First, Ps.-Philo addresses the possibility of a new people replacing Israel, raised by Exodus 32:10. The Moses of LAB insists that God will have no people to glorify him if he destroys Israel, because a new chosen people will not trust the Lord who destroyed the former people. Thus, Ps.-Philo again raises the issue of the faithfulness of God to his word even more strongly than Exodus does. But while the Moses of Exodus appeals to YHWH to express his faithfulness in a merciful way, the Moses of LAB essentially charges that the Lord would render himself untrustworthy in the eyes of the world if he were to destroy his people.[124] Intriguingly, many have argued that a similar thought precipitated Paul's argument in Romans 9-11.[125]

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[123] Jacobson, 498, and James, *Biblical Antiquities*, 112, read *emisit* rather than *amisit*, and so understand the vine to have put forth fruit rather than to have lost it. This is quite possible, and as Jacobson points out, is in harmony with the theme of success and prosperity leading to abandonment of God found in e.g., Deut 32:15; 8:12-17; cf. Ezek 31; Sifre Deut 318. But Jacobson bases his judgment principally on the idea that the loss of fruit is inappropriate to this context—a false supposition.

[124] This gives some support to the common view that Moses virtually forces YHWH's concession with his argument, discussed and rejected earlier in this ch.

[125] See e.g., p. 79 in ch. 2 above, where I also quote on this point, Richard Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, 64, and Ziesler, 234; pp. 301f. in ch. 4 below; Piper, *Justification*, 46.

Second, the consideration of the faithfulness of God vis-à-vis the replacement of Israel by a new people is all the more significant since Moses moves from the abandonment of Israel to the abandonment of the world! He seems to equate the one with the other in some way. The underlying thought appears to be that Israel is the key to the blessing and well-being of the world.[126] For God to forsake Israel is for him to forsake the world, though Ps.-Philo does not develop the thought. Nevertheless, he shows clearly that he associated Exodus 32-34 with the possibility of God forsaking Israel and electing a new people, and with God's faithfulness to his promises to Israel, which he finds necessary for the good of the world.

Third, as Moses draws near to the end of his intercession, he again asks that God fulfill the word he had spoken (i.e. the promises he already made to Israel) as well as the promises that still *must* be spoken, apparently referring to all of the Scriptures that follow Exodus 32-34. This is another instance of the unwavering confidence of LAB's Moses in the faithfulness of God to his word to Israel. He would never cast them aside without remedy.

One further passage from LAB deserves our attention. In 19:7 God speaks to Moses of Israel's future defection from him in idolatry, resulting in his forsaking of them to the destruction of their enemies. He likens that day to the day of his smashing of the tablets of the covenant recorded in Exodus 32:19. Their sin resulted in the writing of the tablets flying away. While most commentators find the point of similarity to be the date of these occurrences,[127] there seems to be more than just this going on. In view of the context of abandonment, it would seem that the Lord is again indicating that he will forsake Israel, the significance of the breaking of the tablets of the covenant for Ps.-Philo. This coheres with God's initial response to the golden calf in LAB 12:4, to forsake Israel, though he would eventually reconcile with them.

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[126] Cf. Gen 12:3; Isa 2:2-4; 56:6-8; 60:1-22; Mic 4:1-5; Zech 2:8-13; 14:1-21; Tob 13:3-14; Sib. Or. 3.702-23; T. Zeb. 9:5-9; Philo, *Sob.* 66; *Spec. Leg.* 2.163; *Mos.* 1.149; 2.224-25.

[127] Jacobson, 625.

The Testament of Moses

The Testament of Moses (T. Mos.) 3:9 may allude to Exodus 32:13 in its placement of Moses' appeal to God's covenant faithfulness to the patriarchs in the mouths of the tribes of Israel. But since T. Mos. is based squarely on Deuteronomy, and the former's use of the name Jacob accords with the latter's usage (Deut 9:5, 27) instead of the use of the name Israel in Exodus 32:13, it is certain that the prime allusion here is to Deut 9:5, 27. Nevertheless, Deut 9-10 presents itself as a first person narrative description of the events recorded in Exodus 32-34, and is therefore directly related to that passage. Hence, Exodus 32:13 may be regarded as part of the background to T. Mos. 3:9. In this pseudepigraphal passage, we have an allusion to Moses' intercession on behalf of Israel in the golden bull-calf episode singling out his argument for God's forgiveness and restoration of Israel based on his covenant faithfulness to the fathers.

T. Mos. 3:9 testifies to what was likely a dominant conviction among Jews of the first century when it was written,[128] viz., that God would not ultimately forsake Israel but would certainly fulfill his covenant and oath to the fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The firmness of God's covenant promises to Israel is in fact a major theme of T. Mos. (1:8-9; 3:9; 4:2-6; 12:2-13).[129] That the author connected this theme with the events of Deut 9/Ex 32-34 is probably evidence that he recognized in them the first and great threat to Israel's covenant relationship with the Lord. Moreover, it is striking that this theme is grounded in the Lord's foreknowledge, a matter not unrelated to Romans 9!

Some would characterize the theology of T. Mos. as deterministic,[130] and indeed, there is some measure of determinism in the book. But it is open to question whether T. Mos. really advocates a full determinism, not only because it advocates

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[128] For a helpful and concise discussion of the date of T. Mos., see J. Priest, "Testament of Moses: A New Translation and Introduction," 920f., who argues convincingly for an early first century date as most appropriate. For a longer treatment favoring this Herodian date, see John J. Collins, "The Date and Provenance of the Testament of Moses." Tromp, 27-131, provides a full scale introduction to T. Mos, and also finds an early fist century date most likely (116f.).

[129] See Priest, "Testament of Moses," 922.

[130] See ibid.

human responsibility and judgment, but also because it nowhere states this explicitly except in 1:13 with reference to the nations, a passage we must come back to. The only other place where it might state a clear determinism (12:4-5) is only conjecture because the text is in need of emendation and partially illegible.[131] Rather, God's foreknowledge is emphasized throughout the work, including at 12:4-5. As Charles has pointed out, "in xii. 4, 5, 13, it is God's foreknowledge, and not his predetermining purpose that is dwelt upon."[132] Indeed, for the author of T. Mos., it seems to be Israel as an entity that will persevere and find God's blessing, while individuals will be included/blessed or excluded/destroyed based on whether they keep the commandments (12:10-13).

The emphasis on foreknowledge shows up in connection with the allusion to the intercession of Moses (Deut 9/Ex 32) through his prophecy of divine judgment upon Israel (see 3:10ff.). This leads us to the primary feature of Moses in T. Mos., that of mediator, intercessor, and prophet.[133] Interestingly, references to Moses as mediator/intercessor are all connected to statements of predetermination or foreknowledge (1:14; 3:9-13; 11:11, 14, 17 [Joshua's words to Moses] taken with 12:4-13 [esp. vs. 6, Moses' response to Joshua]).

Moreover, these themes are also linked to the role of the nations with Israel in 1:12-14 and 12:4-12. We find that God created the world for Israel and intended to hide his purpose from the nations so they would incur guilt and presumably be judged/destroyed. As Tromp has observed, there is a contrast between 1:13 and 1:14 of "[t]he primeval election of Israel (established in the covenant mediated by Moses) . . . and the condemnation of the nations."[134] So there is no vision for the salvation of the Gentiles, but only of Israel, the guilty of which God will use the nations to punish

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[131] Priest's (ibid, 934) conjectural translation is deterministic. But Tromp's (262f.) translation/emendation and interpretation, for which he offers support, emphasizes foreknowledge, although he speaks of "the primordial predetermination of all history" in 12:4 in his comments on 1:14. Of course, foreknowledge can be understood deterministically, but this is far from necessary and should not be assumed.

[132] R. H. Charles, *The Assumption of Moses*, 50 n. 8.

[133] See David L. Tiede, "The Figure of Moses in *The Testament of Moses.*" He relates Moses' intercession more to his prophetic role than to his mediatorial, whereas we contend that T. Mos. bears the opposite emphasis (11:17; cf. 12:6). In any case, all three roles are inextricably intertwined.

[134] Tromp, 143.

(12:11). All of this is highly relevant for Paul's argument in Romans 9. It seems unlikely, though possible, that Paul had read or heard T. Mos., but it surely illuminates the type of thought within first century Judaism that Paul was interacting with in which Exodus 32-34 figured into the discussion.

Tiede has drawn attention to the prophetic/intercessory role of Moses vis-à-vis suffering.[135] In his advocacy on behalf of Israel, Moses suffered for their sake (3:11, immediately following the allusion to Ex 32!). Since the golden bull-calf episode is in the background, we can take this suffering intercessor motif to go back to there at least; and what point in that context is more dramatic in this regard than Exodus 32:32? Moreover, T. Mos. portrays Moses as a prophet who delivered eschatological secrets relating to Israel, the Gentiles, and the covenant faithfulness of God to his word.[136] This raises the possibility that in Romans 9 Paul tapped into this current interpretive tradition regarding Moses. Surely we have seen that issues of the faithfulness of God to his covenant promises to Israel, God's sovereignty and foreknowledge, and Moses' role as mediator/intercessor/prophet attached to the golden bull-calf episode (i.e. Deut 9-10; Ex 32-34), the foundational account bringing together his mediatorial and intercessory roles.

1 Enoch

1 Enoch 89:32-35, probably written in the second century B.C.,[137] presents the story of the golden bull-calf as a vision-allegory in which the people of Israel are sheep, Moses is the lead sheep (eventually turned into a man), and the Lord is called the Lord of the sheep. The author took Exodus 32 to indicate that the majority of Israel "had been blinded in their eyes and gone astray" (89:33).[138] But by slaying

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[135] Tiede, "Figure of Moses," 88.

[136] Ibid.

[137] See E. Isaac, "1 (Ethiopic Apocalypse of) Enoch: A New Translation and Introduction," 7.

[138] That is, they committed idolatry with the golden bull-calf. Here, the concept of the blinding of Israel is certainly unrelated to the concept of the divine hardening/blinding of Israel to be found in the OT and elsewhere in Jewish literature; if anything, it might suggest that the author understood Israel to have been self-blinded prior to and calling forth any divine action in this regard, but there is no explicit connection of any kind. Translations from 1 Enoch are Isaac's (see previous note).

(some of) the sheep who had gone astray with the help of other different sheep (i.e. the Levites), Moses "caused those sheep which went astray to return, and brought them back into their folds"; that is, he led them to repentance and renewed relationship with the Lord. Thus, the author of 1 Enoch interpreted Exodus 32 as reporting (or implying) the repentance of the Israelites, necessary for their restoration. Despite the fact that he fully credits Moses with bringing about their repentance and restoration, it is interesting that he says nothing about his intercession on their behalf. This lays greater stress on the need for repentance and action in the Israelites.

The Martyrdom of Isaiah

The Martyrdom of Isaiah (Mart. Isa.) 3:8-9 alludes to Exodus 33:20. If Jonathan Knight is correct that these verses are actually an early Christian attack on Judaism/the authority of Moses,[139] then we would have an example of Exodus 33:20 being used to repudiate Judaism not too long after Paul wrote Romans, evidencing the type of attitude he sought to correct in Romans 9-11. It would fit into the body of early extra-biblical Christian literature as one of the earlier denunciations of Judaism per se, and a rather extreme one at that for its implicit disparagement of Moses, which would be quite unusual for such literature.[140] But there is no reason to posit such an unusual attitude towards Moses, for Knight's interpretation is unwarranted on the level of exegesis, and perhaps even dating.

It is beyond the scope of this investigation to delve deeply into the details of dating Mart. Isa., but we should note that scholars have traditionally held the work to be composite, and dated the section containing 3:8-9 no later than the first century A.D.[141] As for exegesis, Knight seems to read too much out of what *may* be a

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[139] Jonathan Knight, *Disciples of the Beloved One: The Christology, Social Setting and Theological Context of the Ascension of Isaiah*, 43f., 190-96; idem, *The Ascension of Isaiah*, 28f., 52f.

[140] Knight, *Disciples*, 33-39, dates Mart. Isa. sometime in the period 112-138 A.D. For the patristic literature on the golden bull-calf episode, see L. Smolar and M. Aberbach, "The Golden Calf Epsiode in Postbiblical Literature," 95, 98-101. They note that unlike the people of Israel, Moses was praised in the Church fathers (98).

[141] On the composition and date of the book, see James H. Charlesworth, *The Pseudepigrapha and Modern Research*, 125-30; M. A. Knibb, "Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah: A New Translation and Introduction," 147-50; Knight, *Disciples*, 28-32. Knibb suggests a date of 167-164 B.C. for the section containing the allusion to Ex 33:20 (i.e. chs. 1-5, excluding 3:13-4:22), and Charlesworth similarly

polemical thrust in the text. The evil Belkira accuses Isaiah of being a false prophet partly on the basis of Moses' statement that no one can see the Lord over against Isaiah's claim to have seen the Lord. Knight assumes that the author of Mart. Isa. sides with Isaiah against Moses, and does not even consider the much more likely possibility that the author might argue that Moses and/or Isaiah has been interpreted incorrectly. But it may be that Knight has detected a real polemical situation behind Mart. Isa. 3:8-9 in which the statement of Exodus 33:20 was used by Jews "to deny the possibility of mystical vision and the value of Christian theology . . . ."[142] If so, it probably has nothing to do with disparagement of the authority of Moses, but rather correct scriptural interpretation and the Jewish polemical use of Exodus 33:20 and Isa 6:1. In that case, it would be significant that early Christians clashed with Jews over the former verse, which appears in a context of threat to the elect status of Israel.

Even more relevant for our purposes is that the false prophet Belkira uses Isa 1:10—a direct continuation of Isa 1:9, quoted by Paul in Romans 9:29—against Isaiah in the very next verse, Mart. Isa. 3:10. The fact that Isaiah called Jerusalem Sodom and its leaders Gomorrah is used as evidence against Isaiah to condemn him to death. The significance for us is that the placing of Israel/Judaism in the place of wicked Gentiles and God's judgment was treated with utter contempt. Now the text is obviously critical of this, which leads us to suspect that this was a popular attitude that the author of Mart. Isa. sought to correct, whether it be the insider criticism of a Jewish author according to the typical dating of the passage, or the polemical criticism of an early Christian author according to the latest trend in dating the book. Mart. Isa. 3:8-10 is notable for revealing part of the socio-religious background behind Paul's argument in Romans 9-11 in what was likely a popular Jewish attitude of contempt for the identification of Jews with Gentiles in sin and divine judgment, an attitude Paul had to take into account as he crafted an argument that made such identifications. It is likewise notable for connecting this attitude with Isa 1:10 and Exodus 33:20.

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asserts a date around the second century B.C., while Knight, working from the latest research, argues for one author who shaped his sources, and focuses on the final form of the text.

[142] Knight, *Ascension*, 53.

4 Ezra

4 Ezra 7:106 alludes to Moses' intercession on behalf of Israel in Exodus 32-34.[143] For the character Ezra,[144] Moses serves as an example of successful intercession on behalf of the ungodly, a precedent that should also obtain on the day of judgment. But the angel Uriel reveals to Ezra that this is not so (7:112-15). 4 Ezra 6:35-9:25 (Ezra's third vision) has a number of salient similarities to Romans 9 and will be dealt with in even more detail in the next chapter in relation to Paul's citation of Gen 18:10, 14. For now, we will restrict our comments to observations given little or no attention in our later discussion.

First, we may observe that just as Romans 9, Ezra's discussion with the divine messenger, which delves deeply into theodicy, begins with an expression of Israel's privileged status and a challenge to the reliability of God's promises to his people:[145]

> All this I have spoken before you, O Lord, because you have said that it was for us that you created this world. As for the other nations that have descended from Adam, you have said that they are nothing, and that they are like spittle, and you have compared their abundance to a drop from a bucket. And now, O Lord, these nations, which are reputed to be as nothing, domineer over us and devour us. But we your people, whom you have called your firstborn, only begotten, zealous for you, and most dear, have been given into their hands. If the world has indeed been created for us, why do we not possess our world as an inheritance? How long will this be so? (6:55-59; NRSV)

For both Paul and the author of 4 Ezra there was at least an apparent discrepancy between the elect status of Israel and the fact that she was not experiencing what God had promised her. What is more, they both come to the conclusion that in some way the elect status of ethnic Israel does not guarantee fulfillment of God's promises to

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[143] Stone, 251, considers the allusion to be to Ex 32:11-14, but since the reference is to Moses' intercession in general for those who sinned in the desert, it is better to acknowledge this as an allusion to his intercessory activity throughout Ex 32-34.

[144] For the distinction between the viewpoint of the author of 4 Ezra and the book's character Ezra, see ch. 4 n. 35 below.

[145] Therefore, the assertion of Stone, 189 n. 52 , that the list of epithets in 6:58 has little in common with Paul's list in Rom 9:4 is correct only on the verbal level; it has much in common thematically, as the following analysis will show.

Jews based on ethnicity (4 Ezra 7:45ff.). Thus, we have an allusion to Exodus 32-34 again connected to the theme of the faithfulness of God's word to Israel, and in this instance also connected to the consideration of the meaning of Israel's election. It is striking that 4 Ezra argues that the election of Israel ultimately holds no secure promise for Jews based on ethnicity, an unusual stance. This author's position cannot be said to determine Paul's position, but it gives us a clearer picture of the types of issues whirling about his first century context and an example of the extreme reactions elicited by his socio-historical milieu.

Second, flowing from his theology of individual merit, the author of 4 Ezra teaches that the majority of Israel will be lost because of its unfaithfulness, the logical consequence of passages such as 7:46-48 and 9:14-16. The allusion to Exodus 32-34 appears in connection with the assertion that the arrival of the eschaton will render ineffective any intercession of the righteous for the wicked. This perception of the state of Israel provides a comparable viewpoint to Paul's concern in Romans 9:1-5 that the vast majority of Israel was separated from Christ and his salvation by its unbelief.

Third, arising from this accursed state of Israel is an expression of great grief similar to Paul's lament in Romans 9:1-5:

> About mankind you know best; but I will speak about your people, for whom I am grieved, and about your inheritance, for whom I lament, and about Israel, for whom I am sad, and about the seed of Jacob, for whom I am troubled. Therefore I will pray before you for myself and for them, for I see the failings of us who inhabit the land (8:15-17).[146]

Such anguished sorrow demonstrates the severity of Israel's plight. Indeed, the text speaks of eschatological damnation. This suggests that Paul's language in Romans 9:1-5 also relates to a plight of the severest proportions. Israel's suffering at the hands of the Gentiles is probably a secondary source of Ezra's grief over his people, which leads us to our next observation.

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[146]Metzger's translation (Bruce M. Metzger, "The Fourth Book of Ezra: A New Translation and Introduction").

As can be seen in 6:55-59 quoted above, Ezra's quandary concerning Israel's election and the apparent failure of God's word to her is tied up with a certain measure of God's blessing having been granted to the Gentiles so that they rule over Israel. The problem is not only that ethnic Israel has not obtained the fulfillment of God's promises, though that is bad enough, but it is also that God has granted some sort of favor to the Gentiles over against Israel. A similar tension between the role of Jew and Gentile in God's end time plan also figures in Paul's argument in Romans 9-11. This brings us to a final brief observation, viz., that both 4 Ezra 6:35-9:25 and Romans 9-11 are eschatological in character.

It would be going too far to suggest that in 7:106 the author of 4 Ezra interpreted Exodus 32-34 as directly having to do with all the themes we have identified, but it is notable that in his discussion of these themes he appeals to this passage in Exodus. One might object that it is the mere occurrence of intercession that establishes the link. Maybe so, but it is surely significant that the same themes treated by 4 Ezra swirl around Paul's argument in Romans 9 where he alludes to some of the same passages, such as Exodus 32-34. Indeed, it seems likely that the author of 4 Ezra understood Exodus 32-34 in relation to the faithfulness of God's word to Israel and the fate of the chosen nation, themes that could naturally be related to the role and status of the Gentiles in God's eschatological plan.

Philo

Philo treats the golden bull-calf episode directly and at some length in *Spec. Leg.* 3.125-27, *Mos.* 2.161-72, 270-74, each of which has a specific focus on the faithful response of the Levites and the consequent establishment of their special ministry. The fact that Philo was most impressed by this aspect of the story reveals that he found its primary significance in its demonstration of what makes one worthy in God's estimation. Indeed, elsewhere he considered Moses to be the model of the virtuous wise man par excellence.[147] He goes so far as to quote Exodus 33:17 to show that Moses pleased God above all, drawing the conclusion that Moses was worthy of

[147] In this section on Philo's interpretation of Ex 32-34, references for allusions to Ex are cited in parentheses and follow the Philonic passages. See *Quod Deus* 109 (Ex 33:17); *Post.* 136 (Ex 32:7); *Leg. All.* 3.142 (Ex 34:28).

God's grace (*Quod Deus* 109)! This could be the very type of thought Paul sought to counter in Romans 9. Paul would undoubtedly agree with the modern commentators who find that Exodus in no way attributes YHWH's capitulation to Moses' righteousness.[148] However, Philo probably did not think of such worthiness as meritorious (see below), but rather as that which inclined God to be favorable toward a person.

Quite a number of passages in Philo that allude to Exodus 32-34 develop the allusions in the vein of separation from the fleshly and natural on the one hand, and pursuit of God/wisdom/virtue/spiritual things on the other.[149] These share a common theme of separation from the earthly and mortal for pursuit of God as making one worthy in some way before God. In *Det.* 160 (quoting Ex 33:7), for example, it made Moses a worthy suppliant.

Philo's most important allusion along these lines for our purposes comes in *Quis Her.* 20, where he quotes Exodus 32:32, the most direct focus of our attention. The context argues that it is the wise/virtuous who have good confidence for freedom of speech to advance positive claims upon God. Indeed, "all the wise are friends of God, and particularly so in the judgement of the most holy lawgiver."[150] So again, Philo advocates a worthiness before God based on wisdom and virtue. But this is probably not to be thought of as meritorious works-righteousness, for Philo goes on to extol the need for humility before the Lord (*Quis Her.* 24ff.), confessing the impossibility of worthiness before God and of deserving to inherit his works (*Quis Her.* 33). So it would seem that Philo's interpretation of Exodus 32-34 in general, and 32:32 in particular, seeks to identify what finds favor with God in people. This is relevant for Paul's argument in Romans 9-11, which may be understood as addressing essentially the same issue to some extent.

It is therefore interesting that Philo's citation of Exodus 32:16 in *Quis Her.* 167 follows a related interpretation of Exodus 25:22 that finds God's most

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[148] See e.g., Piper, *Justification*, 81.

[149] *Post.* 158 (Ex 33:20); *Fug.* 90 (33:26); *Ebr.* 67 (Ex 32:27-29), 96 (Ex 32:17), 100 (Ex 33:7); *Quis Her.* 20 (Ex 32:32); *Leg. All.* 2.54 (Ex 33:7); 3.46 (Ex 33:7); 3.101 (Ex 33:13); 3.142 (Ex 34:28); *Det.* 160 (Ex 33:7); *Gig.* 54 (Ex 33:7); *Mig.* 8 (various passages).

[150] Colson's translation in LCL.

fundamental characteristics to be his goodness and judgment. This is the two-fold theme we found running through Exodus 32-34, most profoundly expressed by Exodus 34:6-7. Both Philo and Paul (Rom 9:4; 9:30-10:4), partly influenced by Exodus 32-34, associated the Law with both God's goodness/mercy and his judgment.[151]

Targums and Other Rabbinic Literature

We must now turn to Jewish tradition later than Paul in its written form. There we find that the Targums translate Exodus 33:3, 5 entirely opposite to the Hebrew: "but I will not remove My presence from your midst" (33:3) and "if for one moment I were to remove My Presence from your midst I would destroy you" (33:5).[152] This is an attempt to defend Israel and her elect status, trying to make the biblical text assert that the Lord never left Israel, and implying that he would never do so, not even

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[151] Other allusions to Ex 32-34 in Philo have to do with either (1) wisdom/virtue, whether of its greatness: *Mig.* 85 (Ex 32:16), or its pursuit: *Post.* 136 (Ex 32:7); or (2) the ineffability of God: *Post.* 16 (Ex 33:12); *Mut.* 8 (Ex 33:13); *Mut.* 9 (Ex 33:23); *Post*. 169 (Ex 33:23); *Fug.* 165 (Ex 33:23); or (3) the need for God: *Mig.* 171 (Ex 33:5). We should note that Philo's quotation of Ex 33:13 in *Leg. All.* 3.101 appears in a context that treats predestination and foreknowledge (*Leg. All.* 3.65-106). Moreover, in relation to the idea of predestination Philo cites the same passage (Gen 25:23; *Leg. All.*3.88) Paul will cite in Rom 9:12, not too long after his allusion to Ex 32:32 in Rom 9:3. An analysis of this section of Philo's *Leg. All.* is best left for a treatment of the interpretive traditions surrounding Gen 25:23. But we should note here that while Philo gives no indication of importing the context of Ex 32-34 into the discussion, it is noteworthy that he uses Ex 33:13 in an argument which culminates shortly thereafter in declaration of God's grace with a corresponding call to repentance, all flowing even more directly from a quotation of Deut 32:34 from the Song of Moses, a passage that plays an important role in Rom 9-11 and contains a plot of fall-and-restoration similar to that of Ex 32-34 (see the concluding section of this chapter). On Philo's use of Scripture in this section, see Peder Borgen, *Philo of Alexandria: An Exegete for His Time*, 51-56, who concludes that Philo and Paul drew "on a common expository tradition of Gen 25:23" (56). For Philo's use of Ex 33:13-23, see idem, 239f., who observes that Philo looks favorably on even Gentile search for God through philosophical reasoning, though "proper ascent is tied to Moses and the nation under the Laws of Moses." This proper ascent, which follows in the footsteps of Moses, is open to Gentiles who become proselytes, joining "the new and godly *politeia*" and receiving rights equal to those of the native born. Cf. idem, 216f., where Borgen compares Eph 2:11-22 with Philo's conception of proselytism, and our consideration of Eph 2:11-21 in our treatment of the New Testament context of Ex 32:32 below.

[152] Grossfeld's translations. These are the renderings of Tg. Onqelos; Tgs. Neofiti and Pseudo Jonathan are similar. For a defense of these translations of Ex by the targums, see Bernard Grossfeld, *The Targum Onqelos to Exodus: Translated with Apparatus and Notes*, 92f. n. 3, who follows the traditional and entirely unconvincing expedient of taking the *beth* prefix of the Hebrew בְּקִרְבְּךָ to mean "from" as if it were a *mem* prefix. But the *beth* prefix with קֶרֶב means "in the midst," not to mention the fact that the interpretation is completely at odds with the context of Ex 32-34 in which it is found.

temporarily. Such an interpretation of these verses is in harmony with the defensive and apologetic readings of the golden bull-calf episode in rabbinic literature generally, and testifies to the conflict that arose between Jews and Christians in general, and around Exodus 32-34 in particular.

Rabbinic treatment of the golden bull-calf episode focused mainly on defending Israel from her detractors.[153] Intriguingly, Exodus Rabbah links Exodus 33:12 with Jeremiah 18, and Exodus 34:1 with Isaiah 64:7; Malachi 1:6; Jeremiah 18:6; and Hosea 2,[154] all OT contexts Paul alludes to later in Romans 9! This suggests that Paul chose these texts at least partially for their common theme of Israel's sinful and desolate state before the Lord and the possibility of restoration. Perhaps just as significant in relation to the rabbinic interpretation of the golden bull-calf episode vis-à-vis Romans 9 is the fact that the rabbis found it necessary to defend themselves against the early Church, which came to use the passage to claim that God had rejected Israel, voided his covenant with them, and replaced her with the Church as his elect people. These are the very issues Paul addresses in Romans 9-11. Indeed, it is commonly acknowledged that such a replacement theology was active in the early Church of the NT period as well, and it is a matter of some debate where Paul came down on this issue, Romans 9-11 being a key text for determining his position. Our study will attempt to determine Paul's perspective through an exegesis that is especially attuned to his use of the Old Testament. For now, we observe that Exodus 32-34 is an ideal portion of Scripture to address such issues from, evidenced by the historical clash between Jews and Christians over the passage.

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[153] See L. Smolar, and M. Aberbach, "The Golden Calf Episode in Postbiblical Literature." They helpfully summarize their findings on p. 116, stating that the incident "was a source of acute embarrassment in the talmudic age. With an eye on pagan anti-Semitism, Josephus completely suppressed the golden calf episode. The early Church made polemical use of the sin of the golden calf for which it blamed the Jews of its time, claiming that God had forever rejected them on account of this sin and that the covenant between God and the Jews was consequently void. The result was that in rabbinic literature, despite frank admissions designed for internal use, Aaron, the Israelites, and the eternity of the covenant between God and the Jewish people were vigorously defended." For additional guidance in the rabbinic literature, see Hafemann, *Paul*, 228ff. n. 130, and the literature cited there. For a convenient compendium of rabbinic tradition related to Ex 32-34, see Louis Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews*, 3.119-48. Cf. the thicker collection of Exodus Rabbah (Lehrman, *Midrash Rabbah: Exodus*, 467-545).

[154] See Lehrman, ibid, 516f., 530-35. It is also worth noting that one rabbinic tradition has Moses unsuccessfully pleading mercy for Israel based on their readiness to accept the Torah when the descendants of Esau (i.e., Gentiles) rejected it (see Ginzberg, *Legends*, 3.126).

Acts

This brings us to a consideration of the use of Exodus 32-34 in the NT, pride of place going to the speech of Stephen in Acts 7. Stephen's speech traces the history of Israel with a special focus toward the end on her stiff neck and practice of rejecting God's prophets. "He implicitly denies that he has spoken against the law of Moses, and makes himself out to be a defender of the law."[155] He also attacks

> the Jews for their failure to obey the revelation given to them in the Old Testament and for their rejection of the Messiah and the new way of worship which he brought. . . . Consequently, the speech has its part in the total story of Acts in showing that the Jews, to whom the gospel was first preached, had rejected it, and thus clearing the way for the church to turn away from Jerusalem and the temple and to evangelize further afield, and ultimately among the Gentiles.[156]

When Stephen comes to the golden bull-calf episode in 7:40-41, he quotes Exodus 32:1, 23, and comments, "They made a calf in those days and they brought a sacrifice to the idol, and they rejoiced in the works of their hands. But God turned away and gave them over to serve the host of heaven . . ." (Acts 7:41-42a).

Thus, Stephen describes God's response to Israel's sin with the golden bull-calf as turning away from them and giving them over to idolatry. He does not explicitly state that God returned to Israel or restored them. This does not imply that Israel was not restored at all (i.e., it does not deny that some sort of restoration took place at the time of Ezra and Nehemiah), but does appear intentional, indeed suggestive for the state of Stephen's contemporaries. The implication of the omission is that it is as if the restoration never happened, for the wicked impulse formed at the time of the great sin never left them, and the rest of Israel's sinful history flowed from this, culminating in the exile and presumably her miserable state in subjection to the

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[155] Marshall, 132.

[156] Ibid.

Romans in the present time. That is, Israel is still in exile.[157] Israel's stiff neck was cemented at the time of the golden bull-calf, and has remained so to the present time of eschatological fulfillment in Jesus the Messiah.

Thus, Stephen uses Exodus 32 to articulate a judicial hardening of Israel strikingly similar to what Paul describes in Romans 9-11. For Luke, it is a result of Israel's sin. This hardness motif is not only found in Romans at chs. 9-11, but also at 1:23-24, where Paul alludes to the golden bull-calf episode vis-à-vis Psalm 106:20 (LXX 105), which interprets Israel's idolatry with the bull-calf as exchanging their glory for the image of an ox that eats grass.[158] We will consider Paul's use of Ps 106:20 further when we look at the NT context of Exodus 32:32. Here we note only that in Romans 1:23ff. Paul uses the language of Ps 106's interpretation of the golden bull-calf to describe idolatry that receives the divine punishment of a type of hardening, the giving over of people to their sin so that their own sin becomes its own punishment.

Stephen alludes to Exodus 32-34 again (see Ex 32:9; 33:3, 5; 34:9) in Acts 7:51, suggesting that the hardheartedness which began with the golden bull-calf now expresses itself in continually resisting the Holy Spirit. Given the function of the Holy Spirit in the NT, this rejection of the Spirit is a rejection of God himself. And given the function of the Holy Spirit in Acts, this rejection is a rejection of the mark of the elect people of God. Therefore, Stephen can also call his Jewish accusers "uncircumcised in heart and ears" (ἀπερίτμητοι καρδίαις καὶ τοῖς ὠσίν), ironically placing them in the place of the Gentiles.

If the traditional authorship of Acts be accepted, and therefore its close connection to Paul through his missionary traveling companion, then these

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[157] For the concept of Israel's continuing exile in the first century, see along with the appropriate literature cited, Thomas R. Hatina, "Exile"; James M. Scott, "Restoration of Israel"; idem, "Exile and the Self-understanding of Diaspora Jews in the Greco-Roman Period"; N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*, e.g., 268-70; idem, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, e.g., xviif. 126ff. Scott has also edited two important collections of essays: *Exile: Old Testament, Jewish and Christian Conceptions*; and, *Restoration: Old Testament, Jewish, and Christian Perpectives*. Cf. Hafemann, *Paul*, 392, who finds this concept operative in Paul's argument in 2 Cor 3:16 vis-à-vis his use of Ex 32-34.

[158] See Hafemann, *Paul*, 208 n. 65, on the allusion to the golden bull-calf via Ps 106 as the background for Rom 1:23f.

observations are all the more significant.[159] They become more significant still when we consider Stephen's speech against the context of the whole book, which portrays Paul's mission to the Jew first, but constantly turning to the Gentiles because of Jewish hardheartedness and rejection of the gospel culminating in Paul's application of Isaiah 6:9-10 to the leaders of the Jews of Rome (Acts 28:25-27), which speaks of a judicial hardening of Israel, followed by Paul's bold statement, "Therefore, let it be known to you that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they also will listen" (Acts 28:28). The significance of all of this is heightened yet again by the fact that Paul probably alludes to Isa 6:9 in some way in Romans 11:8 in his discussion of the hardening of Israel.[160] We have found a Christian tradition of the first century, conceivably accessed by Paul himself(!), that found in Exodus 32-34 a characterization of Israel as stiff-necked and estranged from God, resulting in the judgment of hardening, and applied to the contemporary Jewish people. It was used to indict Israel severely for rejecting the prophets culminating in the rejection of the Messiah and the true meaning of the Law of Moses.

John

Finally, we should mention John 1:17-18, where we find allusion to Exodus 34:6 (probably; "grace and truth") and 33:20 respectively.[161] Whereas God is characterized by grace and truth, and no one can see him, Jesus Christ, as the divine Son of God, indeed, the only begotten God (μονογενὴς θεός), has both brought God's truth and grace and most fully revealed God the Father. The allusion appears in a

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[159] For a concise and convincing argument for the traditional authorship of Acts, see Marshall, 44-46; F. F. Bruce, "Acts of the Apostles," 35.

[160] Seyoon Kim, *Paul and the New Perspective: Second Thoughts on the Origin of Paul's Gospel*, 123, claims that there is an increasing recognition that Paul alludes to Isa 6:9-10 in Rom 11:7-10. It is also not insignificant that Douglas C. Mohrmann, "Semantic Collisions at the Intertextual Crossroads : A Diachronic and Synchronic Study of Romans 9:30-10:13," 185f., has observed that the speech of Acts 7 is one of the closest NT parallels to Rom 9-11 vis-à-vis its "intertextual qualities and introductory formulae." It is also interesting to note that he finds the main point of Stephen's speech in Acts 7:51-53 (ibid, 191), where allusion is made to Ex 32-34.

[161] Klyne Snodgrass, "The Use of the Old Testament in the New," 46, claims that there is no doubt that John 1:14-18 is based on Ex 33:17-34:6, and that an appreciation of this background is essential for a full understanding of the Johannine passage. Cf. his treatment of the allusion's significance.

context that is concerned with the rejection of Christ by his own people: "He came to his own, and his own did not receive him" (John 1:11).[162] The contacts with Romans 9-11 are again impressive.

John's contrast of the Law-giving through Moses and Jesus Christ's bringing of grace and truth is akin to Paul's statement in Romans 10:4 that Christ is the goal (or end) of the Law. Whereas the Law brought a measure of grace and truth—it may be counted as one of Israel's greatest privileges after all (Rom 9:4)—it found its fulfillment only in Jesus the Messiah.[163] Similarly, not even Moses, the greatest of OT personages, could see God. Moses and the Law are great and glorious. But Jesus Christ far surpasses them. He is God and reveals him more fully than even the Law of Moses! This is an obvious assertion both of the inadequacy of Judaism apart from Jesus the Messiah and his deity (cf. Rom 9:5). This is another example of first century Christian tradition, positive toward the Law itself and faced with the wholesale rejection of Christ by the Jewish people, associating Exodus 32-34 with the inadequacy of the faith of Israel in the present eschatological age unless completed in Christ.[164]

The New Testament Context of Exodus 32:32

Now that we have examined the Old Testament and related background behind Paul's allusion in Romans 9:3, it is time to exploit what we have learned to understand Paul's use of Exodus 32:32 and exegete Romans 9:1-5. Having soared to the heights of the blessing of God in Christ for the elect (Rom 8), Paul now plunges to the depths of despair over the plight of those to whom the election had historically belonged but who are paradoxically separated from the elect community and its

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[162] It is interesting that Nygren, 356, quotes John 1:11 as an expression of the problem Paul faced in Rom 9-11 quite apart from any thought of the common concern for the context of Ex 32-34.

[163] For John's positive view of the Law as grace in these verses, see Carson (especially), 131ff.; Beasley-Murray, 15.

[164] References to the Book of Life in the NT, and therefore possibly to Ex 32:32, are: Lk 10:20; Phil 4:3; Rev 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12, 15; 21:27. Other possible allusions to Ex 32-34 in the NT include (the Ex reference follows each reference in parentheses): Heb 11:12 (Ex 32:13); 1 Tim 6:16 (Ex 33:20); Jms 5:11 (Ex 34:6); Mt 4:2 (Ex 34:28). For additional allusions to Ex 32-34 in the OT Pseudepigrapha, see Sib. Or. 3:17-19 (Ex 33:20); 2 Enoch 25:1 (Ex 33:11; probably not really an allusion); 37:2 (Ex 34:29ff.); Questions of Ezra 39 (Ex 33:11, etc.); 1 Enoch 47:3 (Book of Life).

blessings.[165] It is in fact the good news of the gospel that presses the horrific condition of Paul's kinsmen so forcefully into view. The better the news is of what God has done in Christ, the worse it is for the Jewish people, who have rejected their Messiah. Paul wants the Roman Christians to know beyond a shadow of a doubt that he feels the sting of this tragedy to the full.

As we have seen in our introduction to Romans 9-11 (ch. 2), Paul was writing to a church embroiled in conflict between Jews and Gentiles. And his gospel and missionary theology were potentially offensive to both Jews and Gentiles for various reasons. In light of the potential double-edged opposition Paul faced in Rome, we can see his rhetorical strategy at work, seeking the unity of Jews and Gentiles in the church at Rome and the common acceptance of his gospel and missionary practice. To the Jewish minority, Paul assures them of his love for the Jewish people, his great concern for their well-being, and his recognition of their privileged status. To the Gentile majority, he models the correct attitude towards the Jewish people—love and respect—and implicitly condemns any arrogance or hardheartedness towards them. Moreover, he provides an implicit rationale for prioritizing Jews in his missionary strategy—the privileges and blessings of the gospel and the election that it bestows most properly belong to the Jews as the historic people of God.

Paul's Sincere Grief (Romans 9:1-2)

So Paul begins his discussion of the faithfulness of God to Israel by saying, "I am speaking the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience bearing witness to me in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart" (Rom 9:1-2). Thus Paul approaches the subject of Israel and her state in the most solemn of tones. The language of 9:1-5 is highly emotional and exalted, testifying to the importance of the topic for both Paul and his argument in the epistle,[166] and supporting the contention that we have arrived at the climactic segment of the theological section of the letter. Through repetition Paul assures his readers of the

[165] On the connection of Rom 9-11 and 1-8, see ch. 2 above, pp. 79-87, and on the more immediate connection of Rom 8 and 9, see especially pp. 84ff.

[166] Cf. Schreiner, 478f.

truth of what he affirms in 9:2, namely, his profound grief (over the accursed state of ethnic Israel).[167] By stating the truth of his words both positively and negatively, he not only repeats his thought, but through a sort of merismus, strengthens it even further, as does the placement of Ἀλήθειαν at the beginning of the whole sequence.

By saying that he speaks the truth ἐν Χριστῷ, Paul indicates that his words are governed by Christ, and even motivated by him. Therefore, he cannot but tell the truth.[168] The phrase functions much as ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ does in Galatians 1:20 in connection with the same denial of falsehood (οὐ ψεύδομαι) we have here in 9:1, as ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ οἶδεν does in 1 Corinthians 11:31, again with οὐ ψεύδομαι, and as ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ does in the following participial phrase. To say that his conscience bears witness ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ means that the testimony of his conscience in this matter is similarly controlled by the Holy Spirit of God, ensuring the veracity of his statement. Whether Paul speaks of his conscience bearing witness to him, or with him to the Romans, does not make much difference for his overall purpose, which is to strengthen even more the impression that the assertion of his great grief in v. 2 is true. Nevertheless, Paul most likely means that his conscience testifies to him of his honesty, for Paul's other two uses of συμμαρτυρέω in the epistle (2:15 and 8:16) carry the meaning of "testify to."[169] Yet the suggestion that Paul is

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[167] On the often-noted repetition of 9:1-3, see especially Dunn, 522.

[168] Cf. 1 Tim 2:7 for the same emphatic combination of ἀλήθειαν λέγω and οὐ ψεύδομαι.

[169] The σύν prefix strengthens the verbal idea rather than indicating cooperation, either of which it can do in this word; see BDAG s.v. These occurrences of the word in Romans are the only ones in the NT. The commentators are divided on the question of whether συμμαρτυρέω + dative in 9:1 means to testify "to" (Dunn, 523; Fitzmyer, 543; and especially Moo, 556) or "with" (Cranfield, 452; Piper, *Justification*, 20; Schreiner, 479 [who incorrectly cites Dunn as agreeing]; Cottrell, 45; Stuhlmacher, 144f.; cf. Karol Gábris, "Das Gewissen—normiert durch den Heiligen Geist: Bibelarbeit über Röm. 9,1-5," 23). Interestingly, Cranfield, who favors the associative meaning of the dative μοί here, understands the dative as a simple direct object in 8:16, while Moo, who takes the opposite view with respect to 9:1, favors the associative meaning of the dative in 8:16, whereas the opposite positions on 8:16 respective to each of these scholars would strengthen their respective positions. Most commentators seem to opt for the associative meaning in 8:16 (so Dunn, 454; Moo, 504; NASB; RSV; NRSV; NKJV), but it seems more likely that the σύν prefix is intensive there and the dative a simple direct object, since there is no indication as to whom the Holy Spirit and the human spirit would together be testifying to, while the Holy Spirit's function is the focus of attention. Though testimony could conceivably be represented as given to the Christian as separate from his own spirit, it is simpler and more likely that here the Holy Spirit testifies to the Christian's spirit conceived of as his very self. As for Rom 2:15, there is no dative and no direct object, so the most likely meaning would be simply, "to testify," the σύν prefix notwithstanding. Moo's argument (556 n. 5) on 9:1 that the idea of Paul's conscience witnessing with him to the Romans is difficult is rather weak. It essentially begs the

offering himself and the testimony of his conscience as two agreeing witnesses according to the biblical law of evidence[170] is attractive (cf. 2 Cor 13:1). So it may be that Paul is invoking this law (Num 35:30; Deut 17:6; 19:15), but to the effect that he is signaling to the Romans that his statement can be believed because it is based on the surety of the testimony of 3 witnesses that have testified to him (his own conscience, Christ, and the Holy Spirit), who in turn testifies to them.

The fact that Paul goes to such great lengths to assure his readers of is that he has great sorrow (λύπη . . . μεγάλη) and unceasing grief (ἀδιάλειπτος ὀδύνη) in his heart. Again, Paul labors to state his point as strongly as possible through repetition via the synonyms λύπη and ὀδύνη,[171] both modified by intensifying adjectives. Such

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question and is not much more difficult than the alternative. In either case, we have conscience "perceived . . . as a semi-autonomous faculty . . ." (Dunn, 523). As for the grammatical relationship between 9:1 and 9:2, it seems best to go the simplest route and take the ὅτι clause of the latter as dependent upon συμμαρτυρούσης rather than λέγω or ψεύδομαι (contra Cranfield, 452, who cites Moffatt, and Barrett, 174f., as in favor of our position, which Angelika Reichert, *Der Römerbrief als Gratwanderung: Eine Untersuchung zur Abfassungsproblematik*, 178 n. 155, has recently argued for). Cranfield's contention that this leaves the verb clauses of 9:1 without clear reference seems weak; they are complete thoughts by themselves, and the context clearly indicates the situation they relate to.

[170] See e.g., Cranfield, 452. But Otto Michel, "Opferbereitschaft für Israel," 95, thinks it impossible (he notes it as an interpretation of some church fathers such as Chrysostom).

[171] Dunn, 523f., points out that these words are only associated in biblical Greek in Is 35:10 and 51:11 (parallel passages), and suggests that "Paul probably had these passages in mind, with the implication intended that this is the "sorrow" which will be banished when the ransomed of the Lord return to the Lord and experience God's saving righteousness (Isa 51:11)" [p. 524]. It is more correct to say that these forms of the words are used only here, for they appear together in the dative case in Prov 31:6; cf. Pss Sol 4:15. Nevertheless, Dunn's suggestion is intriguing and quite possible. But it is difficult to know whether Paul had these Isaian passages in mind or not. Moo's (557 n. 10) judgment that it is unlikely "that Paul's use of the two terms owes anything to these two texts" seems too strong. The verbal similarity is only slight while the thematic coherence is impressive since Paul considers the accursed state of Israel and moves to the time of their restoration (Rom 11:25-32). Indeed, Paul alludes to Is 59:20 in Rom 11:26 in relation to this time of restoration. And we know that Isaiah was important to Paul in Rom 9-11 (see J. Ross Wagner, *Heralds of the Good News: Isaiah and Paul "in Concert" in the Letter to the Romans*; Florian Wilk, *Die Bedeutung des Jesajabuches für Paulus*; Douglas A. Oss, "Paul's Use of Isaiah and Its Place in His Theology, with Special Reference to Romans 9-11"; Shiu-Lun Shum, *Paul's Use of Isaiah in Romans: A Comparative Study of Paul's Letter to the Romans and the Sybilline and Qumran Sectarian Texts*). But there is no indication that this refrain from Isaiah was especially well-known in Jewish tradition, except that it is repeated twice in the book. Moreover, Paul does not allude to the context of Is 35 or 51 elsewhere (according to the indexes of quotations, allusions, and verbal parallels in the fourth edition of UBS' Greek NT), with the possible exception of Is 51:17 in Eph 5:14, depending on whether this is a true allusion and Ephesians be considered Pauline or not. This leaves the volume of the echo rather faint. As far as I know, Dunn is the first and only one to advance this as an allusion. So with only a slight verbal connection and an attractive thematic coherence, and no other tests for allusion in its favor, we are left with only a faint echo here that we need not explore in depth here. According to the designations we outlined in our introductory chapter (p. 32), this may be classified as a possible allusion. J. L. de Villiers, "The Salvation of Israel according

an incredibly strong statement of Paul's grief and veracity in stating it is surely no accident of eloquence. Paul appears to be addressing the slanderous charges circulating against him that he was an enemy of his own people and a blasphemer (cf. Rom 3:8); there were even multitudes of Jewish Christians who were suspicious of him (Acts 21:20-21). We can get a feel for the type of opposition Paul faced from the charges of Asian Jews who seized him in the Temple according to Acts 21:28: "Men, Israelites, help! This is the man who teaches all everywhere against the people, and the Law, and this place; and what is more, he has even brought Gentiles [Ἕλληνας] into the Temple and has defiled this holy place."[172]

But Paul is doing more than defending himself. As mentioned earlier, he is already setting the stage for an argument that will address the concerns of Jews and Gentiles alike in the Roman congregation and encourage them to unity. He is modeling the proper Christian attitude towards the Jewish people to be adopted by the Roman Christians,[173] and genuinely concerned for his people, the only attitude consistent with true faith,[174] indeed, the only one that could confirm the integrity and authenticity of his apostleship.[175] And there is yet another reason for Paul's unusual

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to Romans 9-11," 201, rightly observes a chiastic pattern in λύπη-μεγάλη-ἀδιάλειπτος-ὀδύνη, following J. P. Louw, *A Semantic Discourse Analysis of Romans*, 2.97; cf. Schmithals, 327.

[172] Most interpreters seem to acknowledge that Paul may well be countering charges, and Moo, 556, can say that Paul was "almost certainly" reacting to his anti-Jewish reputation; cf. esp. E. Brandenburger, "Paulinische Schriftauslegung in der Kontroverse um das Verheissungswort Gottes (Röm 9)," 5ff.; Schmithals, 328-30. Cranfield, 453, is one of the few to reject such a suggestion outright, casually dismissing it without any argument. His own suggestion (see below) for the unusual passion and vehemence of the apostle is surely part of the picture, but is incomplete for its rejection of such an obvious factor. Reichert, *Der Römerbrief als Gratwanderung*, 179, has recently challenged the apologetic significance of Paul's passionate vehemence, but with more argumentation, which is nonetheless unconvincing, as is her objection against the empathy-inducing purpose of the apostle's rhetoric on the ground that his addressees would have to be in the identical position as he. Her own suggestion that Paul must match the weighty feel of his rhetoric in what immediately precedes (i.e., the end of Rom 8) may be one of Paul's concerns, but it was probably the least of all. Dunn, 523, insightfully points out that Paul uses the denial formula, οὐ ψεύδομαι, in response to actual criticisms elsewhere (2 Cor 11:31; Gal 1:20).

[173] So Cranfield, 454; Fitzmyer, 543f.

[174] Cranfield, 454.

[175] Ibid. Schreiner, 479, offers the additional reason for Paul's great expression of grief that "the honor and faithfulness of God are inextricably intertwined with the fate of Israel" (cf. R. Schmitt, *Gottesgerechtigkeit-Heilsgeschichte-Israel in der Theologie des Paulus*, 73), but this does not really make sense as the primary cause since Paul vehemently denies that God's faithfulness is compromised by Israel's accursed state. Paul's concern for God's honor may contribute to the intensity of his emotion, but the grief he expresses is clearly over the accursed state of his kinsmen.

display of grief, one which has escaped interpreters. It is a typological fulfillment of the immense grief occasioned by the loss of Israel's election and the annulment of their covenant with the Lord as a result of their apostasy and idolatry in the matter of the golden bull-calf (Ex 33:4-6; see below).

It is common to point out that Paul's expression of grief in these verses is similar to laments over Israel found in the OT prophets and other Jewish literature.[176] This suggests that Paul is operating in the prophetic and apocalyptic tradition of the OT and Judaism, confirming our findings in our consideration of the structure and literary character of Romans 9-11 in ch. 2 above. This impression is solidified by Paul's explanation of this grief which follows, for it alludes to the intercession on behalf of Israel by the prophet Moses.

The Allusion: Paul's Willingness to Be Accursed for His Kinsmen (Romans 9:3)

Preliminary Observations

The logical connection between Romans 9:2 and 9:3 is indicated by γάρ. But the exact significance of the connection is still unclear, for γάρ could be causal,[177] explanatory,[178] or perhaps some combination of the two.[179] I would suggest that the logic is complex in this highly emotional outburst. First and foremost, γάρ should be taken as explanatory. A primary causal meaning would require connecting v. 3 more with the assertion that Paul speaks the truth about his grief (v. 1) rather than directly with the fact of his grief (v. 2).[180] This is entirely possible, especially since Paul

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[176] So Dunn, 524; Moo, 557; Schreiner, 479. Commentators cite such passages as Jer 4:19-21; 14:17-22; Dan 9; Lam; T. Jud. 23:1; 4 Ezra 8:16; 10:24, 39; 2 Apoc. Bar. 10:5; 14:8-9; 35:1-3; 81:2; Par. Jer 4:10; 6:17.

[177] So Piper, *Justification*, 45; Moo, 557.

[178] So Cranfield, 454; Morris, 347.

[179] Cf. Schreiner, 479-81, who does not directly specify the connection, but uses the language of both grounds and explanation; Michael Cranford, "Election and Ethnicity: Paul's View of Israel in Romans 9.1-13," 30. γάρ could even be inferential here. But this has rarely been suggested as its prime significance in 9:2, and it does not take the explanatory function of 9:3 into account; see below.

[180] This is how Sanday and Headlam (228) take it. Cf. G. Stählin, "Zum Gebrauch von Beteurungsformeln im Neuen Testament," 135, who finds Paul's expression in 9:3 to be a continuation of his double assurance in 9:2. γάρ can also introduce proof for a statement, a function that is akin to a

avows his truthfulness so strongly, but it does not give due consideration to the fact that the emphasis of his declaration falls on the fact of his grief. The insistence on his honesty supports the reality of his misery.

Moreover, the report of such an agonizing desire (v. 3) surely elaborates on Paul's heartache. Indeed, it expands on it by even more clearly revealing its depth. Paul has exhausted the resources of mere propositional language to describe the intensity of his grief. Now he clarifies it with an expression of desire so shocking in its intensity that many have asked if Paul could possibly mean what he says, and most conclude that he does not (in that he is speaking hypothetically). Therefore, v. 3 is better taken as an explanation of Paul's anguish. But in the explanation of his grief, Paul implicitly furnishes the reason for his deep sorrow. His willingness to be separated from Christ gives demonstrative proof of his misery (and his truth in stating it). But this only becomes clear as one processes the explanation, as does the inferential function of v.3 that shows the lengths to which Paul's grief could drive him. Thus, v. 3 does serve a causal/substantiating function, and secondary to that, an inferential function, but these are secondary to the explanatory. It is only 9:3's character as explanation that can accommodate its complex logical function

This point is important because it helps us to identify Paul's main point. If vv. 3-5 ground v. 2, then the weight of Paul's language lies in his expression of grief in 9:2. But if they explain, then 9:3 carries his main point because it is an interpretive clarification of 9:2 and because 9:4-5 ground 9:3.[181] This leaves us with Paul's

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causal sense. Such a meaning here is probably even more likely than the strict causal option, but is nonetheless better subsumed under the explanatory meaning as described below.

[181] So Piper, *Justification*, 45, goes to needless trouble to try and explain why Paul's expression of grief in 9:2 is not the main point when grounded by 9:3. He correctly notes that 9:4-5 ground 9:3. But there is no need to resort to casting aside the surface logic of the text as Piper does when one recognizes the explanatory function of γάρ. For that matter, there is no reason that Paul's grief over Israel cannot be, as Piper assumes, what evokes Paul's response in 9:6ff., as Murray, 2.9, sees; this is the *Gedankensprung* referred to by Hans Hübner, *Gottes Ich und Israel: Zum Schriftgebrauch des Paulus in Römer 9-11*, 16 (cf. M. Rese, "Israel und Kirche in Römer 9," 209, 214). In any case, Piper is correct to find Paul's point in 9:3. On the inner logic of 9:1-5, cf. Murray, 2.8f.; Achtemeier, 156, who finds Paul's major concern in 9:4-5, as does P.-G. Klumbies, "Israels Vorzüge und das Evangelium von der Gottesgerechtigkeit in Römer 9-11," 138 (against whom, see Schmithals, 335); Brandenburger, "Paulinische Schriftauslegung," 6, who appears to take the unusual view of 9:1 as the controlling statement in harmony with his emphasis on controversy as the fundamental background of Rom 9. Reichert, *Der Römerbrief als Gratwanderung*, 178ff., finds three different kinds of speech-acts in the structure of 9:1-5 (I/personal [9:1-3]; predication about Paul's fellows [9:4-5a]; strengthening of the predication [9:5b]), and seeks to win a greater role for 9:4-5 than a mere positive foil for 9:2f.

allusion to Exodus 32:32 as the main point of 9:1-5! And this, more than anything, may be what accounts for the complex logical connection between 9:2 and 9:3. Indeed, Paul's allusion to Exodus 32-34 holds the key to a full understanding of 9:1-5. Although the point has not been recognized previously in any real substance or detail,[182] the similarity in theme and subject matter between Exodus 32-34 and Romans 9-11 is remarkable. There is much here for us to explore in our attempt to understand Paul's argument in Romans 9-11. But first, we must clear away some basic matters of exegesis pertaining to what Paul actually says in alluding to this foundational OT passage, though our exegesis will not be uninformed by the OT context, important as it is to Paul's argument.

The Basic Meaning of Romans 9:3 in Intertextual Perspective

In 9:3, Paul states with agonizing pathos, "For I would pray to be accursed—I myself—from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh!" Here is Paul's allusion to Exodus 32:32. The meaning of the imperfect indicative ηὐχόμην has attracted a lot of attention from interpreters. First, there is a question over the meaning of the word εὔχομαι, whether it means "to pray" or "to wish." It usually denotes prayer in the NT, and it is arguable that it does so in every NT instance; certainly Paul's two other uses of the word refer to prayer.[183] So despite the many scholars who think that Paul speaks of wishing in Romans 9:3,[184] word usage points

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Schmithals, 330, finds the logic of 9:1-5 to consist in proving that Israel's salvific privileges are truly realized only in the Christian church of Jews and Gentiles, outside of the synagogue.

[182] The closest scholars have come may be the treatments of Wagner, *Heralds*, 45, 106, 351, 353 n. 34; L. T. Johnson, 144f.; Morris, 347; Schreiner, 480; Moo, 559; H. L. Ellison, *The Mystery of Israel: An Exposition of Romans 9-11*, 30f.; Dunn, 532; and above all, Munck, *Christ and Israel*, 27-30; idem, *Paul and the Salvation of Mankind*, 305f.; and Bartlett, 85f. Morison, 29-36, 178-86, gives perhaps the most extensive treatment of Rom 9:3, but does not so much as mention the parallel with Moses.

[183] Paul's other uses: 2 Cor 13:7, 9. The other NT uses occur in Acts 26:29; 27:29; James 5:16; 3 John 2. Cf. Cranfield, 454f. n. 7, who finds that only in Acts 27:29 is it more natural to understand "wish" rather than "pray." But even here the reference is very possibly to prayer and so taken by, e.g., RSV; NRSV; NKJV; Max Zerwick and Mary Grosvenor, *A Grammatical Analysis of the Greek New Testament*, 451; cf. Marshall, 412. Moo's (558 n. 16) comment is incisive: "all other NT occurrences of the word denote a wish expressed to God . . . and therefore, for all intents and purposes, a prayer . . . ."

[184] Schreiner, 476, 480; Piper, *Justification*, 20; BDAG; KJV; NKJV; ASV; RSV; NRSV; NASB; NIV; Barrett, 176.

toward a reference to prayer.[185] Wiles strengthens the case by pointing to Romans 10:1 as a parallel, where Paul definitely speaks of his prayer for Israel.[186] And when we recognize that Paul is alluding to the *prayer* of Moses in Exodus 32:32, it becomes almost certain that Paul is speaking of prayer.[187]

Second, the imperfect tense of the verb has attracted even more attention than the actual meaning of the word because it is open to a number of possible interpretations and its most natural meaning apart from considerations of content would be to indicate something that Paul had done in some way in the past.[188] Most interpreters find it too incredible to think either that Paul would pray or wish to be cursed and separated from Christ, and/or that he would think that the sacrifice of himself could save the Jews, and rightly agree in essence with Cranfield that ηὐχόμην is here "equivalent to the classical imperfect indicative with ἄν, used where the prayer or wish is recognized as unattainable or impermissible . . . ."[189] Here again, the OT background behind Paul's allusion is significant. Moses' request to be blotted out of

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[185] Scholars who understand a reference to prayer include Cranfield, 454; Moo, 558; Dunn, 524 (cautiously, in recognition of the ambiguity); Wiles, *Paul's Intercessory Prayers*, 19, 256; Hays, *Echoes*, 62.

[186] Wiles, *Paul's Intercessory Prayers*, 256. Haacker, 181, also points to the proximity of ἀνάθεμα as supporting a reference to prayer because of its cultic associations.

[187] So Cranfield, 454, a wonderful intertextual observation from an era dominated by other interests! Cf. Fitzmyer, 544.

[188] This is not to say that past action is inherent in the imperfect, but to recognize that the imperfect is typically used of past time. See Cranfield, 455-57, for a full discussion of the four basic interpretive options relating to this imperfect. Morison, 30-33, 178-186, treats the question at even greater length.

[189] Cranfield, 455. Cf. BDF § 359; Maximilian Zerwick, *Biblical Greek: Illustrated by Examples*, § 356; BDAG, εὔχομαι, s.v. 2. Dunn, 524, is more cautious than most, noting that the grammar does not specify whether or not the wish is realizable. But he unfairly criticizes Cranfield for arguing for greater specificity than allowed by the Greek, when he makes no such claim for the Greek, but rather Paul's meaning. Cranfield lays out the possibilities the Greek could be used to describe, and then argues for what he finds to be Paul's most likely intention. Michel, "Opferbereitschaft," 97ff., and more recently Hays, *Echoes*, 62, 206 n. 206, are among the few to opt for a reference to actual past action, while W. H. Davis, "Anathema—Romans 9:3," may be the only one to support a present significance; cf. Gábris, "Das Gewissen," 24f, who expresses some dissatisfaction with a purely hypothetical interpretation. Contra Schreiner, 480; Piper, *Justification*, 45 n. 57; Wilckens, 187, Rom 8:35-39 does not argue for the impossibility of the prayer of 9:3, since as Dunn, 524, has observed, "Paul could envisage being excluded from Christ (cf. 8:13; 11:20-22; 1 Cor 9:27; 10:12; 2 Cor 13:5; Col 1:22-23 . . .)."

the Lord's book for the sake of his people was rejected. The prayer Paul speaks of had already been shown definitively to be unattainable.[190]

It has sometimes been objected that a hypothetical nuance to ηὐχόμην does not do justice to the gravity of Paul's lamentation.[191] The argument is quite weak when faced with the simple rejoinder that a willingness to sacrifice oneself for one's people is hardly a weak sentiment![192] And we can add that recognition of the allusion to Exodus 32:32 thoroughly militates against this objection. For Paul does not only make this statement to show his profound grief, but also to point to the typologically significant example of Moses and Israel at the time of the golden bull-calf incident, on which he will pattern his response to the present situation.

What Paul would pray if it could bring about the salvation of his people is that he would be anathema from Christ (ἀνάθεμα εἶναι . . . ἀπὸ τοῦ Χριστοῦ), that is, that he would be devoted to destruction under the divine wrath. As most interpreters recognize, this is nothing short of eternal condemnation, or in a word, hell.[193] The term ἀνάθεμα denotes that which is devoted to God, whether as a votive offering or for destruction. The former meaning occurs only at Luke 21:5 in the NT, where it is based on the alternative spelling ἀνάθημα, the form more typically used in relation to a votive offering.[194] Every other occurrence in the NT, all of which are in Paul except

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[190] Rightly, Schreiner, 480. It is therefore strange that Cranfield, 455, suggests that the Moses parallel accords well with the view that Paul actually prayed this prayer (cf. Michel, "Opferbereitschaft," 97ff.); this is to pay only superficial attention to the parallel. But see Gábris, "Das Gewissen," 25f., who suggests that the advent of Christ and his redemptive sacrifice may have motivated Paul to think that the prayer might now be acceptable; but like many interpreters of Rom, she misunderstands Moses' petition (see below).

[191] See e.g., Davis, "Anathema," 207, who finds that the typical view renders Paul's lament "a dull proof."

[192] See e.g., Cranfield, 456.

[193] Cottrell, 47, claims that most scholars agree that anathema means hell here. Note the type of descriptions that show up in the literature: Cranfield, 457, speaks of a forfeiture of final salvation; Moo, 557, speaks of eternal damnation; Schreiner, 480, speaks of eschatological judgment and eternal curse; Barrett, 182, speaks of consignment to damnation; Piper, *Justification*, 45, speaks of eternal wrath; J. Behm, *TDNT*, 1.354f., speaks of the judicial wrath of God; G. Klein, "Präliminarien zum Thema 'Paulus und die Juden'," 238, speaks of "*eschatologischen Fluches*."

[194] See the respective entries for the two forms of the word in BDAG. It is strange that Moo, 557 n. 14, assigns a positive or neutral meaning to ἀνάθεμα in Acts 23:14, where it certainly has the meaning of "curse"; see BDAG, ἀνάθεμα, s.v. 3. Davis, "Anathema," has argued that the term means "votive offering" in Rom 9:3, contending that Paul continually prays "to be a votive offering coming from Christ in behalf of his brethren (the Jews)," referencing Acts 22:17-21, and claiming, "He wanted

one, bears the meaning of "accursed" or the like (1 Cor 12:3; 16:22; Gal 1:8, 9; Acts 23:14).

The LXX provides the main background to NT usage, translating the Hebrew חֵרֶם.[195] The usage in LXX Joshua 7 is instructive because it shows that the curse can be a consequence for violating the covenant, i.e., it can bring the covenant curse upon the sinner.[196] This is the very judgment intended for the Israelites who sinned with the golden bull-calf as indicated by Moses and the Lord in Exodus 32:32-33.

The phrase ἀπὸ τοῦ Χριστοῦ clarifies the sense of ἀνάθεμα, and brings out the full horror of what Paul contemplates, especially in light of Romans 8:35-39 to be heard only seconds before 9:3.[197] ἀπό clearly indicates separation.[198] And for Paul, to be "in Christ" was the sum of all spiritual life and blessing (Rom 3:24; 6:11, 23; 8:1, 2, 39; cf. 2 Cor 1:20; Eph 1:3). To be separated from him is the worst imaginable fate. Moreover, we would suggest that the language of being "in Christ" is not only incorporative, but covenantal, connoting covenant membership. Jesus the Messiah is the covenant mediator and representative, summing up the people of God in himself. Those who become united to him by faith become "in him," and therefore in the covenant and the elect covenant community.[199] As Michael Cranford has seen, "That

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Christ to send him as a living sacrifice to the Jews for their salvation" (207). But he does not offer much evidence apart from the fact that ἀνάθεμα can mean votive offering, while word usage, context, and the OT background argue against it.

[195] ἀνάθεμα means "votive offering" in LXX 2 Macc 2:13, while ἀνάθημα has this meaning in LXX Jud 16:19; 2 Macc 9:16; 3 Macc 3:17. And ἀνάθεμα means "accursed" or the like in LXX Lev 27:28; Deut 13:16, 18; 20:17; Josh 6:17, 18; 7:1, 11, 12, 13; 22:20; 1Chr 2:7; Zech 14:11, while ἀνάθημα has this meaning in LXX Deut 7:26. חֵרֶם came to be used in rabbinic Hebrew of excommunication from the synagogue, while ἀνάθεμα came to be used of ecclesiastical discipline in the Church (see e.g., Cranfield, 457f.; Sanday and Headlam, 228; cf. Dunn, 524), but these types of meanings are obviously inappropriate here, not to mention anachronistic.

[196] See H. Aust and D. Müller, "ἀνάθεμα," 414, who do not mention Josh 7, but point to Judg 21:11.

[197] See Piper, *Justification*, 45.

[198] See BDAG, s.v. 1e; BDF, §211. On the possibility of an instrumental meaning for ἀπό here, with a sound refutation see Piper, ibid, 44f. The replacement of ἀπό by ὑπό in D and G, and by ὑπέρ in Ψ, are clearly secondary on both external and internal grounds, and appear to be attempts to soften the shocking sentiment Paul expresses. As Michel, "Opferbereitschaft," 98, has observed, the full contrast with ἐν Χριστῶ in 9:1 is brought out fully here in 9:3.

[199] It is beyond the scope of this investigation to argue the case for the covenantal-incorporative significance of Jesus as the Messiah. For the basic concept, without the covenantal emphasis (ironically), see N. T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology*,

covenant boundaries are in view here is emphasized by ἀπὸ τοῦ Χριστοῦ, which denotes a separation from a sphere of identity. In terms of boundaries, ἀνάθεμα ἀπὸ τοῦ Χριστοῦ amounts to a movement out of covenant membership into a status of condemnation and wrath . . . ."[200] Indeed, the OT background behind Paul's allusion helps us to see that Paul does not simply speak about the wrath of God, but of the curse of the covenant, which was essentially separation from the elect community and destruction under the wrath of God. It was to be blotted out of the Lord's book, his registry of the elect covenant people, who were the recipients of his covenant promises.

If it were possible, Paul would make this ultimate sacrifice for the sake of his fellow Jews who had rejected Christ and were therefore separated from him, under the deadly curse of the covenant. That Paul speaks of the Jewish people is certain from the designation he gives to them of τῶν ἀδελφῶν μου τῶν συγγενῶν μου κατὰ σάρκα. But that by calling them his brothers he is implying that they are within the elect community[201] is open to serious question. While it is true that non-literal uses of the word "brother" in the Bible nearly always refer to "fellow-members of the elect community,"[202] it is also true that every such occurrence of the term ἀδελφός in Paul refers to fellow Christians.[203] τῶν συγγενῶν μου κατὰ σάρκα is obviously added to qualify the sense of ἀδελφῶν. Moreover, as we shall see, 9:3 reveals that the Jewish people, who do not believe in Christ, are anathema.

Nevertheless, the fact that Paul calls unbelieving Jews his brothers does appear to be based on the covenantal use of the term.[204] It grants recognition to Israel's

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18-55. One significant fact to note is that the kingship of David referred to by Wright as demonstrating the incorporative sense of the idiom, "in x," was established by covenant (cf. ibid, 46f.; 2 Sam 5:1-3). Our view will receive some support from our consideration of 2 Cor 3 below, which relates Paul's ministry of the New Covenant to Ex 32-34.

[200] Cranford, "Election and Ethnicity," 30.

[201] So Cranfield, 459; Fitzmyer, 545. Cf. Käsemann, 258; Dunn, 424f. The omission of μου in P^{46} is probably due to haplography, as is the omission of the phrase τῶν ἀδελφῶν μου in B*, though it is possible that such a positive sentiment relative to the Jews was found objectionable.

[202] Cranfield, 459.

[203] Moo, 559 n. 24, claims that 130 of 133 occurrences in Paul clearly refer to fellow Christians, the exceptions in 1 Cor 9:5 and Gal 1:19 referring to blood relationship.

[204] Cf. our treatment below of ἡ υἱοθεσία in 9:4.

national election and Paul's own participation in it, thereby underscoring his close relationship to his kinsmen and his great love and concern for them vis-à-vis their accursed state. Paul will shortly explain in 9:6ff. that Israel's national election was not necessarily unto salvation—though it certainly was meant to issue in this ideally as a result of participation in the blessings of the covenant and its conditional promises—but that participation in the true Israel and its salvation was always a matter of faith/calling.[205] At this point, however, he is subtly drawing attention to ethnic Israel's continuing election (see below) and his close relationship to them based on physical descent (κατὰ σάρκα).

Paul's use of κατὰ σάρκα with regard to his kinsmen does not carry his typical negative nuance, but is essentially neutral here,[206] denoting ethnic relationship. Nevertheless, there is a hint of limitation in the phrase. They are his brothers and kinsmen *only* according to the flesh.[207] But at this point there is no aspersion cast upon this relationship. It is intended to indicate Paul's solidarity with his people. Yet it does prepare for his argument in 9:6ff. that God's call is not based on physical ancestry. More immediately, it prepares for the assertion of 9:5 that the Messiah comes from the Jews physically, where there is again no aspersion on the relationship, but an even stronger connotation of limitation and anticipation of something that transcends the mere flesh.

Most interpreters understand Paul to be saying that he would pray or wish to deliver Israel from God's wrath by actually sacrificing his own salvation. Many go even further and suggest that Paul speaks of delivering Israel by taking her place under the judgment of God.[208] They tend to take the preposition ὑπέρ to imply

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[205] Cf. ibid, who distinguishes between a national and salvific election in Paul's argument, but mistakenly assumes that this is essentially a distinction between corporate and individual election. While distinguishing between two types of election is correct to a point, it is not the best way to articulate Paul's view. It is probably better to speak of one election that believers in Christ possess fully, but that unbelieving Jews possess in one sense but not fully or eschatologically. See our description of the nature of unbelieving Israel's possession of the name and blessings of election below.

[206] Contra Dunn, 525.

[207] Cf. ibid; Brendan Byrne, *'Sons of God'-'Seed of Abraham': A Study of the Idea of Sonship of God of All Christians in Paul against the Jewish Background*, 83.

[208] Munck, *Christ and Israel*, 12, 30; Morris, 347; Cottrell, 47 (his reference to 6:6, 8 is curious; perhaps a mistaken reference to 5:6, 8?); Moo, 559; Cranford, "Election and Ethnicity," 30; Michel,

substitution, which it certainly can do, but by no means must do.[209] The more usual meaning of the word is the more general sense of "for the sake/benefit of, in behalf of."[210]

In any case, the OT background of Paul's allusion would suggest that neither of these positions that understands Paul to envisage rescuing his people by sacrificing himself is correct. Although most interpreters of Romans seem to assume that Moses' prayer is to this effect, this is not the case.[211] He asks that the Lord curse him *if* he refuses to forgive Israel. That is, he asks to suffer the fate of the people with them if the Lord will not forgive, as an inducement to the Lord to restore them. This is what Paul posits of himself. He casts himself in a salvation-historical role on a par with Moses,[212] and contemplates making his life, salvation, and service the price God must pay to release his wrath on Israel. Just as Moses' request threatened the Lord's covenant purposes (by insisting on the complete eradication of Abraham's seed), so does the prayer Paul contemplates, for he is the Apostle to the Gentiles who is primarily responsible for administering the decisive stage of the eschatological fulfillment of God's covenant promises to bless the whole world, calling Jews and

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"Opferbereitschaft"; Käsemann, 258; Kuss; Stählin, "Beteurungsformeln," 135. Cf. Judith M. Gundry Volf, *Paul and Perseverance: Staying In and Falling Away*, 162f. n. 10, who notes that this position is often taken. B. Klappert, "Traktat für Israel (Römer 9-11)," 72, emphasizes that Paul speaks of prophetic substitution.

[209] See the entry in BDAG, who do happen to take the occurrence in 9:3 to be a concurrence of the meanings of substitution and more general advantage (see s.v. A1c). Gundry Volf, ibid, argues against the idea of substitution in 9:3 and for the weaker sense of benefit.

[210] M. J. Harris, *NIDNTT*, 3.1197, concludes that the emphasis of ὑπέρ is representation, while it sometimes implies substitution.

[211] Morris, 347, and Bruce, 184f. are among the few to recognize this. Yet Morris goes so far as to suggest that Moses' prayer may have sought to make atonement for Israel by the sacrifice of himself, pointing to Ex 32:30. But this is an unlikely understanding of the Ex context. The Heb כפר does not demand atonement by sacrifice.

[212] See Munck, *Christ and Israel*, 29f., for a classic statement of Paul's presentation of himself as a figure of NT *Heilsgeschichte* in Rom 9:1ff.; cf. Michel, "Opferbereitschaft," 97ff., who suggests that Paul set an earnest offer before God to sacrifice himself in substitution for Israel. Michel goes further in his commentary (225; related by Cranfield, 455), suggesting as we do that Paul walks among the prophets and OT men of God in the reality related by 9:3, though we differ in our estimation of the precise nature of Paul's intention. Paul's emphasis on himself and his own ministry in Rom 9-11 supports the contention that he presents himself there as a significant figure of *Heilsgeschichte*. Cf. the "*personae* analysis" of Lo Lung-kwong, *Paul's Purpose in Writing Romans: The Upbuilding of a Jewish and Gentile Christian Community in Rome*, 383-98, 410, which has revealed the surprising fact that the first person singular is the most common person in Rom 9-11; cf. note 131 in ch. 2 above.

Gentiles alike into the covenant seed of Abraham in a ministry to the Gentiles that Romans 11 reveals as central to God's plan to save Israel.

Several additional exegetical insights flow from this intertextual interpretation of Paul's prayer. First, far from weakening the strength of Paul's language, it strengthens it by presenting an even greater identification of Paul with the Jewish people. It still declares his willingness to sacrifice himself for his people, yet it also casts his lot in with them. Second, it demands the meaning "for the sake/benefit of" for the preposition ὑπέρ. Third, it strongly suggests that Paul considers his people to be anathema, for it means that he speaks of joining them in their plight. While many interpreters believe Paul to imply that his kinsmen are anathema based on the purported substitutionary nuance of ὑπέρ, our interpretation strengthens the case by avoiding dependence on this disputed meaning of the preposition in 9:3. Moreover, for those who do not insist on a substitutionary meaning for ὑπέρ yet still find Paul to depict the Jewish people as anathema on the force of logic which runs, "Paul's willingness to be cut off from Christ ὑπὲρ τῶν ἀδελφῶν μου makes sense only if Paul believes his brothers are in a plight as serious as the one he is willing to enter for their sake"[213]—an entirely convincing argument—our observation adds an even stronger argument to the case. Finally, there are some who deny that Paul portrays Israel as anathema.[214] To them we must point out that Paul's OT allusion argues the very opposite, a fact that is in harmony with the view Paul expressed in 1 Thes 2:13-16:

> . . . we give thanks to God constantly, because having received the message from us as the word of God, you [Gentile believers] did not receive the word of humans, but just as it truly is, the word of God, which indeed works in you who believe. For you yourselves became imitators, brothers and sisters, of the churches of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus, for you yourselves also suffered the same things from your own countrymen just as they from the Jews, who also killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and persecuted us severely, and are not pleasing to God, and are hostile to all people, hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles in order that they might be saved, so that they

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[213] Piper, *Justification*, 45. Cf. Schreiner, 481; Heikki Räisänen, "Römer 9-11: Analyse eines geistigen Ringens," 2896; Hübner, *Gottes Ich*, 16; Siegert, *Argumentation*, 122; Wagner, *Heralds*, 106.

[214] Gundry Volf, *Paul and Perseverance*, 162f. n. 10; Dunn, 524f.; Cranfield, 458f. (apparently).

> always fill up the measure of their sins. But wrath has come upon them to the full.

Intertextual Motifs of Idolatry, Grief, Loss of Election, Merciful Judgment, the Faithfulness of God, Divine Sovereignty, and Human Free Will

Paul regarded Israel to be in a state of apostasy for rejecting Christ.[215] So he turns to the scriptural paradigm of Israel's apostasy, Exodus 32-34. There he found Israel embroiled in idolatry with the golden bull-calf. In one of the few treatments to pay anything more than superficial attention to the meaning-effects of Paul's allusion to Moses' intercession, David L. Bartlett has argued,

> In the first chapter of Romans, Paul explicitly says that the primary sin of the Gentiles has been idolatry. Now, by his recalling the story of the golden calf, it may be that he also claims that Israel has fallen into idolatry. Idolatry is worship of a god who is not God. The God who is God is the God who justifies, makes right, all people through faith. To worship a god who justifies only *some* people through the Torah is to worship a god who is not God. Israel's idolatry is now not to worship gods in the form of beasts (as it was in the wilderness; as it still is for the Gentiles). Israel's idolatry is to worship a local god, a national god, as if God were not the God of all people and of all creation. . . . [Paul] is the new Moses because he calls his people away from other gods to the one God, the God of Jesus Christ.[216]

But the similarity between the idolatry of ancient Israel and the Israel of Paul's day is closer than Bartlett realizes. For as we have seen, ancient Israel sought in the golden bull-calf a replacement for Moses, the Covenant Mediator, and a rival means of mediating the all-important presence of YHWH to the people. In doing so they distorted the true nature of the Lord and worshiped a false image of him. It would

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[215] Hence, so much talk of the fall of Israel in the literature, as in the title of C. K. Barrett's essay, "Romans 9.30-10.21: Fall and Responsibility of Israel," and in his description of the typical view of Rom 9-11 (p. 99ff.).

[216] Bartlett, 85; emphasis his. Even Bartlett's comments are a rather limited discussion of the allusion's significance. Cf. Wagner's perceptive comment (*Heralds*, 353 n. 34): "The charge of idolatry runs like a thread through many of Paul's citations and allusions to scripture in Romans 9-11, beginning with his evocation of the golden calf episode in Romans 9:3," pointing to the wider settings of Ex 33:19 (Rom 9:15); Hos 1-2 (Rom 9:25-26); Deut 32:21 (Rom 10:19); 1 Kgdms 8-12 (Rom 11:2); 3 Kgdms 19 (Rom 11:3-4); Deut 29:4 (Rom 11:8). Based as it is on a broader study of Paul's use of Scripture in Rom 9-11, Wagner's observation provides some corroboration for both Bartlett's comments and the development of this intertextual idolatry motif vis-à-vis Rom 9:3 in this investigation.

seem that for Paul, his kinsmen had done essentially the same thing. They had rejected the mediator of the New Covenant, Jesus Christ, who simultaneously mediates God's presence perfectly, in a way Moses never could. And they were clinging to a rival means of mediating God's covenant, presence, and blessing, one that God had not ordained for the present time of eschatological fulfillment. Moreover, they were clinging to a false conception of God, not only marred by ethnocentrism, but also by the rejection of the perfect revelation of the Lord. They had rejected God himself by rejecting the Messiah, "who is over all, God blessed forever" (9:5).

Bartlett's reference to Romans 1 is also more perceptive than he seems to realize. For in 1:23, Paul alludes to the golden bull-calf episode via Psalm 106:20 (LXX 105), which interprets the event as Israel exchanging their glory (YHWH) for the image of an ox that eats grass.[217] Intriguingly, Paul uses this allusion in his argument for the equality of Jews and Gentiles in sin (1:18-3:20)! And if the current trend to take 1:18-32 of all people in some way is correct, as we would argue,[218] then Paul uses the imagery of Israel's idolatry with the golden bull-calf to describe the sin of both Jews and Gentiles alike, placing them in the same position before God. In any case, Paul certainly proceeds to say as much in the development of his argument, contending that Jews are no better off than Gentiles because they are all under sin (summarized in 3:9). Moreover, Exodus 33:6 suggests that because of her sin, Israel lost the gains of the Exodus redemption and stood in the same place as divinely condemned Egypt. Thus, following the lead of Exodus 33:6, Paul appears to have interpreted Exodus 32 to place Israel in the same position as the Gentiles,[219] i.e., outside of the covenant under the judgment of God.

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[217] See our brief discussion of the allusion of Rom 1:23 in our treatment of Acts 7 above, pp. 193.

[218] Moo, 96, says that scholars have traditionally taken 1:18-32 of Gentiles, and that the trend of recent scholarship is to reject or qualify this view. For the traditional view, see e.g., Fitzmyer, 270ff.; Bartlett, 28-31 and the quote above. For a more balanced perspective, see the nuanced statement of Moo, 97. Cranfield, 105f., seems to go too far in taking the passage almost equally of Jews and Gentiles. The important point is to see that even if Paul's language most aptly describes Gentiles and their idolatry, he presents it in such a way as to also apply to Jews. I would say that Paul describes the sin of all people with a special focus on Gentiles. Even if Paul does speak only of Gentiles, it is still significant that he would dare to describe it in terms of Israel's archetypal sin, and go on to claim hardening as its result as does the Christian tradition vis-à-vis Israel recorded in Acts 7.

[219] Cf. our treatment above of the interpretive traditions found in T. Mos. 1:12-14; 12:4-12; Mart. Isa. 3:8-10; 4 Ezra 6:55-59; Acts 7:51. Cf. also Paul's evocation of Ishmael, Esau, and Pharaoh as types of

Moreover, as we noted in our discussion of Exodus 32-34 in Acts 7 above, Romans 1:23ff. uses the language of Psalm 106's interpretation of the golden bull-calf to describe idolatry that receives the divine punishment of a type of hardening. This is significant because the hardening of Israel is a major subject of Romans 9-11. Normal exegetical method would find an invitation to compare Paul's concept of hardening in Romans 1 and 9-11 in the similarity of subject. And given the common background of the golden bull-calf, the Christian tradition of positing judicial hardening as the result of such idolatry, the likelihood that Paul intended Romans 1:18-32 to apply to Jews in addition to Gentiles, and Paul's connecting of Exodus 32-34 with the hardening of Israel elsewhere (2 Cor 3; see below), we have every warrant to read the hardening of Romans 9-11 in light of the hardening of Romans 1.

What this suggests is that the hardening of Israel spoken of in Romans 9-11 is a divine judgment resulting from her stubbornness, sin, and rebellion. This is in harmony with consistent NT Christian tradition on this point, not only in relation to Exodus 32-34 (Acts 7:40-41, 51), but in general, such as in Jesus' use of parables (Matt 13:10-17; Mark 4:10-12; Luke 8:9-10), John 12:37-41 (not insignificantly connected to the salvation of Gentiles through faith in Jesus! See 12:20ff.), and Acts 28:25-27 (of Paul), all of which cite Isaiah 6:9-10, to which Paul in turn probably alludes in some way in Romans 11:8. We do not have space to analyze this early Christian tradition in detail, but we should make some observations.

First, the hardening of this tradition, both in its original context (Isa 6) and in its NT appropriations is a divine judicial hardening that brings judgment upon Israel by, in the language of Romans 1, giving her over to her own sin and its consequences so that her sin becomes its own punishment in a continually increasing cycle of judgment. But second, the tradition does appear to use this concept of hardening as an explanation for the Jews' rejection of the gospel. Nevertheless, the hardening is not viewed as absolute, prohibiting all Jews from faith. Rather, it appears to be a general, corporate hardening that prevented the Jews as a whole from accepting the gospel, but

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Israel in the following argument of Rom 9 and our treatment of the first two in ch. 4 below. Here we might note that since Ex 32-34 serves to record the fall of Israel like Gen 3 records the fall of humanity (see p. 139 above), we have all the more reason to take Rom 1:18-32 of all people including Jews, and to follow Wright, *Climax*, 18-40, in relating Jewish Adam-theology, not so much with mankind in general, but with Israel as God's true humanity.

barred no one in particular from believing so that many Jews did believe. It was an exacerbation of Israel's already sinful state that made it less likely that Jews would believe, but not impossible. Paul used this hardening of Israel as an explanation of her unbelief to defend himself against criticisms based on the failure of his mission among Jews in 2 Corinthians 3:7-18, again in allusion to Exodus 32-34 (and again, see below).

This all touches upon the question of whether in Romans 9-11 Paul presents the hardening of Israel, and therefore God, as the cause of Israel's unbelief or as the result of it. The data we have been reviewing suggests that the answer is not simply one or the other, but a complex combination of both. First and foremost, Paul's use of Exodus 32 at this point would suggest that his emphasis is on the guilt of Israel for their own sin and unbelief, and consequent rejection from the covenant under its fatal curse. That is certainly the emphasis of Exodus 32-34, the context of which is all the more significant for Paul's viewpoint, since he returns to it again when he first addresses the concept of hardening in Romans 9:14-18 (cf. Ex 33:19).

But this self-hardening has brought the judgment of God upon Israel, contributing all the more to their sin and unbelief, and naturally leading them to the ultimate apostasy—the rejection of Christ—bringing upon them an even more severe hardening according to the cycle of judicial hardening, without absolutely preventing any from believing (cf. Rom 1:18-32; 11:5, 7-10, 13-14, 23, 30-31). But to repeat, the resonant significations of Paul's intertextual lament in 9:1-5, which introduces his argument in chs. 9-11 and introduces the plight of Israel to which his argument is partly directed, emphasizes the blameworthy stiff neck of Israel for which they themselves are responsible. This sets an orientation for approaching the theme of hardening as we encounter it in Romans 9-11, though we must allow the various texts to make their own contribution to an understanding of Paul's viewpoint.

As we have seen, what primarily grieved Paul was that his kinsmen were anathema, excluded from the covenant and devoted to destruction under the wrath of God. This could mean nothing other than the annulment of their election. As Paul interpreted the state of Israel in his day through the lens of Exodus 32-34, he saw that they had lost their election, just as Israel had at the time of the golden bull-calf. The prayer he contemplates would seek to restore that election along with obtaining

forgiveness for his people. But the Lord's answer to Moses became his answer to Paul as well. No, he will not simply restore the people. But he will grant them existence and a measure of blessing. However, he will punish the guilty. The application to Paul's context would appear to be that while Israel as a nation (i.e., based on ethnicity alone) remains rejected from the covenant, they retain a measure of God's blessing. Such blessing would include their priority in the gospel. But those who continue in sin by rejecting Christ will remain anathema, ultimately falling prey to its eternal curse.[220]

It is significant that Paul alludes to Moses' second intercession, where there is both blessing and curse for Israel, with the emphasis lying on the curse. It is here that Israel is told that although God will grant them existence and limited blessing, he would withdraw his presence from them, and thus, their election. It is true that God will eventually restore Israel's election in Exodus 32-34, but it is crucial that we pay attention to just how this happens (see below). Be that as it may, Paul appears to allude to this section of Exodus 32-34 especially for its stress on God's judgment upon Israel, indeed, her loss of election.

And this brings us to yet another striking aspect of the context of Exodus 32:32 in relation to Romans 9:1-5—the theme of immense grief over the loss of Israel's election. It is all the more striking when we realize that this grief is the main point of both Exodus 32:30-33:6 and Romans 9:1-5.[221] Thus, Paul's allusion helps us to understand his grief even more fully. And it confirms what has often been assumed

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[220] One might question the validity of the parallel by pointing to the fact that in the Exodus context it seems that the guilty who had sinned, not so much those who would continue in sin, would be punished; there is no explicit provision for forgiveness to those who repent. But as we have seen, there is some question over whether or not Ex 32-34 represents God as ever blotting the sinners out of his book after Moses' self-sacrificial prayer. We do not know how Paul would have interpreted this aspect of the text. He may have thought that threat to have been overwhelmed by God's mercy and to have never taken effect. Or, more probably, he may have understood it against the background of Ex 33:4-6, 19 and 34:6-7, with the assumption that God would forgive the penitent, as in his own gospel. In any case, we are suggesting that Paul was reading Ex 32-34 typologically. He found a pattern in salvation history now recapitulated and escalated in the time of eschatological fulfillment that need not cohere exactly in every minute detail. We find the general similarity so striking as to be impossible to ignore. Moreover, it is typical of typology that there are elements of continuity and discontinuity present in the parallel. I would suggest that Paul found the sinners of Ex 32:33 to be a type of Jewish sinners in the end of the ages who rejected Christ, but who could find forgiveness in the mercy of God in Christ by repentance and faith in accordance with Paul's gospel.

[221] Although we have identified Rom 9:3 rather than 9:2 as the main point of 9:1-5, it is still an expression of Paul's grief. Indeed, it is a richer, fuller expression of his grief, for it expresses its depth and its cause. This is partly why it can give rise to the direction Paul takes in 9:6ff.; he does not simply respond to contentless grief, but his grief over Israel's accursed state.

of Romans 9-11 from what Paul had written previously in Romans and from his other writings, but is now very often disputed, that Paul did indeed regard Israel's election to be nullified (and transferred to the Church through Jesus Christ, the true Israel). Moreover, it reveals just how profound was Paul's engagement with Scripture over the condition of his people, and how potent its effect on his response to their situation, both emotionally and theologically.

This is not to say that Paul's grief was a wooden, artificial response to Israel's plight that he forced upon himself to fulfill Scripture. He surely mourned the plight of his countrymen from the depths of his heart. But it is to suggest that the totality of his response was typologically oriented and typologically presented. Distraught at the loss of his people's election because of their apostasy, Paul has turned to the Scriptures and found the type of Israel's rejection from the election, and the overwhelming anguish that resulted. And from there (in part) he has fashioned both his own understanding of the present crisis and his own response. And just like Moses, he will not simply leave Israel rejected from the covenant.

Looking to the context of Paul's allusion, we find that the great sorrow over Israel's loss of election is also associated with repentance in response to the Lord's call for repentance with a view toward forgiveness and restoration. The metalepsis issues forth a similar call to the Israel of Paul's day to repent in order that they might find forgiveness and enter into the restoration available to them in Christ. More directly, it signals to the Roman Christians that God has not written off Israel, but would call them to repentance through Paul's gospel. Moreover, it holds out the hope that they will yet heed the word of God in the gospel of Christ.

Furthermore, this intertextual juxtaposition gives us greater insight into the nature of the Lord's judgment on Paul's people by suggesting that it is in fact a merciful judgment. In our exegesis of Exodus 32-34 we saw that the twin themes of the Lord's judgment and mercy figured prominently in the narrative, and that it is the mercy of the Lord which is dominant. Indeed, the purpose of the withdrawal of the Lord's presence and the concomitant abrogation of Israel's election was to spare the people from destruction because their sinful condition could only provoke God's wrath (Ex 33:3-5). God's covenantal presence would mean destruction for a stiff-necked people.

This all adumbrates the contours of Paul's argument in Romans 9-11, for as Cranfield has observed, the keyword of these chapters is "mercy."[222] Moreover, Paul argues throughout the passage that God's judgment and hardening of Israel was for the purpose of mercy to both the Gentiles and the Jews (see esp. 9:22-29; 11:11-32). It would appear that Paul draws this general idea from Exodus 32-34 as he interprets his own ministry through its narrative. This insight helps us to see how, for Paul, God's rejection of Israel is actually an expression of mercy towards them. If the Lord did not reject ethnic Israel, then he would have to destroy them as his sinful covenant people. To cast them out of the covenant actually preserves them as a people and therefore gives them the opportunity to come to repentance and enter the renewed covenant. Thus, Paul's emphasis on mercy in Romans 9-11 along with his emphasis on judgment with a view toward mercy derive (at least in part) from Exodus 32-34. The scripturally astute auditor would therefore be prepared for the direction Paul's argument will take, and be able to grasp its meaning more fully.

Even the main theme of Romans 9-11, the faithfulness of God to his covenant word, may be traced back in part to Exodus 32-34. As we observed earlier, Moses' primary argument for the Lord to spare Israel in his first intercession is God's promise to the fathers (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob/Israel; Ex 32:13). This looks to be the background behind Paul's appeal to the very same basis for God's blessing even upon unbelieving Israel, who are enemies in relation to the gospel, but beloved in relation to the election (11:28). Just as in the case of ancient Israel, God's mercy to Paul's contemporaries is not *demanded* by his promise to the fathers (Rom 9). He could start over with Jesus Christ and all who are in him without extending any continuing privilege to ethnic Israel, and still fulfill his covenantal promise to Abraham et al. But his propensity to show mercy drives him to express his faithfulness in granting priority to the Jew and working for their salvation. The Lord's faithfulness serves as the basis of his mercy in Romans 9-11, even as his mercy serves as the basis of his

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[222] Cranfield, 448. Lloyd Gaston, "Israel's Enemies in Pauline Theology," 97, has gone so far as to identify mercy as the theme of Rom 9:6-29, and apparently, of the whole unit of chs. 9-11 (see note 79 in ch. 2 above). Anthony Hanson, "The Oracle in Romans XI.4," makes the intriguing observation that Jewish tradition identified the cave where Elijah heard the oracle to which Paul alludes in Rom 11:4 with the cleft of the rock where Moses received the theophany of Ex 33-34, citing *Tractate Pesahim* 264 and *Tractate Aboth* 64. He judges that Paul probably knew this tradition, and finds the chief connection for Paul in the concept of mercy, indirectly revealed as God's nature in the old dispensation, but directly revealed through Christ in the new.

faithfulness. And it all serves to exalt God's mercy: "For God has shut up all in disobedience in order that he might have mercy on all" (11:32).

It is striking that Moberly could identify the "theme of Yahweh's faithfulness to his promise despite seemingly impossible obstacles" as prominent in Exodus 32-34, comparing the passage to the Abraham cycle of Gen 12-25, and suggesting "an interpretation of Ex. 32-34 also in terms of a challenge to Yahweh's promise and the vindication of his faithfulness."[223] For this is the very theme Paul will turn to in 9:6ff., and it is just such a challenge to God's promise that he will take on, turning indeed to the Abraham cycle, focusing on Genesis 18, 21, and 25. And by scholarly consensus, we may aptly describe Romans 9-11 as a vindication of God's faithfulness.[224]

It is also noteworthy that interpreters have found the traditional theological tension between divine sovereignty and human will/action in the interaction between God and his servant Moses in Exodus 32-34. For that is yet another prominent motif widely recognized in Romans 9-11. Paul's allusion to a context filled with dynamic interaction between divine and human roles in the plan of salvation would suggest a model for understanding his musings over these issues. Just as the Lord limited his own determinations to some extent by granting to Moses a decisive role in his plan, and to a lesser extent, to Israel herself vis-à-vis the opportunity for repentance, so does he now limit his sovereignty, giving both Paul and Israel (and Gentiles for that matter) decisive roles in the outworking of his plan for the salvation of the world. While God remains in control of the overall direction of everything, he does not determine every minute detail, but responds to the wills and actions of his creatures in general, and Paul and Israel in particular. His sovereignty involves the prerogative to relent of judgment in response to intercession and repentance.

Thus, Paul's allusion highlights the significance of his role in salvation history (far more than typically recognized). His transumption intimates that Israel's fate relies significantly on his ministry in their behalf as it did on Moses' (cf. Rom 11). Therefore, it contributes to Paul's implicit appeal for support of his gospel and ministry, and prepares the Christians at Rome for his similar appeal for support of his

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[223] Moberly, *Mountain*, 52.

[224] See our treatment of the theme of Rom 9-11 in ch. 2 above.

mission to Spain in ch. 15 with a view toward his upcoming visit to Rome. For through Paul's ministry, they can also play an instrumental role in the salvation of Israel and the world. In the words of Romans 10:14, "How will they believe in the one whom they have not heard of?" On the other hand, God will not determine the response of those to whom Paul will take his gospel; rather, through Paul, God invites repentance so that he might decide their fate favorably.

Moses, Paul's Ministry, the Restoration of Israel, and the Remnant

This now brings us to a consideration of the implications of Exodus 32-34 for Paul's argument in Romans 9-11 as regards the restoration of Israel to the covenant and its election. In our exegesis of Exodus 32-34 we have seen that one of the main problems of the narrative is how the election-bestowing presence of God could dwell in the midst of a sinful people (Israel) without destroying them. Moses had obtained the promise of the Lord's presence and covenant for Israel by appealing to his own favor with the Lord and seeking a restoration of the covenant, modified so as to be principally a covenant between him and YHWH, and then through him, with Israel in its identification with him. But this still did not provide a solution to the certain, fatal danger the Lord's presence posed for Israel in its corrupt character. The resolution would come through the Lord's mercy and Moses himself, as he became the answer to his own prayer by experiencing the glory of God and then bringing it back with him into the midst of the people. Indeed, Moses brought both a new covenant and the presence of the Lord to Israel.

I would like to suggest that Paul finds his own ministry as an apostle of Christ prefigured in the ministry of Moses recorded in Exodus 32-34. The New Moses, Jesus Christ (cf. Acts 3:22; 7:37), has established the New Covenant based on his own favor with the Lord. This New Covenant is also a covenant principally between the Lord and Christ the Covenant Mediator, and then through Christ, with all who are identified with him through faith, i.e., his people, the true Israel, even the Church. And just like Moses, Paul saw the very glory of God in Christ and now seeks to bring that election-bestowing glory back to Israel in his preaching of the gospel Ἰουδαίῳ τε πρῶτον καὶ Ἕλληνι. Jews who identify with Christ in positive response to Paul's gospel enter back into the covenant and election, receiving the eschatological blessing

of the Spirit, the very glory and presence of God. Thus, it is through Paul's gospel and ministry that the glory of God is revealed and the New Covenant is brought to Israel.

One might question this scheme because both Jesus and Paul occupy the place of Moses, though in different ways. But this is not a very serious objection precisely because Jesus and Paul each fulfill Moses' role differently and especially because of Paul's identity as an apostle of Christ, who functions as his official representative and covenant messenger.[225] On the other hand, the proposed typological vision of Paul's ministry vis-à-vis Exodus 32-34 is consistent with basic convictions held by Paul. For he undoubtedly believed that: (1) Christ is the mediator of the New Covenant (1 Cor 11:25; 2 Cor 3:6, where the new covenant is surely in Christ); (2) Jesus was the very embodiment of the glory of God, which shined in his gospel (2 Cor 4:4, 6; cf. Phil 2:6; Col 1:15, 19); (3) he saw this same glorious Jesus (1 Cor 9:1; 15:8; Gal 1:12, 16; cf. Acts 9:3-9; 22:6-11; 26:12-18); (4) Christ gives the eschatological blessing of the Spirit/glory of God to those who believe the gospel (preached by Paul) (Rom 8 [!]; 5:2; 9:23 [!]; Gal 3:1-14; 4:4-7, 21-31).[226]

Moreover, Paul's use of Exodus 32-34 in 2 Corinthians 3 provides strong confirmation of the view we are advancing here, for he interprets the passage in essentially the same way there.[227] We have mentioned 2 Corinthians 3 several times in

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[225] Cf. our comments in ch. 2 above, p. 104f., concerning Paul's prophetic posture as a covenant messenger in Rom 9-11 in the tradition of the OT prophets. In favor of the idea that Paul considered Moses as a type of Christ, see James M. Scott, *Adoption as Sons of God: An Exegetical Investigation into the Background of* ΥΙΟΘΕΣΙΑ *in the Pauline Corpus*, 166, and literature he cites there. Interestingly, Scott points to 1 Cor 10:1-13, where we will see below that Paul alludes to Ex 32. Linda L. Belleville, "Moses," 620, on the other hand, confidently asserts that "Paul nowhere employs Moses as a type of Christ." Even if Belleville is correct, it still seems likely that Paul considered Moses as a type of Christ in light of Paul's Exodus typology in his letters and the connection made in early Christianity in general as reflected in the NT.

[226] See our examination of Rom 9:8 in ch. 4 below, where we discuss the Spirit, Rom 8, and Gal 4:21-31 *inter alia*. As Hafemann, *Paul*, 422, correctly states, "Paul, together with early Christianity as a whole, understood the indwelling of the Holy Spirit as the concrete and real presence of God himself," citing 1 Thes 4:8; Gal 3:2, 5; 4:6; 1 Cor 2:12; 3:16; 6:19; chs. 12-14; 2 Cor 5:5; 11:14; Rom 5:5; 8:16, 23; 12:3-7; 14:7. The four convictions listed above could be shown from a variety of texts, but that would take us far afield from our focus into detailed exegesis of a number of passages. For Paul's ministry as one that conveys the Spirit, see especially Scott J. Hafemann, *Suffering and Ministry in the Spirit: Paul's Defense of His Ministry in II Corinthians 2:14-3:3*; idem, *Paul*.

[227] For an exegesis of the passage that is truly intertextual and thorough, see Hafemann, *Paul*. We agree in large measure with Hafemann's interpretation, though not in every detail, and refer the reader to his penetrating analysis for the general tenor of our approach to the passage; cf. the recent treatments sensitive in various degrees to intertextual methodology of Hays, *Echoes*, 122-53 (= ch. 4); Wright, *Climax*, 175-192 (= ch. 9); Carol K. Stockhausen, "2 Corinthians 3 and the Principles of Pauline

the course of our analysis, but have deferred discussion of this important passage until now because the context of Exodus 32-34 suggests the type of formulation we have set forth with respect to Romans 9-11 on its own in light of Paul's epistles and theology. But when we realize that Paul interprets the same context along remarkably similar lines elsewhere, then the significance of Exodus 32-34 for Romans 9-11 that we are proposing becomes greatly strengthened, and we can also reasonably look to 2 Corinthians 3 to fill out our understanding.

In 2 Corinthians 3, Paul continues the defense of his ministry, partly against some sort of judaizing threat.[228] Already we have some contact with Romans 9-11 since we have seen that Paul's vehement asseveration concerning his concern for the welfare of his Jewish brethren in 9:1-2 was partly aimed at opposition from Jewish Christians. In response to such opposition in Corinth, Paul insists that he is a minister of the New Covenant of the Spirit (3:6), who gives life (the representative and supreme blessing of the covenant in the OT). This New Covenant far surpasses the Old, which is abolished with the advent of its eschatological fulfillment (3:7-11; cf.

Exegesis," which relies on her monograph, *Moses' Veil and the Story of the New Covenant: The Exegetical Substructure of II Cor. 3.1-4.6*; Linda L. Belleville, *Reflections of Glory: Paul's Polemical Use of the Moses-Doxa Tradition in 2 Corinthians 3.1-18* (see idem, "Creation or Tradition? Paul's Use of the Exodus 34 Tradition in 2 Corinthians 3.7-18," for a summary of her survey of OT and Jewish tradition concerning what she terms the Moses-Δόξα tradition found in part 1 of her monograph). It is noteworthy that through the course of his exegesis Hafemann consistently draws parallels with Paul's argument in Rom 9-11, though without the important insight that the same OT passage lies in the background there as well. Our investigation helps to explain why there are so many similarities between the two Pauline passages. A. Andrew Das, *Paul, the Law, and the Covenant*, 76-94, has now followed Hafemann extensively, while Mark D. Given, *Paul's True Rhetoric: Ambiguity, Cunning, and Deception in Greece and Rome*, 119-24 (esp. 119 and n. 133), has criticized him sharply. But Given's criticism is rather weak; conservative conclusions and compatibility with Reformed theology are hardly arguments against exegetical argumentation. It only strengthens our case that apart from any thought of allusion to Ex 32-34 in Rom 9-11, Räisänen, "Römer 9-11," 2900, finds parallel Pauline treatment of glory, the Mosaic covenant, and the law-giving in Rom 9:4 and 2 Cor 3; the similar observation of F. Dreyfus, "Le passé et le présent d'Israël (Rom 9, 1-5; 11, 1-24)," 135f., bolsters the case still further; cf. also Gábris, "Das Gewissen," 28. But U. Luz, *Das Geschichtsverständnis des Paulus*, 272 n. 23, is against any substantive parallel. For the view that Paul's Damascus Road Christophany, in which he saw the risen Jesus Christ as the image and glory of God, is part of the fundamental background of 2 Cor 3:1-4:6, see Seyoon Kim, *The Origin of Paul's Gospel*, 137-268 (generally), and esp. 5-13 and 229-39.

[228] Hence the title of the monograph by Belleville mentioned in the previous note. See Scott J. Hafemann, "Corinthians, Letters to the," 177, who claims that although much is unclear about the identity of Paul's opponents in the Corinthian letters, one of the clear facts is that they were Jews who "relied on their spiritual heritage as Jews. . . ." Admittedly, the Romans context is not as polemical as 2 Cor 3, but we may say that a polemical situation forms part of its background and contributes to its character as apologetic (see our treatment of the purpose of Rom 9-11 in ch. 2 above).

3:14).[229] Therefore, we have confirmation from Paul's interpretation of Exodus 32-34 elsewhere of the very controversial position, assumed in former times, that Paul takes some type of supercessionist stance in Romans 9-11 (cf. Acts 7).

Another apologetic concern for Paul in 2 Corinthians 3 that he almost certainly had in mind in Romans 9-11 is the charge against his gospel that the very people who should have accepted it (i.e., the Jewish people), being the fulfillment of their Scriptures and covenant, had in fact rejected it.[230] Paul conducted his ministry with great boldness/confidence (παρρησίᾳ, 3:12). And as we noted earlier, Paul turns to the hardening of Israel in 2 Corinthians 3:12-18 vis-à-vis Exodus 32-34 as a partial explanation for the rejection of his gospel by the Jews. But in harmony with the emphasis of Exodus on the self-hardening of Israel, that is, their stubborn and rebellious character which issued forth in their apostasy with the golden bull-calf, Paul's language does not focus on God's hardening of Israel, but their own historic obstinate character. Even though Moses veiled the dangerous glory of God shining from his face, "their minds were hardened" (ἐπωρώθη τὰ νοήματα αὐτῶν), or simply, "their minds were hard/obstinate" (3:13-14). He then makes the point that this same hardness has continued to the present day at the reading of the Old Covenant, turning Moses' veil into a metonymy for Israel's obdurate condition in relation to God and his word (3:14-15).[231] If anything in addition to themselves, Paul later attributes their blindness to Satan (4:3-4).

While the divine hardening of Israel may lie in the background of 2 Corinthians 3:12ff. to some extent given the Christian tradition we have observed and Paul's use of the motif in Romans 9-11, that is not his emphasis in his interpretation of Exodus 32-34 in the Corinthian context.[232] Rather, he emphasizes Israel's sinful

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[229] Even Hafemann, *Paul*, e.g., 321-33, whose interpretation of 2 Cor 3 has been identified as the least negative towards the Old Covenant (A. Andrew Das, *Paul, the Law, and the Covenant*, 77 n. 21), understands the passage to speak of the abolishment of the Old Covenant and its replacement by the New.

[230] On this apologetic concern in 2 Cor 3, see Hafemann, *Paul*, 362; Martin, 66f.; cf. Barnett, 215-17.

[231] For Paul's use of Moses' veil as a metonymy for Israel's hardened condition, see Hafemann, *Paul*, 371ff.

[232] Emphasis on the divine hardening of Israel is one of the drawbacks of Hafemann's study (*Paul*). It is questionable whether much of the OT background he cites (e.g., Deut 29:3; Jer 5:21; Ezek 12:2; see e.g., his pp. 366-96, pp. 366 and 390 for examples of explicit citation) really has the divine hardening

character and guilt. In view of the common background of Exodus 32-34 and some similarity in apologetic intent, this only confirms the conclusion we drew earlier that Paul's allusion to Exodus 32:32 in the introduction to his argument in Romans 9-11 suggests an understanding of a judicial divine hardening in the passage.

But just as we saw in other early Christian tradition, the hardening of Israel in 2 Corinthians 3 is also not absolute. 3:15-18 speaks of the possibility of Jews (especially, but not exclusively) turning to the Lord in conversion, as Paul rewrites Exodus 34:34 in application to the individual Jew with Moses as the type of the one who turns to the Lord and finds her hardness of heart removed. Significantly, the hardening is removed when (ἡνίκα) a person turns to the Lord (3:16), that is, as a result of conversion, for it is only removed "in Christ" (3:14).[233] Therefore it is not the removal of hardening that leads to conversion, but conversion that leads to the removal of hardening.[234] Jewish hardness of heart surely makes conversion more difficult, but does not completely prevent it. It is no argument against Paul's mission which includes (and prioritizes) evangelism to Jews.

The Jew who believes in Christ receives the Spirit of the Lord and experiences his glory, thereby undergoing progressive transformation into his glorious image as he continually beholds his glory (3:17-18), which would have wrought his destruction

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of Israel in view; rather it again emphasizes Israel's own sinful, rebellious and stubborn character, stretching back to their very beginnings as a nation, which in turn brought the divine judicial hardening spoken of in Isa 6:9f. This is not to say that Paul did not connect these and other Scriptures relating to Israel's stiff neck or God's hardening judgment, but that the way he did so appears to have been along the lines we have just suggested (i.e., a judicial hardening in response to Israel's sinful character) rather than according to some unconditional decree as Hafemann's study implies. Deut 29:2-8 seems to be a key text for Hafemann, who takes it to indicate that Israel's stiff neck was YHWH's doing. But this is a misreading of the text, for it is in fact a stark declaration of Israel's own responsibility for their stiff neck in light of the Lord's mighty works in their behalf and their need for his intervention and assistance in following him. Moreover, it pointedly evokes the promised restoration, depicting Israel's state under the covenant left to their own devices apart from the Lord's action to help them know, see, and hear, promised for the future. On the other hand it makes the point that the Lord had actually already acted in order to help Israel know.

[233] ἡνίκα occurs only in 2 Cor 3:15-16 in the NT. In the LXX, ἡνίκα with ἐάν and the subjunctive always presents the associated action as in some way determinative for a subordinate contingent action (Gen 20:13 [though without subjunctive]; 24:41; 27:40; Ex 13:5; Lev 5:23; Deut 25:19; 27:3; Josh 24:20; 24:27; Jud 14:2). Moreover, ἡνίκα is so used in every one of its five occurrences in Ex 32-34 (32:19; 33:8, 22; 34:24, 34), with Ex 34:34 providing the basis of Paul's use in 2 Cor 3:16.

[234] Hafemann, *Paul*, never comes to terms with this wording of the text, but consistently *assumes* that the removal of hardening by the Spirit effects conversion, which merely reveals whether one has been given the eschatological gift of the Spirit. Cf. note 104 in ch. 2 above.

apart from the New Covenant and its Spirit based on the work of Christ. Paul's identification of the Lord with the Spirit emphasizes the Spirit as the very presence of God given to those who enter into Christ and the New Covenant. 2 Corinthians 4:1-6 goes on to present Paul's ministry of proclaiming Jesus Christ as Lord as a display of the glory of God in Christ, who is the glory and image of God. But the gospel is veiled among the unbelieving, who are perishing. Applicable to both Jews and Gentiles, this surely means that Paul regarded Jews who did not believe the gospel to be perishing. In light of the significance of the glory/presence of God in Exodus 32-34 as the conveyor of election, we may say that Paul's interpretation of the passage in 2 Corinthians 3 suggests a reading of Romans 9-11 in terms of the mediation of the election-bestowing glory of God through Paul's gospel and ministry.[235] Indeed, such a statement of the matter brings greater clarity to Paul's theology of the Spirit found in Romans 8 and elsewhere even as these references sharpen our understanding of the nature of the election bestowed by the Spirit (see below).

A Pauline typological understanding of Exodus 32-34 vis-à-vis Romans 9-11 is also supported by Paul's other undeniable allusion to the OT context in 1 Corinthians 10:7, where he quotes Exodus 32:6. Indeed, the Corinthian context is again instructive for the Roman context. First, we observe that Paul addresses his predominantly Gentile audience as brothers (ἀδελφοί) in recognition of their New Covenant bond in Christ (1 Cor 10:1), just as he spoke of his Jewish brethren as brothers in recognition of their common Old Covenant bond (Rom 9:3). Second, and more significantly, Paul calls Israel "our fathers" (οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν; 1 Cor 10:1), clearly identifying them as the Corinthians' fathers, and therefore attributing to this Gentile church inclusion in the true eschatological Israel, which stands in continuity with Israel of the past.[236] This is the very identity of the Church that calls God's word

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[235] Cf. ibid, 376 n. 132, who takes 2 Cor 3:14-16 to develop in short form the basic history and nature of Israel Paul relates in Rom 9-11, and takes issue with Michael Theobald, *Die überströmende Gnade: Studien zu einem paulinischen Motivfeld*, 203, for arguing against the parallel on the basis of the fact that 2 Cor 3:16 does not refer to the future conversion of Israel. While Hafemann agrees with the basis of Theobald's conclusion, he does not agree with the conclusion itself, believing that the parallel does not need to be complete. But a better course would be to recognize that 2 Cor 3:14-16 supports an understanding of Rom 11 that takes Paul to speak of his present ministry to the Jew first and also to the Gentiles (11:30-31) rather than some sort of future mass conversion of Israel.

[236] See Fee, 444, on 1 Cor 10:1. He notes that this idea "is thoroughgoing in Paul," citing Rom 2:26-29; 11:17-24; Gal 3:6-9, 29; 6:16; Phil 3. Fee also correctly points out that Paul's language is also sure evidence of the Gentile Corinthian church's familiarity with the OT. The warp and woof of Paul's

into question and occasions Paul's argument in Romans 9-11; not that Gentiles per se are now the true Israel, but that the Church in Christ is the Israel of God (cf. Gal 6:16), made up of both Jews and (primarily) Gentiles.

Third, Paul ascribes privileges to OT Israel as prefigurements of Christian privileges in order to make the point that as was the case with Israel of old, Christians' eschatological privileges do not guarantee that they will not fall under the fatal judgment of God if they persist in idolatry.[237] Romans 9:4-5 just so happens to make much of the privileges of Israel, which nevertheless do not guarantee either contemporary ethnic Israel or the Church that they are immune to the deadly curse of the covenant if they fall into unbelief. Moreover, Paul makes this same sort of argument in Romans 11, applicable to both Jews and Gentiles, who stand or fall not on their privileges, but on their faith, which is the means of their possession of those privileges. Fourth, Paul tells us that "these things became types [τύποι] of us in order that we might not be desirers of evil, just as they desired" (1 Cor 10:6). It is immediately after this that he warns the Corinthians against being idolaters based on a quotation of Exodus 32:6. Thus, Paul identifies the situation of Israel at the time of the golden bull-calf as a biblical type written down for the instruction of the Church as the eschatological people of God, "upon whom the end of the ages has come" (10:11).

Through his allusion to Exodus 32:32, Paul takes upon himself the mediatorial, intercessory, and prophetic aura of Moses. The transumption fits the apologetic context of Romans 9-11 well, for as we have seen, Exodus 32-34 functions to substantiate Moses' authority.[238] Now it subtly serves to substantiate Paul's authority as well. Indeed, as Hafemann has shown, Moses' authority was regularly assumed and then used to legitimize a given author's own authority in post-biblical

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letters reveals the centrality of the OT for his churches, and further argues for the type of approach taken in this investigation, taking Paul to have assumed a high level of scriptural familiarity among his Gentile audiences.

[237] See Fee, 442ff. If Paul's reference to the cloud (νεφέλη,1 Cor 10:1-2) refers to the presence of God in the midst of Israel as a prefigurement of the role of the Spirit, as it probably does (contra Fee, 445, who thinks it possible, and who cites Conzelmann and Dunn as supporting it), then the context is all the more relevant to Paul's argument in Romans.

[238] See p. 173 above.

literature.[239] And as we have seen in T. Mos. 3:9's allusion to Moses' intercession on behalf of Israel, the mediatorial/intercessory/prophetic persona of Moses was related to his activity in the episode of the golden bull-calf. There could be no greater figure for Paul to evoke in order to set the stage for reception of his authoritative apostolic/prophetic revelation of eschatological secrets relating to God's purpose, Israel, the Gentiles, the faithfulness of God to his covenant promises to Israel, and God's sovereignty and foreknowledge.

Keeping in mind that the prophetic, mediatorial, and intercessory roles of Moses are inextricably intertwined, we would venture to say that Paul joins Moses in pronouncing covenant judgment upon Israel and calling faithful Israelites to join him in recognizing their brothers' apostasy and divine rejection (cf. Ex 32:25-29; T. Mos. 3:9ff.). Like Moses, he proclaims the termination of Israel's covenant as well as its renewal (cf. Ex 32:19; 33:3-5; 34:29-35). And like Moses, he prays for Israel's salvation, willing to sacrifice himself in the attempt to convince God to spare them of his wrath and restore them to his favor.

Even the modest remnant motif of Exodus 32-34 might have some implications for Paul's argument in Romans 9-11. It happens to first appear in the narrative of Exodus 32-34 in connection with Moses' *prophetic* call to the Levites, who represent a faithful remnant, to kill their apostate brethren. The motif's reverberations in the NT context support the contention that Paul's reference to the accursed state of unbelieving Israel envisaged the fatal covenant curse in store for those who are unfaithful to the covenant by rejecting the Messiah on the one hand, and the blessings of the covenant for those who are faithful to it by embracing its messianic Lord on the other hand. In light of Paul's immense grief at the plight of his Jewish brethren, the necessity of slaying covenant brethren in the OT context underscores in the Pauline context the costliness of faithfulness to the Lord and his covenant and the inevitable pain and separation from unbelieving Israel necessitated by allegiance to Jesus Christ.

The remnant motif surfaces again in Moses' self-sacrificial intercession on behalf of Israel recorded in Exodus 32:31-32 and alluded to by Paul. There, Moses implicitly appealed to the faithful remnant represented by himself as part of the basis

[239] Hafemann, *Paul*, 63-69.

of his request for mercy for the people, revealing a profound identification of himself with the people of Israel. Similarly, the self-sacrificial prayer Paul contemplates would also appeal to the faithful remnant embodied in himself. This only deepens Paul's identification of himself with the Jewish people[240] and also prepares for his development of the remnant motif in his argument (Rom 9:27-29; 11:1-10).

The Privileges of Israel in Intertextual Perspective (Romans 9:4-5)

Having seen numerous substantive parallels between the contexts of Exodus 32-34 and Romans 9-11 (along with some tenuous ones that gain greater plausibility from the cumulative force of the many undeniable correspondences), we would expect the context of Paul's allusion to enrich our understanding of 9:4-5 as well, along with their enumeration of the privileges of Israel.

The First and Basic Privilege with an Orientation to the Entire Catalog

The form and structure of Romans 9:4-5 has drawn attention from interpreters for its impressive artistry.[241] Ἰσραηλῖται leads the list of privileges and sums them up as the name given to members of God's covenant people. The name "Israel" was the special covenant name of the people of God, first conferred upon the patriarch Jacob, and consequently applied to his descendants.

It is commonly recognized that the name, which emphasized special status before God, was the preferred self-designation over against that of "Jew(s)," which emphasized national and political identity and was typically used both by Jews in dealings with Gentiles and by Gentiles of Jews.[242] Now significantly, Paul changes his

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[240] M. Barth, "The Testimony of Romans 9-11 and Other Pauline Texts," 82 n. 3, makes the interesting observation that, in light of the tribe's role in the OT, Paul's descent from Benjamin probably meant to him that he was representative of all Israel.

[241] For particularly helpful treatments of the form/structure of 9:4-5, see Piper, *Justification*, 21-23; Dunn, 522; Schreiner, 482-85. These have been especially influential for our analysis. Cf. Byrne, *'Sons of God'-'Seed of Abraham,'* 81-84. See also Siegert, *Argumentation*, 122, for some additional insights not often noted.

[242] See Cranfield, 460f.; Dunn, 526; Moo, 561; Fitzmyer, 545; Schreiner, 482; Ellison, *Mystery*, 31; H. Kuhli, *EDNT*, 2.204f. But see Kuhli's (205) complaint that the difference between the two terms is frequently exaggerated, and Moo's helpful qualification (n. 30). Cf. U. Luz, *Das Geschichtsverständnis des Paulus*, 269 n. 9, who essentially denies the distinction in these terms in Paul. Dunn, *Theology of*

terminology by speaking primarily of Israel rather than Jews.[243] The move strengthens Paul's identification with his people. It may be that Paul also found some inspiration for his use of the designation "Israel" in Moses' use of the name instead of the more usual "Jacob" in his first intercession on behalf of the people (Ex 32:13). Just as there, use of the covenant name evokes God's covenant promises to Israel in all their fullness, sharpening the problem Paul raises. Given the context of intercession (cf. Rom 10:1), invocation of this honorable name strengthens the implicit appeal for their salvation and looks forward to Paul's argument for God's faithfulness based on his promise to the fathers in ch. 11.

The rest of Israel's privileges are grammatically subordinate to Ἰσραηλῖται in three relative clauses (ὧν . . . ὧν . . . ἐξ ὧν) that unpack its meaning.[244] The six items in the first relative clause are delicately balanced with the six feminine nouns set in two groups of three and the endings of the first, second, and third members corresponding in assonance to the endings of the fourth, fifth, and sixth members respectively:

ἡ υἱοθεσία	ἡ νομοθεσία
ἡ δόξα	ἡ λατρεία
αἱ διαθῆκαι	αἱ ἐπαγγελίαι.

Paul, 505ff., probably makes too much of Paul's use of the honorific title "Israel" in Rom 9-11, essentially finding in it the key to Paul's argument. We must remember that the Scriptures of Israel consistently made distinction between Israel and the nations, and that while the terminology of Jewishness may have had greater ethnic connotations—making the concept of "Israel" more appropriate for inclusion of Gentiles—these were not entirely lacking in the terminology of Israel. Indeed, Paul's discussion of true Jewishness in Rom 2 (see esp. vv. 25-29) spiritualizes the term and suggests that uncircumcised Gentiles can be both Jewish and circumcised spiritually through true spirituality; see ch. 4, p. 308 below. Kuhli's (205) point that "[u]nlike Ἰουδαῖος, Ἰσραηλίτης is most often an expression of conscious solemnity," helps us to see that Paul's use of the word adds to the solemnity of his expression in Rom 9:1-5. I would suggest that Kuhli's further observation (205) that the term was used primarily of the pre-exilic period helps to explain some of its solemnity as arising from the common (though not ubiquitous) perception in first century Judaism that Israel was still in exile.

[243] The term "Jew(s)" is used in Rom 1:17; 2:9, 10, 17, 28, 29; 3:1, 9, 29, while the term "Israel/Israelites" is not used until 9:4, but then frequently in the rest of chs. 9-11 (Rom. 9:6, 27, 31; 10:19, 21; 11:1, 2, 7, 25, 26), whereas "Jew" is only used again in 9:24 and 10:12.

[244] Cranfield's (460) view of the three ὧν clauses along with οἵτινες as dependent on τῶν συγγενῶν μου κατὰ σάρκα is curious. While οἵτινές εἰσιν Ἰσραηλῖται is certainly dependent on τῶν συγγενῶν μου or τῶν ἀδελφῶν μου, as Cranfield indicates, or both (see below), Piper, *Justification*, 21, is surely correct to state that Ἰσραηλῖται is the antecedent of the three relative clauses that follow. But the difference is not great since τῶν ἀδελφῶν μου τῶν συγγενῶν μου κατὰ σάρκα are the Ἰσραηλῖται described by the relative clauses. Cf. Schreiner, 486 n. 15.

There is close association and overlap between every element of this list and not just between the rhyming pairs; [245] they are all of one piece and testify elegantly to Israel's glorious historical heritage. It is this heritage that makes their present situation so grievous.

9:4-5 ground Paul's allusion to Exodus 32:32, itself an expression of his immense grief at his people's accursed state. They reveal an additional factor that intensifies the greatness of his heart's unceasing pain—the (Jewish) people who have been excluded from the covenant and its blessings are the very people to whom these most properly belong as the historic bearers of the divine election. The content of vv. 4-5 alone assure us of their causal function. But the relative pronoun οἵτινες confirms this judgment in its use "to emphasize a characteristic quality, by which a preceding statement is to be confirmed."[246] It is their identity as bearers of the name of God's covenant people, with all the prerogatives inherent in that name, that makes the situation all the more tragic, especially in light of the fact that many Gentiles are participating in the eschatological fulfillment of that name and its blessings.

οἵτινες is dependent on τῶν ἀδελφῶν μου τῶν συγγενῶν μου κατὰ σάρκα,[247] making it clear that the same kinsmen who stand anathema under the covenant wrath

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[245] For the special connection between the rhyming pairs, see Schreiner, 483ff.; Piper, *Justification*, 21 n. 12; cf. Scott, *Adoption*, 148f. On the question of whether Paul authored this list or made use of a traditional Jewish catalog, see esp. Piper, *Justification*, 21-23, who argues convincingly that the list reflects Paul's "own selectivity, artistry, and theology" (p. 22); cf. Scott, idem, n. 96; Räisänen, "Römer 9-11," 2896 n. 29. Contrast the less plausible suggestion that the list arose from Hellenistic Jewish tradition, strongly asserted e.g., by H. W. Bartsch, "Röm. 9, 5 und Clem. 32, 4: Eine notwendige Konjektur im Römerbrief," 404; cf. the more cautious statement of Byrne, 285 (but see his earlier more confident statement in Byrne, '*Sons of God*'-'*Seed of Abraham*,' 128 [see 81-84 for his argument behind his assertion, following esp. Michel, 228]).

[246] BDAG, ὅστις, s.v. 2b. As Moo, 560 n. 27, puts it, this indefinite relative pronoun often has a "causal flavor" and does so here. See also Schreiner, 482; Dunn, 526; Timothy Friberg and Barbara Friberg, *Analytical Lexicon to the Greek New Testament*, ὅστις, s.v. 3; Zerwick, *Biblical Greek*, § 215; Hübner, *Gottes Ich*, 14.

[247] Cranfield, 460, takes τῶν συγγενῶν μου κατὰ σάρκα as the antecedent of the following relative clauses, allowing that τῶν ἀδελφῶν μου could (less possibly) be the antecedent. But there seems to be no reason to distinguish so sharply between the two since they are in apposition to one another. Daniel Jong-Sang Chae, *Paul as Apostle to the Gentiles: His Apostolic Self-Awareness and Its Influence on the Soteriological Argument in Romans*, 225f. n. 51, agrees that the whole clause τῶν ἀδελφῶν . . . σάρκα functions as the antecedent of οἵτινες, but his criticism of Piper, *Justification*, 23-24, 45, 64, who applies Israel's privileges to unbelieving Israelites, is wholly unconvincing in light of our exegesis. He can only make this criticism because he offers no detailed exegesis of Rom 9:1-5 and does not really deal with the logical relationship between 9:1-3 and 9:4-5. Ironically, Chae's and Piper's views turn out to be somewhat similar. Cf. note 255 below.

of God are the same ones who bear the historic covenant name and privileges; they are Israelites. For them Paul would pray to be anathema from Christ "inasmuch as they are Israelites, of whom is the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the Law, and the service, and the promises, of whom are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen." But this raises a serious problem. How can Israel be both anathema and the elect people, recipients of the covenant promises? That is (at least apparently) a contradiction in terms. It would seem to mean that God's promises to Israel as represented by these magnificent privileges have failed. Indeed, this is the problem that Paul addresses in the rest of Romans 9-11, to which the verses before us are the introduction.

Many interpreters stress Paul's attribution of these privileges to ethnic Israel in the present,[248] and deny what Paul's argument in Romans 1-8 implies—which is why he must now address this problem at all—and what our exegesis of 9:1-3 has found, that Paul does regard Israel defined ethnically and apart from Christ to have forfeited their election and covenant prerogatives under the curse of God. Many such interpreters emphasize the fact that Paul uses the present tense—οἵτινές *εἰσιν* Ἰσραηλῖται—which must then be supplied for the following relative clauses. Therefore, one might argue, Paul explicitly ascribes to ethnic Israel both the covenant name, encompassing the covenant blessings, and possession of the covenant privileges; so he cannot mean that they have forfeited their election or that they are anathema. Recognizing that Paul does depict unbelieving Israel as anathema, some argue that the significance of the name and its privileges is either strictly a historical/temporal matter[249] and/or that such privileges do not promise salvation to every individual ethnic Israelite, but to ethnic Israel as a whole.[250]

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[248] See e.g., P. von der Osten-Sacken, *Christian-Jewish Dialogue*, 20; Schreiner, 485; Gundry Volf, *Paul and Perseverance*, 163f. n. 13; Fitzmyer, 545; Cranfield, 460; Moo, 561; Dunn, 526; cf. J. D. G. Dunn, "Did Paul Have a Covenant Theology? Reflections on Romans 9.4 and 11.27," 302f.

[249] See e.g., L. Cerfaux, "Le Privilège d'Israël selon Saint Paul" (see pp. 12, 26f., for summaries); Klumbies, "Israels Vorzüge"; Dreyfus, "Le passé et le présent d'Israël"; G. S. Worgul Jr., "Romans 9-11 and Ecclesiology," 99, whose translation relegates Israel's privileges to the past.

[250] Piper, *Justification*, e.g., 24; Schreiner, e.g., 485; Moo, e.g., 562.

But these approaches read too much into Paul's language here and pay too little attention to the immediate context of his argument, not to mention the OT background we have been exploring. According to our own exegesis above, we must grant that Paul does attribute the special covenant name presently to unbelieving ethnic Israel, that this name encompasses the following privileges, and that he likewise attributes some type of possession of these same privileges to them. But to insist against 9:1-3, the OT background, the rest of chs. 9-11, and chs. 1-8, that contemporary ethnic Israel fully enjoys the privileges ascribed to them in 9:4-5 is both unjustified and unnecessary. Paul does not explain in what sense his kinsmen according to the flesh are Israelites except to enumerate their privileges. Even less does he explain just how they possess these blessings. Indeed, his language is rather limited.

Paul's use of the genitival relative pronoun ὧν is a fairly meager expression of their possession of the covenant prerogatives and susceptible to more than one interpretation.[251] Rather than a genitive of possession, it is possible that it is a genitive of reference indicating that the Israelites of whom Paul speaks bear a special relationship to the prerogatives he lists ("in relation to whom is the adoption . . ."),[252] Or it could be a genitive of advantage indicating for whose benefit the named blessings work ("for whom is the adoption . . ."), but not how they work or the nature of their work; this would go along nicely with a view of Romans 9-11 that takes Paul to argue that ethnic Israel's historic position as God's people inclines God to grant them a measure of blessing, though rejected from the covenant, and to work specially for their salvation. Or perhaps it is a genitive of source ("from whom is the adoption . . .")[253] or means ("through whom is the adoption . . .").[254] The point is not to argue for

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[251] Cottrell, 51f., prefers to translate literally in this section, presumably for this reason and in harmony with his relegation of Israel's privileges to the past. John G. Lodge, *Romans 9-11: A Reader-Response Analysis*, 45, recognizes the use of the relative pronoun here as understated. Mohrmann, "Semantic Collisions," 194f., argues that Rom 9:4-5 "contain no temporal reference."

[252] Paul so uses ὧν in Rom 15:18 and 1 Cor 7:1, though neither is in reference to persons. Godet, 135, and Hodge, 298, following the KJV, appear to take the first ὧν clause in this way ("to whom pertaineth the adoption . . .").

[253] L. T. Johnson, 145, offers this as a real option, though he thinks the genitive of possession *may* be better. The fact that Paul marks the last relative clause as a genitive of source by the preposition ἐκ, distinguishing it from the preceding clauses, argues against this option.

an alternative translation of the genitival relative pronoun over against the usual possessive interpretation, though we prefer a literal translation in an attempt to capture the ambiguity and what we gather to be the weak sense of possession intended by Paul ("of whom is the adoption . . ."). But we are quite happy to admit that a possessive genitive is the most natural interpretation. The point I am making is that it is an ambiguous expression of possession, and it is dubious to hang one's interpretation of Romans 9-11 on Paul's language at this point. His language here is lofty and poetic after all, and room must be made for a bit of poetic license.

The important question is, in what sense does ethnic Israel now possess the privileges of 9:4-5? In light of our exegesis so far and our exegesis of Romans 9-11 in general, I would suggest that the answer is that these privileges belong to Israel in the sense that they most properly belong to Israel as the historic bearers of these privileges, but they do not in fact do so apart from faith in Christ. In other words, unbelieving Israel bears the name outwardly, but not in substance, and the prerogatives are first and foremost meant for them, but are not in fact theirs based on ethnicity, nor apart from faith in Christ. Indeed, the gospel is "the power of God for salvation to all who believe, to the Jew first and also to the Greek" (1:16). This approach is borne out by both the context of Romans and the OT background.

First and foremost, Paul addresses this exact issue in the very next verse in response to the very problem we are discussing! The fact that ethnic Israel as a whole is anathema and therefore not receiving the fulfillment of God's promises to her suggests that his word has failed. The primary reason that Paul gives to deny this accusation is that there are two Israels, and by implication two kinds of Israelites—those who are merely part of ethnic Israel (οἱ ἐξ Ἰσραήλ), and those who are part of true, eschatological Israel by faith, whether Jew or Gentile (οὗτοι Ἰσραήλ).[255] So

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[254] This seems extremely unlikely without the aid of a preposition.

[255] See note 320 below, and our exegesis of Rom 9:6ff. in the next chapter. Even if one adopts the more usual interpretation of the true Israel in 9:6b as referring to Jewish believers, the distinction between two types of Israel still holds. It is amazing how often the argument of 9:6ff. is ignored or skirted in addressing these questions. For example, Dunn, 526, who does at least acknowledge that someone might find 9:6 to be relevant, simply begs the question by calling attention to Paul's "firm statement" that the Jews are Israelites in the face of 9:6. Piper, *Justification*, 24, 30, who wants to ascribe the privileges of 9:4-5 to unbelieving Israel eventually has to admit in view of 9:6ff. that they only apply to the elect among unbelieving Israel, that is for Piper, to those who eventually will believe. But is this not, in his wording, "against the wording of the text" (24)? Piper unwittingly involves himself in a contradiction here, since he makes much of the fact that Paul's grief over his kinsmen is because they

unbelieving Jews can be ἐξ Ἰσραήλ, i.e., they can possess the name and prerogatives of Israel outwardly, but they might not fully and truly possess them, i.e., they might not actually be true Israel. Hence, the paradoxical statement of 9:6b.[256]

Later in his argument, Paul speaks metaphorically of Israel as an olive tree, and individual, unbelieving Jews as natural branches that have been separated from the tree. The significant thing in Paul's use of language there for our purposes is that he speaks of Jews who are separated from true Israel as possessing Israel though cut off from her: "How much more will these who are natural branches be grafted into *their own* olive tree?" (11:24). Even though unbelieving Jews are cut off from true Israel, they still possess its name and prerogatives in that these had historically belonged to them, and most properly belong to them now, if they will only believe. They are the natural branches even if cut off.

Again, in Romans 2:25-29, Paul asserts that the Jew's circumcision becomes uncircumcision (spiritually) if he is a transgressor of the Law, whereas the uncircumcision of the Gentile who keeps the Law becomes circumcision (spiritually). Indeed, true Jewishness is spiritual and true circumcision is of the heart by the Spirit (who according to our exegesis bestows the divine election!). Just as one can possess

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are under the eternal wrath of God and that Paul could only be willing to enter such a fate himself for them if he believed this to be their fate. But if Paul believed these privileges to only apply to the elect among unbelieving Israel, who would certainly never face this fate, then the ground is ripped out from under Piper's otherwise convincing interpretation of 9:1-3. It is better to take the route offered in our exegesis, and to recognize that Paul applies these privileges in a nuanced way to ethnic Israel as a whole, most of whom are unbelieving, and in fact applies them especially to unbelieving Jews as a part of the fundamental basis of his grief over them. Piper's view does violence to the logic of the text barely less than Chae's (*Paul*, 225f.) view that Paul applies these privileges only to believing Jews; see note 247 above. Cf. M. Rese, "Die Vorzüge Israels in Röm. 9,4f. und Eph. 2,12: Exegetische Anmerkungen zum Thema Kirche und Israel," 217f., who rightly sees that the advantages and Paul's heartache must apply to empirical-historical/unbelieving Israel (cf. also Luz, *Geschichtsverständnis*, 273; J. M. Österreicher, "Israel's Misstep and Her Rise: The Dialectic of God's Saving Design in Rom 9-11," 319), but surprisingly represents the view that the privileges apply not to empirical Israel but to eschatological Israel/the Church as the standard interpretation.

[256] This mirrors the paradoxical relationship between Rom 9:1-3 and 9:4-5, which W. Kraus, *Das Volk Gottes: Zur Grundlegung der Ekklesiologie bei Paulus*, 296-98, stresses, and H.-M. Lübking, *Paulus und Israel im Römerbrief: Eine Untersuchung zu Römer 9-11*, 59, argues as forming the point of the section (9:1-5) and the central question of all of chs. 9-11 (cf. Dieter Zeller, *Juden und Heiden in der Mission des Paulus: Studien zum Römerbrief*, 113, who finds the essence of Rom 9-11 in the tension between the historical promises given in the past and the presently proclaimed Gospel, and Österreicher, "Israel's Misstep," who stresses the dialectical character of Paul's argumentation, and finds Paul expressing "the polarity of Jewish existence" [320]). We should add that the paradox is not real in Paul's mind, but only apparent; he will go on to resolve it in his ensuing argument. Moreover, as we have seen, the contrast plays a crucial role in Paul's rhetorical strategy.

the divine privilege of circumcision yet not truly possess it, so can Israel possess the name and prerogatives of the elect people of God, but not truly possess them, to Paul's overwhelming sorrow.

One final example should suffice, this time from the OT background. In Moses' third intercession, he presented Israel's identity as God's people to YHWH in order to convince him to restore them to his favor, covenant, and election (Ex 33:13). But Israel was no longer YHWH's people at that point. Nonetheless, Moses could assert, "this nation is your people," not because he was lying or trying to trick YHWH, but because even though they were not actually his people at that point, they were most properly his people because of their history as such. In the same spirit, Paul cries out concerning his ethnic kinsmen who have been rejected from the covenant and its blessings, "They are Israelites to whom belong all the blessings of the covenant!" It is this fact that makes their situation so heartrending. They are from Israel but not Israel; they possess the olive tree but are cut off from it; they are Jews outwardly but not inwardly, circumcised but uncircumcised, God's people but not his people.

With this list of Jewish privileges Paul picks up on the discussion he began in 3:1 when he asked, "What then is the advantage of the Jew, or what is the benefit of circumcision?" The answer is, "much in every way" (3:2). He then begins to list Jewish privileges, but only mentions τὰ λόγια τοῦ θεοῦ, which we may regard as a summary description of the catalog in 9:4-5.[257] As we have seen, the honorific title Ἰσραηλῖται is not only the first privilege of this impressive listing as continued here in 9:4-5, but it too is a summary description of the rest of the catalog. Now Paul begins to unpack its meaning as he moves to the next privilege of his Jewish kinsmen: ἡ υἱοθεσία.

[257] See ch. 4 n. 94 below. It can serve this function because it is the oracles of God that contain everything pertaining to Israel. They are foundational, and lead to all other divine blessings; as 2 Tim 3:15 says, they lead to salvation in Christ

The Rest of the Privileges

The next privilege, ἡ υἱοθεσία, refers to the adoption[258] of Israel as God's son contained in the OT.[259] That is, it is equivalent to the covenantal election of Israel as God's people.[260] Indeed, covenant relationship in the ancient Near East and the OT extended family obligations and responsibilities to those outside of the family, and engendered familial language among covenant partners.[261] God's adoption of Israel as his son, i.e., his covenant partner, involved his commitment to be their father, bestowing love, care, protection, discipline, and blessing, and required his people to act as faithful "sons," responding to their father with love, trust, and obedience.[262] In short, it designates the establishment of covenant relationship between the Lord and Israel, with all that includes.

Thus, ἡ υἱοθεσία essentially encapsulates all the privileges of 9:4-5 as well. And it is the ideal blessing to follow the sacred title Ἰσραηλῖται, which was for all intents and purposes conferred with Israel's adoption. This ties into the concept of calling that Paul develops in Romans 9, beginning in 9:7, which we will argue refers to the naming of God's people.[263] Election is the choice of a people as God's

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[258] Scott, *Adoption*, 13-57, shows conclusively that υἱοθεσία means "adoption as son" rather than the more general "sonship"; see also idem, "Adoption," 15f. Therefore, the translations of scholars such as Fitzmyer, 545; Piper, *Justification*, 20, 31-33; Dodd, 151; Byrne, 284-87, are imprecise (but see Byrne's critique [252] of Scott; cf. Haacker, 184). Nevertheless, it is important to remember that adoption necessarily results in adoptive sonship so that the two concepts are inextricably linked and necessarily imply one another. The OT background of the term discussed here gives additional support to Scott's case for the act or state of adoption.

[259] See Ex 4:22f.; Deut 1:31; 14:1; 32:6; Isa 1:2; 63:16; 64:8; Jer 3:19-22; 31:9; Hos 11:1; Mal 1:6; 2:10.

[260] Dunn, 526, and Schelkle, 150, are among the surprisingly few to directly relate adoption to election in Rom 9:4. Cf. Newman and Nida, 178.

[261] I owe this point to Gordon Hugenberger and his course "Theology of the Pentateuch," taught at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in the Spring semester of 1996. The point helps to explain the background behind the covenantal term "brother" used by Paul in 9:3 and discussed above.

[262] See Keil and Delitzsch, 1.1.457f., for a helpful discussion of Israel's adoption and election as reflected in Ex 4:22f., which has been called the classic scriptural text for grounding Israel's adoption (for this label and language, see Piper, *Justification*, 31, quoting V. Huonder, *Israel Sohn Gottes*, 54).

[263] See ch. 4 below, pp. 328ff. The tie is strengthened by Byrne's (*'Sons of God'-'Seed of Abraham,'* 120) observation that "calling" and "sonship" are frequently associated in Jewish tradition regarding the establishment or reconstitution of Israel (citing Hos 1:10; 11:1; Sir 36:17; Jub 1:25; LAB 18:6; 4QdibHam 3:4f.; 4 Ezra 6:58).

son/covenant partner, which entails the bestowal of the covenant name, Israel/Christ, that is, the calling of God's people as his elect. Therefore, Fitzmyer's surprise that Paul does not include election in the list of Israel's privileges[264] is unwarranted, but not because of Chae's contention that Paul merely presupposes the election of Israel.[265] Rather, he chooses to speak of Israel's election in terms of adoption in 9:4, probably because (1) he wants to invoke the preceding discussion of adoption and the Spirit in Romans 8; (2) artistic composition demanded a feminine noun ending with -ια; and (3) he wants to maintain connection to the context of the Exodus he has alluded to, and to which so many of the listed privileges are especially linked.

At the same time ἡ υἱοθεσία also refers to the adoption of the eschatological people of God spoken of by Paul in his writings (Rom 8:15, 23; Gal 4:5; Eph 1:5). Indeed, the word υἱοθεσία does not occur in a religious sense prior to Paul, who is the only NT author to use this term that is absent from the LXX.[266] We do not need to posit a sharp division between the past orientation of the privileges of Israel Paul lists and an eschatological significance as some do.[267] The blessings Paul mentions stand in a salvation historical continuum. The adoption of Old Covenant Israel has been fulfilled in the adoption of the New Covenant people of God, who receive the realization of the promises inherent in the former dispensation, just as, according to Romans 8:15, 23, Christians participate in the inauguration of the eschatological

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[264] Fitzmyer, 543.

[265] Chae, *Paul*, 226. H. J. Schoeps, *Paul: The Theology of the Apostle in the Light of Jewish Religious History*, 237, and William S. Campbell, "The Freedom and Faithfulness of God in Relation to Israel," 44, both correctly recognize that the list of 9:4-5 testifies to the election of Israel. But Dreyfus, "Le passé et le présent d'Israël," 132, shortsightedly refuses to speak of the election of Israel at all based on Rom 9:1-5, since the term is not mentioned here. Yet his point does derive from a genuine aspect of the text, viz., that ethnic Israel has lost her election in some way. Dreyfus fails to come to grips with the complexity of Paul's language and theology. His contention that the privileges Paul enumerates are situated κατὰ σάρκα (134, 139) does not hold up, although it would be true to say that the cause of Paul's grief is that in unbelief ethnic Israel possesses the privileges only κατὰ σάρκα, and therefore not fully or truly. He is on the right track, but it is important to recognize that it is not the privileges themselves that are κατὰ σάρκα, but unbelieving Israel.

[266] See Scott, *Adoption*, 55, who calls Paul's use of the word "unparalleled"; Piper, *Justification*, 22f., 32, whose qualifying adverb, "virtually," is unnecessary.

[267] See above all Piper, *Justification*, 23-44; Schreiner, 483-85; cf. Moo's (562f.) treatment of the adoption and the glory respectively, in which he distinguishes between Christian and Israelite adoption, yet intermingles the historic orientation of the OT glory/presence of God with Israel and its eschatological significance. See Dunn, 533, for an approach that does not pit the past and the eschatological against one another.

adoption that will only be consummated at the resurrection. So for Paul, this OT privilege always looked forward to its eschatological completion, and there is a progressive fulfillment in salvation history in which all who remain in covenant relationship with the Lord may participate. All of this applies to every one of the prerogatives Paul mentions, though the items most directly relate to their OT expression in light of Paul's allusion to the period of their fundamental establishment when ethnic Israel more truly possessed them and because of the more obvious past orientation of some of the members such as the covenants, the giving of the Law, and the Temple service. Nevertheless, the real apex of Paul's concern relates precisely to Israel's failure to truly possess the inaugurated eschatological fulfillment of these blessings.

Our understanding of the nature of ethnic Israel's possession of the privileges of 9:4-5 frees us to appreciate that even though they are anathema in Paul's estimation, and therefore rejected from the covenant and its blessings in the present time of eschatological fulfillment, the privileges of the eschatological people of God belong to them ideally. By the same token, Gentiles who believe in Christ are admitted to the true Israel, joining the remnant of Jews who believe in Christ. They thus participate in the privileges of Israel. And thus Paul's grief is severely intensified.

As for the OT background behind the adoption of Israel, it is important to recognize that the phenomenon was especially tied to the Exodus and the events surrounding it, and just as importantly, that it ultimately stretched back to the election of Abraham and the divine covenant with him. Israel was already God's son at the very beginning of the Exodus events, as evidenced by the foundational expression of her adoption in Exodus 4:22f. This can only mean that Israel was God's son by virtue of the Abrahamic covenant, which was subsequently developed in the Mosaic covenant. Nevertheless, her adoption was uniquely established through the ratification of the covenant on Sinai.

Now, it is to this context of the institution of the Sinaitic covenant that Exodus 32-34 is organically and vitally connected. Indeed, it completes the narration of the establishment of the covenant by recording the first and great threat to its continuation before it was even fully completed, and by explaining a fundamental change to its

nature. And it is no accident that interpreters typically recognize that the privileges Paul lists generally go back to the Exodus complex (and we would add, ultimately to the Abrahamic covenant, which found fulfillment at Sinai). Paul's allusion to this context draws our attention to this passage for the most relevant understanding of Israel's adoption/election to his argument in Romans 9-11. It was an adoption that was abrogated because of Israel's apostasy, and then restored through the mediation of God's glory through the covenant mediator in the midst of the people, who were now identified with and dependent on him for enjoyment of the covenant and its blessings.

It is therefore significant that the next benefit Paul lists is ἡ δόξα,[268] which he also connects to adoption, the Spirit, and heirship in the preceding chapter. Most interpreters agree that "the glory" in 9:4 refers to the manifest presence of God with Israel spoken of in the OT, whether speaking of it in terms of the (personal) presence of God,[269] manifestation of the divine presence,[270] the Shekinah,[271] theophany,[272] or the like. Some may identify a certain aspect of the divine glory as foremost,[273] but the

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[268] Paul's unusual (and perhaps unparalleled in antiquity) absolute use of the articular construction ἡ δόξα without any type of modifier for the divine glory is probably due mostly to stylistic considerations of assonance and economy (see above); cf. Dunn, 526; Moo, 563 n. 43 (who notes that there is no clear OT precedent here).

[269] Schreiner, 484; O'Neill, 151; Moo, 563; C. H. Giblin, *In Hope of God's Glory: Pauline Theological Perspectives*, 268; Gundry Volf, *Paul and Perseverance*, 163; Gábris, "Das Gewissen," 28; Edwards, 230; Leenhardt, 244 (ET); de Villiers, "The Salvation of Israel," 201; Maillot, 240; K. Berger, "Abraham in den paulinischen Hauptbriefen," 78 (specifically in relation to the Temple; but he also equally says it could refer to the pillar of cloud). Indeed, interpreters often use more than one designation to describe this privilege as can be seen in the citation of various scholars under more than one description in the following notes.

[270] Osten-Sacken, *Dialogue*, 28; Morris, 348; Fitzmyer, 546; Moo, 563; Cranfield, 462; Barrett, 177 (essentially); Morison, 38 (who speaks of symbol); A. F. Johnson, 171; Sanday and Headlam, 230; Cottrell, 53; L. T. Johnson, 146 (essentially); Godet, 135; Dodd, 151; Murray, 2.5; Wilckens, 188; Hodge, 299; Newman and Nida, 179; Black, 129; de Villiers, ibid; I. Fransen, "Le Dieu de toute consolation: Romains 9,1-11,36," 28; Schlier; Rese, "Die Vorzüge Israels," 216. Erik Peterson, "Die Kirche aus Juden und Heiden," 145, speaks of a visible sign of the divine sovereignty.

[271] Ziesler, 237; Munck, *Christ and Israel*, 31; Cranfield, 462; Ellison, *Mystery*, 35; Käsemann, 259; Morison, 38; Sanday and Headlam, 230; Godet, 135; Hodge, 299; Bruce, 185; Gábris, "Das Gewissen," 28; Black, 129; Eldon Jay Epp, "Jewish-Gentile Continuity in Paul: Torah and/or Faith (Romans 9:1-5)," 82; Bartsch, "Röm. 9, 5," 404; Maillot, 240.

[272] Schlatter, 201f.; Dunn, 526; Käsemann, 258 (epiphany); Barrett, 177; Cottrell, 53; Haacker, 184.

[273] As e.g., Dunn, 526, who finds the reference to be particularly but not exclusively to the theophanies granted to Israel.

presence of God in the midst of his people is fundamental to them all. It was God's magnificent presence that appeared in the pillar of cloud and pillar of fire in the Exodus and desert wanderings,[274] at the establishment of the covenant on Mount Sinai,[275] and in the Tent of Meeting,[276] the Tabernacle,[277] and the Temple.[278]

Paul's allusion to Exodus 32-34 directs us to the most relevant connotation of ἡ δόξα for his discussion in Romans 9-11. We saw that the glory of the Lord was a main theme of Exodus 32-34 and that its chief significance was to denote God's covenant presence, which bestowed his covenant and election with all of the accompanying blessings. Hence, Paul's use of the term in the wake of his emotive appeal to the intercession of Moses and immediately following mention of the elective adoption also carries this significance. Paul speaks of the glory of God as his manifest presence, which simultaneously establishes his covenant, confers his election, effects his adoption, and bequeaths his blessings. We once again have a term that implies all of the other items of this exalted catalog.

The suggestion that Paul's understanding of ἡ δόξα in 9:4 is especially dependent on the context of Exodus 32-34 is confirmed by Paul's heavy emphasis on the word in the argument of 2 Corinthians 3:7-18, where, as we have seen, he draws heavily from Exodus 32-34. Indeed, Exodus 34:29-35 is the source of his δόξα language in 2 Corinthians 3! Moreover, the specific meaning of the term suggested by the OT context is also confirmed by Paul's discussion of glory, adoption, the Spirit, and heirship in Romans 8. There he makes it clear that the Spirit of God and of Christ, i.e., the glory/presence of God, imparts the blessings of Christ to believers. Intriguingly, it is possession of the Spirit that determines whether one belongs to Christ (8:9), bestows adoption (8:14-16), and makes one an heir of God and his glory (8:17ff.; cf. 8:30), all with a view to the ultimate consummation of these blessings in the future against the present tension of the already and not yet. What we see in Romans 8 is the activity of the Spirit as the glory/presence of God bestowing

[274] E.g., Ex 13:21; 16:10.

[275] See Ex 19:9-25; 24:12-18, esp. vv. 17-18.

[276] Ex 33:7-11.

[277] Ex 29:43; 40:34-35.

[278] 1 Kgs 8:11.

covenant membership and election, that is, the adoption that makes God's people heirs of all his blessings, including freedom, life (the supreme OT covenant blessing), peace, glory, and resurrection. This conforms perfectly to Paul's typological application of Exodus 32-34 lying behind his argument in Romans 9-11.

But the mention of Paul's conception of glory in Romans 8 brings us to consider the suggestion that Paul refers to the future, eschatological glory often mentioned in his epistles. John Piper is the chief proponent of this view in modern scholarship, which has few supporters.[279] But Piper has made a good case for the eschatological view citing (1) Paul's regular absolute use of δόξα without a modifier;[280] (2) the Pauline context embracing Romans 8:18, 21, related to eschatological sonship, and 9:23, which assumes that vessels prepared for glory includes Jews; (3) the OT and Jewish conception of glory as an eschatological hope;[281] and (4) Jewish apocalyptic expectation of the manifestation of God's glory to and for Israel.[282] Nevertheless, all of this is not enough to overwhelm the immediate context of Paul's catalog and OT allusion.[283]

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[279] Piper, *Justification*, 33-34. But Byrne, *'Sons of God'-'Seed of Abraham,'* 140, takes it eschatologically of the public risen glory, and Moo, 563, finds it difficult to decide between the two major alternatives, and combines them, granting the eschatological view a secondary application. Godet, 135, opposes the eschatological view, but mentions Reuss as advocating it. Dunn, 526f., 533f., also includes believer's share in God's own eschatological glory within the purview of Paul's intention in 9:4 (cf. Schmithals, 331), at first seemingly in a secondary, implied sense (526f.), but then later as Paul's dominant intention (533f.). Dunn seems to move comfortably between the OT and eschatological meanings of the blessings listed in 9:4-5 in a welcome, if not totally clear or satisfactory, approach. Epp, "Jewish-Gentile Continuity," takes an approach even closer to ours in generally finding eschatological significance for the items in Paul's list that provides continuity in election between Jews (God's ancient people) and Gentiles only through faith in Christ, a continuity that is broken in the case of unbelieving Jews. Cf. also the approach of Dreyfus, "Le passé et le présent d'Israël," 135f., who finds Paul's eye on two types of glory spoken of in the OT, the passing glory of the Old Covenant, and the future glory announced to Israel but only realized in Christ.

[280] Rom 2:7, 10; 8:18; 9:23; 2 Cor 4:17; Col 1:27; 3:4; 2 Tim 2:10. Cf. Paul's use of δόξα with modifiers for eschatological glory: Rom 5:2; 8:21; 9:23; 1 Cor 2:7; Eph 1:18; Phil 3:21; 1 Thes 2:12; 2 Thes 1:9; 2:14; Tit 2:13. Even if one does not share Piper's view of some of these references as authentically Pauline, disputed references still testify to early Christian usage that presented itself as Pauline.

[281] Isa 40:5; 42:8; 46:13; 48:11; 58:8; 60:1, 2, 7; 62:2, 3; 66:11, 18; Jer 13:11; Hag 2:7, 9; Zech 2:5. Cf. Dunn, 526, who, in relation to the eschatological revelation of God's glory to the nations, also mentions Isa 35:2; 40:5; 59:19; 60:1-3; 66:18-19.

[282] 4 Ezra 7:91-98 [the context of which is not unrelated to Ex 32-34 and Rom 9-11; see our treatment of Ezra 7:106 and its broader context in our analyses of exegetical traditions above in this ch., and below in ch. 4 in relation to Gen 18:10, 14]; 2 Bar 21:23-26; 51:1-10; cf. Ps. Sol. 17:32-35.

[283] See e.g., Schreiner's (484 n. 9) criticism of Piper.

The answer lies in recognizing that the OT glory of God and the eschatological glory of Christian hope are not mutually exclusive,[284] or even fundamentally distinct. Indeed, for Paul, the OT glory of God comes to eschatological fulfillment in Christ. Just as with adoption, there is only one privilege of glory, the experience of which differs for God's people according to the salvation historical epoch. This is evident in Paul's concept of glory and the Spirit in Romans 8, where he states that we presently only have the first fruits of the Spirit, and in 2 Corinthians 3, where he speaks of a progressive glorification of believers in the Lord's own glory by the Spirit (3:18).

So the glory that God's covenant people possess as an inheritance is God's own glory, which they are granted increasing participation in over the course of salvation history culminating in the final glorification of believers. Moreover, just as with adoption, Paul probably regarded the glory of the past to have always pointed toward the glory of the future. Thus, given the OT orientation of this catalog and Paul's contention that his Jewish kinsmen do not truly possess its benefits at present, rather than saying that these privileges "look to the future with roots in the past,"[285] it would be better to say that they look to the past with a view toward the future. Be that as it may, the fact that this greatest of all privileges most properly belongs to ethnic Israel renders their separation from it exceedingly grievous and provides one of the strongest possible arguments for taking "the light of the gospel of the [election-bestowing] glory of Christ, who is the image of God" (2 Cor 4:4), to the Jew first, even though "a veil lies over their heart" (2 Cor 3:15) and "the god of this world has blinded [their unbelieving] minds" (2 Cor 4:4).

The next privilege, αἱ διαθῆκαι,[286] follows naturally from the previous three, for they are all covenant realities, Ἰσραηλῖται being the covenant name, ἡ υἱοθεσία

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[284] As Moo, 563, does. Unfortunately, he does not carry this observation through to the other privileges listed in 9:4-5.

[285] Piper, *Justification*, 34.

[286] We agree with the vast majority of interpreters that the reading ἡ διαθήκη attested by P^{46}, B, D, F, G, b, vg^{cl}, sa, bo^{mss}, and Cyp, is probably not original despite the strong external support. Internal considerations favor the singular even more strongly. It is more likely that a scribe would change the unusual plural to the much more common singular in conformity with the other singulars in the series than vice versa. Additionally, the plural maintains the symmetry with the sixth item (αἱ ἐπαγγελίαι) of

the establishment of the covenant and the resulting state of covenant partnership (i.e., adoptive sonship), and ἡ δόξα the covenantal presence of God. The unusual plural has drawn speculation from interpreters as to which covenants it may refer to. According to Calvin Roetzel, "almost unanimously commentators have interpreted the plural noun, διαθῆκαι, as a reference to different covenants which Yahweh established with the patriarchs—Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, etc."[287] But there is no unanimity in identifying just which covenants Paul has in mind.[288] Suggestions range from those named by Roetzel to exclusion of one or more of them and/or addition of other figures such as Noah and David[289] to the simple possibility that the plural is a manner of referring to either the Abrahamic[290] or the Sinaitic[291] covenant with respective various

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the list controlled by the first ὧν clause. While this could actually provide a good reason for a scribe to change an original singular to the plural (effectively nullifying the claim of Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*[2], 459, that there is no good reason for such a change), it is much more likely that the original author of the list is responsible for its impressive structure than a later scribe. J. D. G. Dunn, "Did Paul Have a Covenant Theology? Reflections on Romans 9.4 and 11.27," 302 n. 47, notes that E. J. Christiansen, *The Covenant in Judaism and Paul: A Study of Ritual Boundaries as Identity Markers*, 220-25, argues vigorously for the singular reading.

[287] Calvin J. Roetzel, "Διαθῆκαι in Romans 9,4," 377. Roetzel's own suggestion that the term actually means ordinances, commandments, or oaths in accordance with what he purports to be rabbinic, targumic, and apocryphal usage is unconvincing. Indeed his analysis of the evidence is suspect. He seems to force covenants into the mold of oath, law, etc., missing that these concepts go hand in hand yet are not identical; he fails to see the complementary relationship between covenant and promise, as Piper and Schreiner also do (see note 293 below). Moreover Roetzel is forced into an unsuccessful attempt to explain away the undeniable reference to two covenants in Gal 4:24, contending that Paul speaks of one covenant for the Jews and one for the Gentiles. But he is correct to say that the plural does not refer to totally distinct covenants with the patriarchs; but as Dunn's (527) comment implies, this is a good point gone wrong. For further criticism, see Schreiner, 484f. n. 12 (though he mistakes the date of Roetzel's article); cf. Dunn, 527; Moo, 563 n. 47; Fitzmyer, 546. Käsemann, 259, surprisingly gives some tacit support to Roetzel's position, and Rese, "Die Vorzüge Israels," 216 n. 32, goes further, endorsing it fully.

[288] See Piper, Justification, 34f.; Schreiner, 484 n. 11.

[289] E.g., Giblin, *In Hope*, 268, mentions the covenants with Abraham, Moses, and David, as does Murray, 2.5. Cranfield, 462, adds to this the covenants (we would say covenant renewals to be more precise) with Israel in the plains of Moab and at Mounts Ebal and Gerizim; cf. Barrett, 177f., who suggests according to a rabbinic reference (see Strack-Billerbeck 3.262) that Paul makes distinction between three covenants within the one Exodus covenant—Horeb, in the plains of Moab, and at Mounts Ebal and Gerizim; cf. also Dunn, 527; Morris, 348; Bartsch, "Röm. 9, 5," 404 n. 4. Dunn even mentions the covenant with Phinehas as a possibility and Morris includes Noah (as do Stuhlmacher, 145; de Villiers, "The Salvation of Israel," 201; Schmithals, 331; W. Vischer, "Le Mystère d'Israël: Une exégèse des chapitres ix, x et xi de l'épître aux Romains," 441) and Joshua.

[290] Dunn, 527. Gábris, "Das Gewissen," 29, surprisingly questions the inclusion of the Abrahamic covenant.

[291] See Dunn, 527; Moo, 563, who places Barrett here (see previous note).

renewals to the alternate possibility that it is an all-inclusive reference to all the covenants mentioned in the OT.[292]

Piper insightfully observes that the great diversity among commentators on this question testifies to the fact that Paul's terminology is open-ended at this point.[293] I would add that the exalted nature and intent of the entire catalog lends to a more comprehensive designation as well. Nevertheless, it is a listing of *Israel's* privileges; so it would seem fitting to limit the referents to those covenants specifically related to Israel or her patriarchs, including the New Covenant.[294] Still, even though we accept such an identification for αἱ διαθῆκαι, it may be that we can find something more specific at the forefront of the general idea in light of Paul's allusion to Exodus 32-34 in the previous verse.

In Exodus 32:13 Moses pleads for Israel on the basis of the Lord's covenant oath to Abraham, Isaac, and Israel (i.e., Jacob). And he does so to save Israel and her covenant with the Lord just instituted at Sinai. Indeed, as we have mentioned, Exodus 32-34 is part of the *locus classicus* of the Sinaitic covenant. Moreover, one of the main issues of the passage is the abrogation and renewal of the covenant. Putting all of this together, I would suggest that in light of Paul's allusion to Exodus 32:32, αἱ διαθῆκαι of 9:4 especially refers not so much to distinct covenants, but to the Abrahamic covenant and its various renewals and stages, encompassing both the Sinaitic/Mosaic covenant with its renewals and the New Covenant promised in the

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[292] Moo, 563; Morris, 348; but both of these exclude the New Covenant, whereas Ellison, *Mystery*, 36f., includes it too, as does Bruce, 185; Schmithals, 331, and Dunn, 527, 534, who eventually (and confusingly) concludes that Paul means only the old and new covenants. Epp, "Jewish-Gentile Continuity," 83, squarely refers the designation to the old and new covenants, and Dreyfus, "Le passé et le présent d'Israël," 136f., adds the Abrahamic to these two. A. F. Johnson, 171, identifies five covenants, but does not include the Noahic: "Abrahamic (Gen. 15), Mosaic (Exod. 20), Palestinian (Deut. 29), Davidic (2 Sam. 7), and new (Jer. 31)."

[293] Piper, *Justification*, 35. But he takes this observation in the wrong direction, contending that covenants and promises are basically synonymous in 9:4 as do Lietzmann, 89 (cited by Piper), and Schreiner, 484. This approach shortchanges the complexity of the covenant concept and its centrality in the OT and Judaism. It is better to acknowledge, as Schreiner does (without drawing the proper inference), that the covenants contained promises, and therefore that the two concepts are complimentary rather than synonymous. The ambiguous genitival construction of Eph 2:12 can hardly settle the question; it is in fact unlikely to be epexegetical. Nevertheless, we agree with the practical result of Piper's view of αἱ διαθῆκαι, namely, that it includes the New Covenant mentioned in Rom 11:26f.

[294] Cf. Cottrell, 54.

prophets. For the Sinaitic covenant is surely seen in Moses' intercession on behalf of Israel as an extension of the Abrahamic covenant even as the New Covenant is surely seen by Paul as a fulfillment of the same. But given the undeniable focus on the Mosaic covenant in Exodus 32-34, perhaps it would be more precise to say that αἱ διαθῆκαι in 9:4 especially refers to the Sinaitic/Mosaic covenant with its renewals, understood as an extension of the Abrahamic covenant and looking forward towards the New. Furthermore, mention of "the covenants" echoes the motif of covenant renewal found in Exodus 32-34 along with the type of Israel's rejection and restoration discussed in detail above.

Paul's use of the word διαθήκη elsewhere is instructive for appreciating what lies behind his ascription of the covenants as the special prerogative of Israel in the context of a lament (Rom 11:27; 1 Cor 11:25; 2 Cor 3:6, 14; Gal 3:15, 17; 4:24; Eph 2:12). First, we observe that Paul regularly refers to the New Covenant. Second, we find a contrast between the Old and New covenants, the former bringing death, i.e., the curse of the covenant (= anathema), to Israel, while the latter brings life to all included in it by faith, including Jews who turn to the Lord (2 Cor 3:7-18, where again, Ex 32-34 is in view). Third, we find that Paul viewed the Abrahamic covenant as primary and the Mosaic covenant as a subordinate addition to it (Gal 3:15-17). Fourth, he saw Christ as the true Israel/seed of Abraham to whom the covenant promises were made. Therefore, all who are in him are the true Israel and inherit Israel's promises (Gal 3:15-17). But those not in him have a veil over their heart, and are subject to death (2 Cor 3:7-18).

Fifth, the talk of the covenant in Gal 3 is directly related to the adoption as sons. Belonging to Christ, which both Romans 8 and Galatians 3 link to possession of the Spirit makes one Abraham's seed and an heir of the promises. This all in turn is related to significant terminology used shortly hereafter in Romans 9 (see ch. 4 below). Sixth, Gal 3 clearly views the Old Covenant, marked by the Law, as preparatory for its fulfillment in Christ, a concept that, seventh, appears again in Paul's famous allegory of two covenants in Gal 4:21-31, again using material connected to his ensuing argument in Romans 9 (see again ch. 4 below). It is important to note that he does not disparage the Old Covenant in and of itself, but in comparison to the New. The Old had its purpose, to be fulfilled in Christ. But clinging

to the Old in the time of eschatological fulfillment is slavery; those who do are to be cast out of the covenant and denied participation in the fulfillment of its promises in accordance with Gen 21:10, 12, part of the latter verse being omitted in the quotation of Gal 4:30 but quoted in Romans 9:7. It is also worth noting that Gal 4:27 is one of two other uses of the plural, διαθῆκαι, by Paul outside of Romans 9:4.

That leads us to the only other use of the plural by Paul, if Ephesians be accepted as authentically Pauline—Eph 2:12. The context is once again significant, addressing Jew/Gentile relations. The author draws attention to the names by which Jews and Gentiles were called, at least by some—the Circumcision (τῆς . . . περιτομῆς) and the Uncircumcision (οἱ . . . ἀκροβυστία) respectively (2:11; cf. Phil 3:3). Before they were in Christ, the now Gentile Christians were "apart from Christ [χωρὶς Χριστοῦ; cf. Rom 9:3's ἀνάθεμα . . . ἀπὸ τοῦ Χριστου], separated from the commonwealth of Israel and foreigners to the covenants of promise [τῶν διαθηκῶν τῆς ἐπαγγελίας], having no hope and without God in the world" (2:12). But now, in Christ, Gentile believers are made to share in Israel and her covenants of promise, which are only available to Jews who are in Christ as well, for it is in Christ that God makes Jews and Gentiles one, effects reconciliation with himself, grants access to himself through the Spirit (!), etc. (2:12-21). And it is in Christ and the Spirit that the Church of Jews and Gentiles is the temple of God, a thought that is not unrelated to Romans 9:4, as Paul will very soon mention Israel's privilege of the Temple service. It is almost as if Eph 2 is a commentary on the privileges of Romans 9:4-5. If it is accepted as Pauline, then the ramifications for interpretation of Romans 9:4-5 are immense. If not, it would still be significant as a first century Christian interpretation of Paul written most likely by one of his disciples in his name.[295]

We should add that it is important to remember just what the covenant meant to Israel and her Scriptures. It was not simply some formal arrangement or

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[295] For a comparison of Rom 9:4f. and Eph 2:12, see Rese, "Die Vorzüge Israels" (cf. more generally, M. Barth, "The Testimony of Romans 9-11," 45-48). Rese's conclusion that the two texts contain different concepts of Israel is formally correct, but ultimately misleading. It is well recognized that Paul operates with several definitions of "Israel" in Rom 9-11 (see e.g., Luz, *Geschichtsverständnis*, 269f.); and in 9:4f. he is certainly speaking of ethnic Israel as a whole, but he quickly qualifies this with the concept of eschatological Israel as the true Israel. Moreover, as we have argued, ethnic Israel's empty possession of the name and blessings of the elect people is part of the tragedy Paul laments in Rom 9:1-5. Thus, we might say that the concept of eschatological Israel is present implicitly already in 9:4f.

commandment, but it was actually her relationship with the Lord. In it was contained everything pertaining to him in relation to them; as Exodus 32-34 testifies it was inextricably intertwined with the election, and the glory, and every possible expectation of good associated with knowing the Lord God (cf. Eph 2:12). Thus, yet again, Paul includes a privilege of Israel that essentially sums up all of the others. The fact that the Jewish people stand cursed outside of the covenant and its fulfillment when it most naturally belongs to them is grievous beyond words.

The next privilege Paul lists, ἡ νομοθεσία, arises directly out of αἱ διαθῆκαι, for it is the giving of the covenant Law that he refers to. There is debate over whether νομοθεσία here denotes the actual giving of the Law,[296] or its result, the Law itself,[297] either of which meanings it can bear. It is true that either meaning implies the other.[298] Therefore, whichever meaning we adopt we must remember that the other is also present. Reference to the act of law-giving is supported by the rarity of the word, appearing in OT canonical literature only in LXX 2 Maccabees 6:23 (cf. 4 Macc 5:35; 17:16), together with the fact that this is the word's most literal meaning.[299] On the other hand, its occurrence in both 2 and 4 Maccabees to refer to the Law argues to the contrary, as does the supreme importance of the Law in the OT and Judaism.[300] Moreover, the use of such an unusual word can be accounted for by the unusual structure of the catalog in which it appears, necessitating a rhyming parallel to the similarly unusual υἱοθεσία.[301] Nevertheless, it is not true that it is impossible "to argue

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[296] So Ziesler, 237; Moo, 563f.; Käsemann, 259; O'Neill, 152; Munck, *Christ and Israel*, 31f. (esp. n. 15); Origen (cited in Bray, 246); Epp, "Jewish-Gentile Continuity," 85-90 (esp. 88); Kuss; Lübking, *Paulus und Israel*, 54; Reichert, *Der Römerbrief als Gratwanderung*, 183 n. 180; Dreyfus, "Le passé et le présent d'Israël," 137; Gábris, "Das Gewissen," 29; Rese, "Die Vorzüge Israels," 216; Luz, *Geschichtsverständnis*, 272. Most translate in harmony with this view.

[297] Cranfield, 462f.; Piper, 36 (who notes that most commentators opt for the alternative meaning); Fitzmyer, 546; Giblin, *In Hope*, 268; Wilckens, 188 n. 828; Cottrell, 54; Murray, 2.6; Hodge, 299; W. Gutbrod, *TDNT*, 4.1089; G. Schneider, *EDNT*, 2.471.

[298] See Piper, ibid; Dunn, 527. So some simply affirm that it refers to both: Godet, 136; Dunn, 527; Morison, 40; Morris, 349.

[299] Cf. BDAG; Moo, 564. Moo also argues based on Paul's previous critique of the Law in Rom 3:19-20; 4:15; 7:7-25. But this is weak, since Paul is not critical of the Law itself, which he regarded as holy, righteous, and good (7:13), but of its inability to give life apart from the Spirit.

[300] See Piper, *Justification*, 36; Dunn, 527.

[301] See Piper, ibid; Dunn, 527; Moo, 564 n. 48.

persuasively that Paul intended to stress the *event* at Sinai rather than the possession and content of the law" as Piper contends.[302]

For the context of Exodus 32-34 stresses exactly this. Israel's apostasy occurred at the very time the Lord was completing the giving of the Law to Moses. The text goes out of its way to stress the divine origin of the Law on the tablets given to Moses (32:15-16; cf. 31:18). And it portrays the nullification of the covenant by Moses' breaking of the tablets. Then, the giving of the Law is stressed again as part of the renewal of the covenant both in the Lord's oral communication to Moses (34:10-28) and on the new tablets of the Law (34:1, 4, 27-29).

Once again, the original context of Paul's allusion is highly relevant to the privilege at hand, and points the way to its proper interpretation. It suggests that Paul did indeed intend νομοθεσία as a reference to the giving of the Law. The metalepsis evokes the context of Law-giving found in Exodus 32-34 with its significance of establishment of the covenant and bestowal of the divine favor and election. It goes hand in hand with the concepts of adoption, glory, and covenant embedded in the narrative, and like the other privileges Paul has mentioned to this point, essentially sums up the whole list. Moreover, it recalls the fact that the breaking of the covenant Law brought about both the annulment of the covenant and the covenant curse. Yet it also recalls that this glorious privilege was granted anew in the renewal of the covenant, dependent on God's faithfulness and mercy through the Covenant Mediator. Through this one word, latent with intertextual significance, Paul manages to effectively encapsulate the story of Israel's rejection and restoration.

There can be no question of whether ἡ νομοθεσία is primarily oriented toward the past. It obviously is. But just as with the previous blessings Paul has enumerated, it also has an eschatological significance. Indeed, just as the giving of the Law recorded in Exodus 32-34 was tied up with Israel's adoption, the divine glory, and the covenant, so is the "giving of the Law" to their respective eschatological fulfillments as it is fulfilled in Christ. For in the previous chapters of Romans (especially ch. 8), in which Paul has attributed Israel's privileges to Christ, and through him to the Church,

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[302] Ibid; emphasis his. Nevertheless, I agree with Piper's fundamental concern to argue that Paul considered both the Law itself and its bestowal to be "a great privilege for Israel, full of grace and a window of hope toward the future" (37).

he has not neglected the Law. But now, in its eschatological fulfillment, it is the Law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus (Rom 8:2). Thus, we might say that, for Paul, the eschatological giving of the Law is not so much a completely new Law, though some aspects of it have been rendered obsolete, but the giving of the Law in the heart in fulfillment of the OT promise of the New Covenant (cf. Jer 31:31ff.; Ezek 36:27; 2 Cor 3:3-6). This is equivalent to the giving of the Spirit, who enables believers to obey the Law from the heart, fulfilling its requirement (Rom 8:4; 6:17-8; 2 Cor 3).

Thus, with the eschatological adoption, gift of the Spirit/divine glory, and New Covenant comes a new possession of the Law in freedom and power to which the original giving of the Law always pointed. Just as the event at Sinai, the New Covenant νομοθεσία signifies the divine favor and election. How tragic that the original recipients now do not truly possess their own Law—they are in slavery and condemned to death (Rom 8:1-17; Gal 3-4)—and have missed its fulfillment!

ἡ λατρεία follows nicely upon νομοθεσία, since the latter contained the former. Virtually all interpreters agree that ἡ λατρεία refers primarily to the cultic service that reached its apex in the worship of the Lord in the Temple, though some extend the meaning of the term beyond this to include non-sacrificial worship of God such as Scripture reading, prayer, and the religious observance of the home and synagogue.[303] Not surprisingly, Paul's allusion to Exodus 32:32 can shed light on this privilege as well. For Exodus 32-34 is closely related to Israel's cultic worship.

First, it interrupts the flow of Exodus' narrative, bringing an abrupt halt to its natural progression, which was to proceed to the construction of the Tabernacle followed by conquest of the Promised Land. Israel's sin brought an end to this blessing along with all the rest of their prerogatives inherent in their adoption and covenant with the Lord. It was the Lord's glory that was to fill the Tabernacle. The withdrawal of his presence from Israel denied them the worship. Thus, this prerogative is part and parcel of the other ones that we have examined. It was part of the covenant administration to maintain Israel's relationship with the Lord.[304] Its

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[303] So Cranfield, 463; Morris, 349; Dreyfus, "Le passé et le présent d'Israël," 137f.; cf. Schmithals, 332. Opposed by Moo, 564; Schreiner, 484. Epp, "Jewish-Gentile Continuity," 83, somewhat uniquely appears to take this broader meaning as primary. On LXX usage, see Piper, *Justification*, 37.

[304] See Piper's helpful sketch of the supreme importance of this benefit (ibid, 38).

possession implies the other items in this catalog, as has each term we have examined. Just as the sin of Exodus 32-34 elicits the negation of the promised Tabernacle, so does the resolution of the problem result in the construction of the Tabernacle (Ex 35-40). Hence, against the backdrop of Paul's allusion to this context, ἡ λατρεία invokes the same type of Israel's fall-rejection-restoration, this time in the guise of the cultic service that was denied to Israel along with its adoption, divine glory, covenant, and Law, and restored with the same through the mediation of God's glory—the key to all the rest—via the Covenant Mediator. The focus on the Tabernacle in the Exodus context suggests that Paul's reference certainly included this mode of Israel's worship in addition to its fulfillment in the more permanent Temple located in Jerusalem.

Second, the cultic worship was stressed in the covenant stipulations repeated in the second *giving of the Law* (Ex 34:10-28; cf. the previous privilege!). It was precisely in this area of sacrificial worship that Israel fell, giving their hearts to an idol rather than the living God. Therefore, while the entire Law God had given is presupposed, Exodus 34 emphasizes this very aspect represented by λατρεία. Now, Israel has again fallen into idolatry, this time by clinging to cultic sacrifices that cannot avail before God and rejecting the once for all sacrifice that he has provided in his own son for forgiveness and life. This points all the more strongly towards the eschatological fulfillment of this privilege in what Paul would have considered to be the ultimate covenant renewal, the New Covenant, in which believers in Christ are the true Circumcision and worship in the Spirit of God (Phil 3:3; cf. Eph 2:11-21 discussed above), and indeed, are themselves the Temple of God/the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 3:16-17; 6:19; 2 Cor 6:16; Eph 2:21f.), all based upon the ultimate sacrifice of Christ.

Similar to what we have seen in each of the privileges Paul has enumerated, he refers to the one privilege of service understood most directly in its past OT expression, most keenly revealed in Exodus 32-34 and its broader context, but understood as pointing toward its eschatological fulfillment, so that at base he refers to the one prerogative filled with past, present, and future import. In fact, Paul uses the word and its cognate verb (λατρεύω) elsewhere only in a spiritual sense, except for the latter's use in Romans 1:25, where, interestingly enough, it describes idolatrous

cultic worship in the context of allusion to the golden bull-calf episode.[305] His only other use of λατρεία appears in Romans 12:1, where he uses it to call the Roman Christians to worship that is a total life response to what God has done in Christ (i.e., his mercies as described in Rom 1-11) amounting to a living sacrifice. This is equivalent to the Christian life of sanctification that Paul described in Romans 6, which leads to eternal life. It is this sacrificial worship that is man's duty and great privilege in Christ, but that Paul's kinsmen fail to participate in because of their unbelief.

αἱ ἐπαγγελίαι[306] is the last privilege belonging to the first relative clause describing Ἰσραηλῖται. Three basic referents have been suggested with a good deal of overlap between them: (1) the promises to Abraham/the fathers (most usually to Abraham, and then repeated to Isaac and to Jacob);[307] (2) the messianic promises;[308] (3) the many promises of God to his people.[309] The Abrahamic promises are favored by Paul's emphasis on them in Romans 4 (albeit in the singular; see esp. vv. 13, 14, 16, 20), a chapter particularly related to Romans 9 (see our next ch.), his reference to

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[305] λατρεία occurs in Rom 9:4; 12:1; λατρεύω occurs in Rom 1:9, 25; Phil 3:3; 2 Tim 1:3 (the Pauline authorship of which is, of course, widely disputed). Even in Rom 1:25, a broader reference for λατρεύω is not excluded in light of a possible parallel to 1:21 (cf. Dunn, 63) and its previous occurrence in 1:9. H. Strathmann, *TDNT*, 4.62-65, notes that the NT writings tend to spiritualize this verb. H. Balz's (*EDNT*, 2.344) comment concerning its use generally is especially interesting in light of our argument relating to its idolatrous intertextual connotations in this context: "Λατρεύω always alludes to worship, often where the place of God is occupied by other entities, thus where true worship is perverted and misguided."

[306] The singular, ἐπαγγελία, is read by P^{46}, D, F, G, a, bo^{mss}, but this has less external support than the parallel singular variant for διαθῆκαι earlier in 9:4 that we rejected (see note 286 above). The singular here probably resulted from the earlier change to the singular in many cases (cf. Dunn, 521f.), and it is easy to see how homoioteleuton could easily occur in others.

[307] Dunn, 528; Ziesler, 238; Cranfield, 464; Moo, 564; Stulmacher, 146; Munck, *Christ and Israel*, 32 n. 16; Bruce, 185; Dreyfus, "Le passé et le présent d'Israël," 138; Epp, "Jewish-Gentile Continuity," 83f.; Kuss. Fitzmyer, 547, adds the promises to Moses and David (cf. Edwards, 231), while O'Neill, 152, speaks of the patriarchs and the prophets. The overlap between suggestions results in the inclusion of some scholars under more than one heading.

[308] Barrett, 178; Cranfield, 464; Morris, 349; Murray, 2.6; Sanday and Headlam, 231; Hodge, 299; Schelkle 151; Käsemann, 259; Best, 107; Morison, 41; Bruce, 185; J. Schwiewind and G. Friedrich, *TDNT*, 2.583f.

[309] Piper, *Justification*, 39; Morris, 349; Cranfield, 464; Schreiner, 484f. (who rightly identifies them as the covenantal promises, but wrongly, virtually equates the two concepts); Giblin, *In Hope*, 268; Newman and Nida, 179; A. F. Johnson, 171; Cottrell, 55; Ellison, *Mystery*, 37f. (seemingly); Godet, 136; Best, 107; de Villiers, "The Salvation of Israel," 201.

the fathers in the words that immediately follow (9:5), his discussion of Abraham and the divine promise to him in the following verses (9:7-9), his articulation of Christ's work as confirmation of God's promises to the fathers (15:8) in what is often taken as a summary of his concern in Romans (15:7-13), and his focus on the promises to Abraham in Galatians 3-4, also significantly related to the subject matter of Romans 9. The messianic promises are supported by the reference to the Messiah in 9:5 as well as their singular importance in early Christianity. As with its plural counterpart in the first triad of privileges (αἱ διαθῆκαι), we would argue that αἱ ἐπαγγελίαι should be given as broad a meaning as possible within the limits of its present context. That would mean option three mentioned above, that αἱ ἐπαγγελίαι refers to all of God's promises to Israel. But just as with the previous plural, there is no reason to deny a special focus within the general reference.[310]

Therefore, in light of the evidence reviewed above, it seems most likely that Paul speaks especially of the promises to the fathers. And we can add a further piece of supporting evidence from the OT background suggested by Paul's allusion to Exodus 32:32: Moses specifically appeals to the promise to the fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Israel/Jacob in his first intercession on behalf of Israel in Exodus 32:13. It is again significant that the OT context understands all of the blessings bestowed upon Israel in its covenant with the Lord established at Sinai—of which Paul's list is a fair summary—to be a fulfillment of God's promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. For it suggests that this may also be Paul's view, and that he therefore understood God's work in Christ as a fulfillment of both the fundamental promises to Abraham and their development in the Mosaic covenant, as confirmed by all we have seen in relation to this list of Israel's privileges. But to say this automatically brings the messianic character of the promises into view, since Paul finds their fulfillment only through the Messiah. Nevertheless, it is the Abrahamic genesis of the promises that stands out most conspicuously against the general context of Romans, the specific context of Romans 9, and Paul's allusion to Exodus 32. The point at issue is the fact that the promises that believers in Christ have become heirs of are the very promises that were first given to Abraham, and then through him to Israel.

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[310] Cf. e.g., the way Cranfield, 464, assigns primary reference to the Abrahamic promise, followed by many other OT promises, among which eschatological and messianic promises were most prominent.

The mention of αἱ ἐπαγγελίαι is an excellent example of the eschatological tension that has characterized the entire list of Israel's privileges. The promises were given incipiently to Abraham and found increasing fulfillment over the course of salvation history. Now, in the time of inaugurated eschatological fulfillment, the very people whose heritage contains these promises do not participate in their fulfillment while many who had no such heritage do. This is because, as Paul has made clear in Romans 4 and elsewhere (esp. Gal 3-4), faith has always been the means of inheriting the Abrahamic promises, and now, it is faith in Christ; indeed, he is the seed to whom the promises were ultimately made along with all who are covenantally united to him by faith.[311] As much as any member of the sixfold list expounding the privileges of Ἰσραηλῖται, αἱ ἐπαγγελίαι sums up the entire catalog. Piper rightly comments "that for Paul the promises of God flow together into a summation of all the good that God can possibly offer his people."[312] The accursed state of Israel that has resulted from their rejection of Christ is what incites Paul's grief, calls God's word into question, and elicits the argument of Romans 9-11 in defense of God's faithfulness.

The fact that among the many promises of God to Israel, those to the fathers are first and foremost in view leads directly into the second relative clause explicating the meaning of Ἰσραηλῖται: "of whom are the fathers" (9:5a). Interpreters have offered various suggestions for the identity of the fathers Paul invokes. Piper and Schreiner claim that most interpreters take οἱ πατέρες to mean Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.[313] But quite a few add other designations to these three patriarchs such as the twelve sons of Jacob,[314] the wilderness generation,[315] David,[316] or generally "the

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[311] See Gal 3-4, and especially 3:15-29. For an excellent treatment of Gal 3:10-20 that is particularly germane to the present study, see Wright, *Climax*, 137-74 (= chs. 7 and 8). A. Sand, *EDNT*, 2.15, recognizes the paradoxical possession of the promises by Israel (i.e., they possess them but do not possess them) and equates it with the mystery of Israel.

[312] Piper, *Justification*, 39.

[313] Piper, 40 n. 46; Schreiner, 486. For representatives of those who so limit the designation (at least for all intents and purposes), see in addition to Piper and Schreiner, Ziesler, 238; Cottrell, 56; Munck, *Christ and Israel*, 32 n. 17; Cerfaux, "Le Privilège," 25; Hodge, 299; Pelagius, 115; Schmithals, 332; Dreyfus, "Le passé et le présent d'Israël," 138; Rese, "Die Vorzüge Israels,"217.

[314] Bruce, 185; Cranfield, 464; Best, 107.

[315] Dunn, 528; Moo, 564 n. 53 ("perhaps").

fathers of distinction in redemptive history from Abraham onwards."[317] Such broadening additions miss Paul's specific concern for the fulfillment of the Abrahamic promises as expressed in Romans 4, and more importantly, 9:6-13, where he specifically names Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.[318] Moreover, we may now add that Paul's allusion to Exodus 32 also suggests that the fathers he has in mind are Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, for as we have seen, these are precisely the fathers Moses mentions in his intercession for Israel, to whom YHWH owes covenant faithfulness. Furthermore, this is not just a superficial parallel, but a theme directly linked to a major concern of both passages—the faithfulness of God to his word.

Most interpreters rightly reject any reference to a concept of the "merits of the fathers" here and/or in 11:28.[319] Rather, Paul speaks of οἱ πατέρες as one of Israel's great benefits in the fashion of Exodus 32, which pleads for the Lord's mercy and forgiveness to Israel based on the Lord's covenant promise to the fathers. The parallel strengthens the already obvious connection to αἱ διαθῆκαι and αἱ ἐπαγγελίαι. Israel's election and privileges derive from God's covenants with and promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Thus, οἱ πατέρες also encompasses the whole of Israel's prerogatives like the others we have analyzed. The problem Paul wrestles with is that by and large the patriarchs' physical descendants are not experiencing the realization of the covenant promises made to the fathers in the time of their eschatological fulfillment. The answer he will present is that the true descendants of the patriarchs are only those who believe in Christ, whether Jew or Gentile, and that God grants priority to the Jew and works specially for her salvation in merciful faithfulness to his covenant promises to the fathers. Indeed, the patriarchs have eschatological

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[316] Murray, 2.6; Edwards, 231; Stulmacher, 145f., who appears to include Noah, Moses, and the prophets as well.

[317] Murray, 2.6; so also essentially, Cranfield, 464; Dunn, 528; Morris, 349; Best, 107; de Villiers, "The Salvation of Israel," 201; Bartsch, "Röm. 9, 5," 405.

[318] Cf. Piper, *Justification*, 40, and our treatment of αἱ διαθῆκαι and αἱ ἐπαγγελίαι above. Murray's (2.6) argument that the next clause *requires* the inclusion of David is groundless, even if one accepts the untenable proposition (in view of the structure of the passage and the καί; cf. Piper, idem, 21, 40; Schreiner, 486 n. 15) that the final ὧν clause modifies οἱ πατέρες rather than Ἰσραηλῖται, since Paul could very well intend to identify Christ as the seed of Abraham and descendant of the three original patriarchs. His similar appeal to 1:3 is also less than convincing for the same reason in addition to those given to support our position here.

[319] For explicit denial of the concept's presence in Rom 9:4, see Piper, ibid, 41; Schreiner, 486.

significance in the New Covenant. They are the fathers of all who believe in Christ, in whom the Abrahamic promises have come to fulfillment.

The mention of fulfillment in Christ brings us to the final privilege Paul lists: "and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen" (9:5b). This is now the third and final relative clause explaining the significance of 9:4's Ἰσραηλῖται. But Paul changes his wording slightly from the simple ὧν of the last two clauses to ἐξ ὧν, signaling both a shift in perspective and that he has come to the climactic and greatest privilege of Israel. To say that the Messiah comes *from* Israelites is to state his ethnic identity as an Israelite,[320] and to therefore state the supreme honor of the Jewish people, and their supreme advantage of having the Savior of the world come to them first, and act first and foremost for their sake (Ἰουδαίῳ τε πρῶτον!). But in contrast to saying that he is *of* Israel or *belongs to* Israel, it is also to draw attention to the fact that ethnic Israel does not now truly "possess" their own Messiah; they have rejected him in unbelief.[321] This is especially confirmed by the limiting phrase τὸ κατὰ σάρκα, which conveys that the Messiah comes from Israel only with respect to the flesh/physical ancestry.[322]

It is not as if Paul could not have used the same grammatical construction of Israel's relationship to the Messiah as he did of the other privileges he has listed.[323] As we have argued concerning Paul's rhetoric, ethnic Israel both possesses and does not possess each of the prerogatives Paul names, in different senses respectively. But now, at the climax of this glorious catalog, Paul chooses to give expression to ethnic Israel's superficial possession of these blessings. Why would he do so?

First, it is an exquisite rhetorical move. Paul has allowed the accursed state of Israel to recede ever so slightly and briefly to the background of his rhetoric as he has

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[320] See Piper, ibid, 42. This is especially so in light of τὸ κατὰ σάρκα (see below). This use of the ἐκ-construction here suggests a similar meaning for the construction in 9:6b (οἱ ἐξ Ἰσραήλ), confirming that what is at issue in Rom 9-11 is ethnic false possession vs. faith-based true possession of the election and blessings of God.

[321] Cf. Moo, 565; Schreiner, 486.

[322] BDF § 266.2, states that the article here "strongly emphasizes the limitation ('insofar as the physical is concerned')"; cf. BDAG, ὁ, ἡ, τό, s. v. 2f. Piper, *Justification*, 43, astutely adds that the neuter article makes κατὰ σάρκα adverbial rather than adjectival in relation to the masculine Χριστός.

[323] Rightly, Piper, *Justification*, 42f.

listed the people's great prerogatives.[324] But at the very point that Paul arrives at the climactically pivotal privilege, he rips the bulk of its benefit away, and with it, that of all the rest of Israel's benefits. And it all goes to support Paul's grief at his kinsmen's accursed state as expressed in his contemplated prayer of self-malediction (9:3). That is, after all, the purpose of this exalted catalog—to communicate the privileged position of Israel as powerfully as possible in order to lament the grievous fact of their exclusion from it and to raise the challenge to God's word that this poses.

Secondly, it is precisely because Christ is the climactic privilege of Israel that Paul would choose to indicate his people's separation from him. For more than any other privilege, Christ sums up all the rest; indeed he encompasses them uniquely. One's relationship to Christ determines one's possession of the rest of the privileges. Thus, through this one turn of phrase Paul is able to sum up the problem of Israel, which he must now address.

But Paul's rhetorical strategy has not yet finished its climb to the heights of Israel's privilege. For in the final clause he reveals the supreme dignity of Israel's Messiah in contrast to his strictly earthly origin (τὸ κατὰ σάρκα)—he is Lord over all, God blessed forever! 9:5b (ὁ ὢν ἐπὶ πάντων θεὸς εὐλογητὸς εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας, ἀμήν) has probably been discussed more than any other verse in the NT.[325] To state the matter as simply as possible, the fundamental issue is whether the clause in whole or in part refers to ὁ Χριστός or to God the Father, and most importantly, whether Paul applies θεός to Christ.[326] The issues are detailed and complex, and have been clearly

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[324] Ibid, 43, goes way too far in positing a definitive shift in perspective between 9:3 and 9:4-5 from negative to positive. Both are in view throughout 9:1-5, though one might gain greater prominence at this or that point. It is far-fetched to draw a sharp distinction between Paul's unbelieving kinsmen and the Ἰσραηλῖται he speaks of, since Paul unquestionably equates them (τῶν ἀδελφῶν μου τῶν συγγενῶν μου κατὰ σάρκα, οἵτινές εἰσιν Ἰσραηλῖται)! Moreover, as Piper acknowledges, 9:4-5 ground 9:3. Ironically, the κατὰ σάρκα of 9:5 has a more "negative" nuance than the one in 9:3, not vice versa as Piper would have it.

[325] Already in 1895 Sanday and Headlam, 233, could say, "The interpretation of Rom. ix. 5 has probably been discussed at greater length than that of any other verse of the N. T." And not long after, F. C. Burkitt described the situation even more extremely: " 'the punctuation [of Rom. 9:5] has probably been more discussed than that of any other sentence in literature' " (cited by Bruce M. Metzger, "The Punctuation of Rom. 9:5," 95). The discussion has continued unabated over the last century. Cf. Lodge, *Romans 9-11*, 47.

[326] Metzger, ibid, 95f., relates that there are at least eight possible punctuations, listing them with supporters; cf. Moo, 565. Additionally, a few have supported the textual emendation ὧν ὁ (in place of ὁ ὢν, so Barth, 330f. n. 4, 339, but later rejected in his *Church Dogmatics*, 2.2, according to Cranfield,

delineated in the voluminous literature.[327] Consequently, we need not cover the same ground here. Suffice it to say that we find the traditional interpretation most convincing, as represented by our translation above.[328] Before moving on to our primary concern of the significance of Paul's allusion to Exodus 32 for this controversial question, we will content ourselves with two observations that have perhaps not received as much attention as they deserve, one of a hermeneutical nature, and the other, broadly exegetical.

First, I would like to point out that the more objective data, such as Greek

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466; Ziesler, 239; Haacker, 179, 187; Bartsch, "Röm. 9, 5"; W. L. Lorimer, "Romans ix. 3-5," who further inserts ὁ ὢν after θεός;) first mentioned but rejected by the seventeenth century Socinian Jonasz Schlichting (on whom see esp. Cranfield, 465). But with no manuscript evidence it is certainly to be rejected as pure conjecture. Against the suggestion, see esp. Metzger, idem, 99f.

[327] For full discussions, see Metzger, "Punctuation"; Cranfield, 464-70; Sanday and Headlam, 233-38; Godet, 136-43; Morison, 43-51; Kuss, 677ff.; idem, "Zu Römer 9,5" (against whom, see Cranfield, 466f. n. 7).

[328] Of the two main options that take 9:5b as a relative clause modifying Χριστός, I have taken the one that separates θεός from ἐπὶ πάντων, primarily because of the participle following the article ὁ, which is by no means a conclusive consideration in and of itself, but in the absence of any other objective factors, tips the scales in the direction I have taken. I do not find the argument in favor of my rendering that the alternative could be open to misunderstanding Christ as superior to the Father (so e.g., Cranfield, 469; Schreiner, 489) very compelling, for possible misunderstanding would hardly be much of a consideration in the use of an ambiguous construction, and it is highly unlikely that anyone would so misconstrue the expression; as Paul says elsewhere, the point is evident (1 Cor 15:27). Those who favor a reference to Christ include: Schlatter, 202f.; de Villiers, "The Salvation of Israel," 202; Morris, 349f.; Schreiner, 486-89; Bartlett, 86 (cautiously); Cottrell, 55-59; Peterson, "Die Kirche," 146; A. F. Johnson, 171f.; Dreyfus, "Le passé et le présent d'Israël," 133; Murray, 2.6f., 2.245-48; Piper, *Justification*, 43f.; Wright, *Climax*, 237; Das, *Paul*, 97f.; Cerfaux, "Le Privilège," 26; Morison, 43-51; Godet, 136-43; Edwards, 234f.; Bruce, 186f.; Sanday and Headlam, 233-38; Oscar Cullman, *The Christology of the New Testament*, 312f.; Metzger, "Punctuation"; Nygren, 358f.; Gore, 22-24; Ellison, *Mystery*, 38-40; Pelagius, 115f.; Schelkle, 189 n. 2; Ralph Earle, *Word Meanings in the New Testament*, 180-85; Schlier; Ben Witherington III, "Christology," 105f.; Munck, *Christ and Israel*, 32f.; Best, 107 (seemingly); Hodge, 300-02; Calvin, 196; Fitzmyer, 548f.; Moo, 565-58; Leenhardt, 245-47 (ET); Cranfield, 464-70; Gábris, "Das Gewissen," 30f.; the vast majority of patristic authors (see e.g., Metzger, idem, 102f.). Those who favor a reference to God the Father include: Osten-Sacken, *Dialogue*, 20; Ziesler, 239; Haacker, 179, 185-87; Stulmacher, 146; Byrne, 284, 288; Kuss, 677ff.; idem, "Zu Römer 9,5"; L. T. Johnson, 147; Siegert, *Argumentation*, 122 (seemingly); Giblin, *In Hope*, 267f.; Rese, "Die Vorzüge Israels," 217; W. L. Lorimer, "Romans ix. 3-5" (favors conjectural emendation; regards the traditional view "well-nigh impossible," p. 385); Barrett, 177ff. (he is technically undecided, but gives a slight nod to an independent doxology through his translation); Lübking, *Paulus und Israel*, 56f.; Epp, "Jewish-Gentile Continuity," 81 (seemingly); Käsemann, 259f.; Dunn, 528f.; Berger, "Abraham," 79; Reichert, *Der Römerbrief als Gratwanderung*, 184-87; John A. T. Robinson, *Wrestling with Romans*, 110-12 (very cautiously); Dieter Sänger, *Die Verkündigung des Gekreuzigten und Israel: Studien zum Verhältnis von Kirche und Israel bei Paulus und im frühen Christentum*, 155f. n. 494; Dodd, 151-53; Schmithals, 327, 332f; Schmitt, *Gottesgerechtigkeit*, 73; W. Vischer, "Le Mystère d'Israël," 441-43; Wilckens, 186, 189; Bartsch, "Röm. 9, 5" (arguing for conjectural emendation); Neil Richardson, *Paul's Language about God*, 30f.; Mohrmann, "Semantic Collisions," 188 n. 709.

grammar/style, Pauline doxological style, standard doxological form,[329] etc., favor a reference to Christ. The main argument against the Christological interpretation is that Paul does not incontestably call Christ θεός anywhere else. But almost everyone acknowledges that Paul viewed Christ as divine, and that he all but calls him God elsewhere.[330] So many scholars find it quite conceivable that he would also apply the title to him even if this was not his custom. The hermeneutical point I wish to add to this is that it is methodologically suspect to insist that Paul could not have spoken in this manner when it is at least plausible that he did so, evidenced by the many interpreters who so understand him, and it is the most natural way to take his grammar. In such a theologically charged arena, it is best to let more objective criteria determine exegesis rather than a priori convictions of what we think Paul could or could not say.[331]

Second, the Christological interpretation of Romans 9:5b accords best with the purpose of the catalog of Israel's privileges in which it is found, to support Paul's lament of Israel's accursed state as embodied in his consequent willingness to sacrifice himself for them. While it is true that such a list of Israel's blessings might naturally lead to a doxology, to say that the context favors praise to the God of Israel

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[329] The recent attempt of Reichert, *Der Römerbrief als Gratwanderung*, 184f., to neutralize the doxological evidence by furnishing a reason for the unprecedented change in word order (i.e., to differentiate the subject from another referent that could be mistakenly so identified) is unsuccessful; ancient Jewish doxologies simply did not diverge from the established form, LXX Ps 67:19f. being no exception (see Metzger, "Punctuation," 107 n. 24; Fitzmyer, 549; even if allowed for as the sole exception among the mass of ancient Jewish doxologies, it could not be for the reason Reichert suggests for Rom 9:5). Would Paul have sought to make his intention clear by such a subtle maneuver while leaving so much else pointing to a reference to Christ? For that matter, if he followed the traditional word order there would have been little doubt—ironically if we accept Reichert's argument—that he intended a doxology to God the Father. Reichert's further contention that acceptance of an appositional participial clause argues against the Christological interpretation because it makes εὐλογητός either appositional to ὁ ὢν . . . θεός or attributive to θεός rather than the direct predicate (185f.; cf. Sänger, ibid) is likewise unsuccessful. Perhaps she has shown that we do not here have a technical doxology to Christ (a point already made by Metzger, ibid, 106f. n. 23, in his defense of a reference to Christ), but if so, then she has proved too much, for then the word order indicates that we do not have a doxology at all, leaving only an assertion of the blessed, divine nature of Christ, which is fully consistent with the use of a strengthening ἀμήν and may be said to have doxological overtones. Indeed, the highly unusual characteristics of 9:5b vis-à-vis doxological practice suggests that what we have here is something unusual, loosely put, a doxology to Christ.

[330] See e.g., Rom 1:7; 8:35, 39; 10:12-14; 14:9; 1 Cor 1:24; 2:8; 2 Cor 4:4-6 (connected to Paul's extensive usage of Ex 32-34!); 8:9; Gal 4:4; Phil 2:6-11; Col 1:15-17, 19. For the case, see e.g., Cranfield, 468; Metzger, "Punctuation," 109f.; Sanday and Headlam, 237.

[331] See Metzger, ibid, 110f., for an extended development of this essentially hermeneutical point.

over against reference to the divine nature of Christ[332] ironically severs the list from its context and treats it in isolation from its purpose in that context. To say, as Käsemann does, "The main point here is that of Israel's blessings,"[333] is true only very narrowly. The point of a list of blessings is, of course, blessing. But the point of listing the blessings at all in this context is to grieve their forfeiture and to raise the challenge to God's faithfulness that must therefore be addressed. Thus, while it is conceivable that Paul launches into a doxology at the climax of his agonizing lament out of a sort of theological reflex, this does not seem very likely given the careful artistry employed throughout the whole passage, especially vv. 4-5. It seems far more likely that Paul draws attention to the incredibly exalted nature of Israel's Messiah, and thus paradoxically brings us to Israel's greatest privilege and their greatest woe—their Messiah who has come to them is none other than God himself, but they have rejected him and thereby all the aforementioned blessings, which are wrapped up in him.

This leads us to consideration of the ramifications of Paul's allusion to Exodus 32-34 for the meaning of Romans 9:5b. For as we have seen, the allusion suggests that by rejecting Christ Paul's unbelieving kinsmen have fallen into an idolatry that surpasses even that of the golden bull-calf. Hence, the intertextual idolatry motif argues for a reference to Christ as God. One could argue that because Christ fulfills the role of Moses in Paul's typology, the allusion need not argue for a reference to his deity in Romans 9:5b. But this is to miss the typical escalatory character of antitypes, Paul's view of Christ as divine by almost any reckoning (see above), and additional considerations based on Exodus 32-34 which also argue for a Christological interpretation.

The phrase ὁ ὢν ἐπὶ πάντων indicates that the referent is Lord over all things. πάντων is ambiguous, and could refer to all people, or all (impersonal) things, or all things bar none. Keeping in line again with the exalted nature and purpose of the list

[332] So Dunn, 529; Käsemann, 260; L. T. Johnson, 147. Johnson's claim that 9:6 argues against a reference to Christ is without warrant; the subject there is not God as he claims, but the word of God, which may be taken as roughly equivalent to the blessings listed in 9:4-5, which only seem to have failed because of 9:1-3, which they ground. While one might argue that the context favors a traditional doxology, it is nothing short of astonishing to claim that a doxology to Christ would be meaningless in this context as does Bartsch, "Röm. 9, 5," 403.

[333] Ibid.

before us, we take the phrase to indicate sovereignty over absolutely everything. But we again think that there is a more specific reference that comes to the fore of the multitude encompassed by πάντων—the connotation of all people, suggested by Paul's emphasis in Romans on God as the God of all people, and Christ as the Lord of all, both Jew and Gentile.[334] This then ties in to part of contemporary Israel's idolatry, which has been suggested by Paul's allusion to Exodus 32. Ethnic Israel worships a false, ethnocentric conception of God that conceives of him as "the God of Jews only" (Rom 3:29), who only justifies the circumcised, those who are of the Law rather than anyone who has faith in Christ. Thus, the special connotation of πάντων in Romans as referring to all people and the intertextual idolatry motif rooted in Exodus 32-34 are mutually supporting—the former helping to establish the validity of the latter, and the latter underscoring the presence of the former in the present context.

The chief intertextual observation relating to the meaning of Romans 9:5b is the glory motif of Exodus 32-34. Recalling our exegesis of the OT context and our discussion of ἡ δόξα above, we have seen that God's glory denotes his personal covenantal presence, indeed, his very self manifest in all its magnificence and moral beauty. It is a presence that bestows election and all its benefits. We have also seen that Paul's defense of his ministry in 2 Corinthians 3 based on Exodus 32-34 was dominated by the concept of glory, and that this glory was ultimately the very glory of God embodied in and revealed through Christ, himself the glory and image of God, and mediated through the Spirit.[335] At the same time, we saw that in Romans 8 Paul directly related his concept of glory to the Holy Spirit of God, who is also the Spirit of Christ (8:9) and the glory/presence of God. The upshot of all of this is that Paul conceives of Christ as the personal presence of God which conveys election, covenant membership, and all related blessings. That is, Paul believed Christ to be God and his allusion to Exodus 32 thus supports a Christological interpretation of Romans 9:5b. Indeed, in light of the significance of the glory of God in Exodus 32-34 as adopted by

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[334] The form appears in Rom 1:8; 4:11, 16; 8:32; 9:5; 10:12; 12:17; 12:18; 15:33.

[335] The present argument is strengthened if Kim, *Origin of Paul's Gospel*, 205-52, is correct to link Paul's conception of Christ as the εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ to the Damascus Christophany and 2 Cor 3:1-4:6 (connected as it is to Paul's use of Ex 32-34) on the one hand and to OT/Jewish descriptions of epiphanies/theophanies on the other. Cf. the theophanic connotations of John 1:17-18's use of Ex 33:20 and 34:6 in relation to the divine Christ discussed above in the previous section on interpretive traditions.

Paul, the common function of Christ and the Spirit as the glory/presence of God carries Trinitarian implications.

Summary/Conclusion

While most interpreters recognize Paul's allusion to Exodus 32:32 in Romans 9:3, the echo has never before been fully explored for its relevance to Paul's argument in Romans 9-11. Our investigation has found that Paul's use of Exodus 32-34 is of enormous weight for his argument, holding significance for a number of exegetical details as well as broader themes and rhetorical movements. The similarity in theme and subject matter between the old and new contexts is striking. Both are concerned with the apostasy and hardheartedness of Israel, the resulting divine judgment and loss of election along with all its promises, the ensuing tremendous grief, the faithfulness of God to his covenant word and his great mercy, and the restoration of Israel to election and blessing in a "new" covenant established primarily with the Covenant Mediator and mediated to the people only through connection with him and the glory of God shining through him. Indeed, it appears that Paul has gone to the scriptural paradigm of the fall and restoration of Israel, Exodus 32-34, to understand and express the present stage of salvation history and the outworking of the eschatological fulfillment of the covenant promises of God.

James M. Scott has argued persuasively that Romans 9-11 fits into the Deuteronomic view of Israel's history, which basically articulated the sin-judgment-restoration pattern running through the Scriptures of Israel, and perhaps best represented by the Song of Moses in Deut 32 and taken up in subsequent Jewish tradition.[336] But what seems to have escaped Scott and others is that the story of this Deuteronomic tradition is first the story of Exodus 32-34.[337] Indeed, it appears that

[336] Scott, "Restoration," 802-05. Scott outlines the six elements of this view earlier in his article (798f.). Cf. note 157 above, as well as note 74 and pp. 346f. in ch. 4 below; Richard H. Bell, *Provoked to Jealousy: The Origin and Purpose of the Jealousy Motif in Romans 9-11*; Hays, *Echoes*, 163f.

[337] Paul's allusion to Ex 32-34 therefore provides additional support for Scott's thesis. And the fact that Scott, ibid, 801, finds the Deuteronomic tradition in 1 Thes 2:15-16 corroborates our earlier citation of these same verses as a parallel to Paul's viewpoint in Rom 9:3. Paul's use of Ex 32-34 along with a number of other passages containing this Deuteronomic theme or important parts of it also supports the intertextual approach of the present study and the related approach of C. H. Dodd, *According to the Scriptures: The Substructure of New Testament Theology*, who argued that the NT authors were drawn

much of Paul's argument can be traced back *in part* here in seed form. Just as it has been claimed that Deuteronomy 32 contains Romans *in nuce*,[338] we may say that Exodus 32-34 contains Romans 9-11 *in nuce*. Paul has taken upon himself the mediatorial, intercessory, and prophetic aura of Moses in a typologically conditioned response that conceives of his own ministry as the vehicle through which the election-bestowing "glory of God in the face of Christ" is brought back to Israel in "the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God" (2 Cor 4:4, 6). Paul's grief is a typological fulfillment of Israel's sorrow at their loss of election resulting from their idolatrous apostasy. Even his utilization of the remnant motif later in his argument may be foreshadowed in Exodus 32's remnant motif, the first glimpse of which could be the self-sacrificial prayer contemplated in Romans 9:3. God's judgment upon Israel in Paul's day is an escalated fulfillment of his merciful judgment upon Israel of old, placing them in the same hardened position as the Gentiles under his wrath yet granting them opportunity for repentance and forgiveness vis-à-vis Christ and the New Covenant as God once again limits his sovereignty in giving Paul, Israel, and the Gentiles pivotal roles in his plan of salvation for the whole world.

None of this is to suggest that Exodus 32-34 was the determinative influence on Paul's argument in Romans 9-11 or its primary background. But it is to suggest that Exodus 32-34 supplies important background informing Paul's rhetoric, and that his allusion in Romans 9:3 functions as a pointer to this context, providing a foundational orientation in the introductory section for approaching the argument of Romans 9-11. As for more specific exegetical insights relative to Romans 9:1-5 generated by attention to Paul's use of Exodus 32:32 in Romans 9:3 that remain to be mentioned, we have suggested that the allusion supports:[339] (1) ηὐχόμην as a reference to prayer rather than a wish; (2) a hypothetical meaning for the imperfect

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to certain passages of Scripture based on traditional text-plots they found particularly important; on Dodd, see ch. 1 above, pp. 10ff.

[338] Hays, *Echoes*, 163-64.

[339] Since the intertextual matrix of Paul's allusion is thoroughly integrated into our exegesis of his rhetoric, the following list is not necessarily exhaustive. For a full appreciation of the significance of Paul's use of Ex 32:32 for understanding Rom 9:1-5, we refer the reader to the detailed analysis presented in the immediately preceding section of this chapter. Moreover, some of the insights we have already mentioned in this summary could have been included in this "more specific" listing.

tense of ηὐχόμην; (3) ἀνάθεμα as a reference to the curse of the covenant, which was essentially separation from the elect community and destruction under the wrath of God; (4) the contention that, for Paul, unbelieving Israel is anathema; (5) the idea that Paul contemplates a prayer that would offer to join his people in their accursed state as an inducement to the Lord to spare them rather than the standard view of Paul's prayer/wish to refer to some sort of substitution; (6) the contention that Paul casts himself in a salvation-historical role on a par with Moses; (7) a stronger sense of Paul's identification with the Jewish people; (8) the meaning "for the sake/benefit of" apart from any nuance of substitution for the preposition ὑπέρ.

Concerning the exalted catalog of Israel's privileges in Romans 9:4-5, we have found that in light of Paul's allusion to Exodus 32:32, Exodus 32-34 and its broader context provides the most appropriate place to begin analysis of the background of this impressive list. Indeed, it appears as a fair summary of the blessings given to Israel in her covenant and election distinctively established at Sinai. Immediately following Paul's allusion, many of the items in the catalog effectively evoke the fall-rejection-restoration pattern of Exodus 32-34 in which these very privileges were rescinded from Israel and ultimately restored to them. Continuing our list of more specific exegetical insights, we have suggested that Paul's allusion supports: (9) use of the covenant name Ἰσραηλῖται as invoking God's covenant promises to Israel in all their fullness; (10) the possibility that Paul found some inspiration for his use of the designation Ἰσραηλῖται in Moses' use of the root name in Exodus 32:13; (11) an understanding of ethnic Israel's possession of the blessings of election as ideal rather than actual, partial and outward rather than fully and in truth; (12) ἡ δόξα as the covenant-and-election-bestowing glory of God; (13) αἱ διαθῆκαι as a reference to the Sinaitic/Mosaic covenant with its renewals, understood as an extension of the Abrahamic covenant and looking forward towards the New; (14) ἡ νομοθεσία as a reference to the giving of the Law rather than the Law itself, though each is implicit in the other; (15) Paul's mention of ἡ λατρεία as including the OT Tabernacle; (16) αἱ ἐπαγγελίαι as referring especially to the promises to the fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Israel/Jacob (i.e., to Abraham initially, and then repeated to Isaac and Jacob); (17) the suggestion that Paul understood God's work in Christ as a fulfillment of both the fundamental promises to Abraham and their development in the Mosaic covenant;

(18) οἱ πατέρες of 9:5a as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob/Israel; (19) the Christological interpretation of 9:5b, which applies θεός to ὁ Χριστός.

We have also discovered that Jewish interpretive traditions surrounding Exodus 32:32 and its broader context treat themes that are highly relevant to Paul's argument in Romans 9-11. Ancient interpreters of Exodus 32-34 engaged issues of the faithfulness of God to his word to Israel, the restoration of Israel, the question of whether Israel as a nation could be cast away and destroyed, the possibility of a new people replacing Israel, Israel's role in relation to the world/Gentiles, divine foreknowledge, divine predetermination, Moses' prophetic/mediatorial/intercessory role, eschatological secrets relating to Israel and the Gentiles, the necessity of repentance for restoration, an attitude of contempt for the identification of Jews with Gentiles in sin and divine judgment, Israel's privileged elect status, identification of that which finds favor with God in people, and the fate of Israel. Later rabbinic tradition sought to defend Israel against the early Church, which came to use the golden bull-calf episode to claim that God had rejected Israel, voided his covenant with them, and replaced her with the Church as his elect people. This position vis-à-vis Exodus 32-34 was anticipated already in the NT, where the passage was used to characterize contemporary Israel as stiff-necked and estranged from God under the divine judgment of hardening (Acts 7), and to express the inadequacy of the faith of Israel in the present eschatological age unless completed in the divine Christ (John 1:17-18).

Paul's prophetically and apocalyptically charged lament of Romans 9:1-5 serves a complex literary and rhetorical purpose. Its grave tone signals the climactic character of the argument to which he now turns even as its discreet and tactful expression presents the grievous and controversial (even in our own day!) rejection of ethnic Israel that creates the fundamental problem Paul must address. From the beginning of his discourse in Romans 9-11 Paul pursues the practical purpose of Romans in general and chapters 9-11 in particular of procuring the unity of Jews and Gentiles in the Roman church behind his gospel and missionary praxis,[340] giving

[340] This in turn serves the purpose of preparing for his pending visit to Rome and goal of obtaining support for his mission to Spain from the Roman church; cf. Brandenburger, "Paulinische Schriftauslegung," 7f., who probably overdoes the genuine background of controversy (Klumbies, "Israels Vorzüge," 135 n. 1, finds Brandenburger's approach too speculative).

assurance of his sincere love and respect for the Jewish people, which he models as the proper Christian attitude towards them. All of this comes to pointed expression in Paul's allusion to Exodus 32:32 in Romans 9:3, which the logic of the passage reveals to be the main point of 9:1-5, an intensely dramatic expression of grief over the accursed state of ethnic Israel/the Jewish people that intimates with respect to Paul a prophetic authority and salvation-historical role of the highest order among mortal men. Thus, Paul's allusion to Exodus 32:32 is central to his introduction to the argument of Romans 9-11. Indeed, its echo of the grief over the loss of Israel's election and vision of its restoration provide an orientation for approaching the whole of Romans 9-11 and suggests that Paul's use of the OT may well provide the keys to a full understanding of what Paul has written here.

Chapter Four

Paul's Use of the Old Testament in Romans 9:6-9

Paul makes two Old Testament quotations in Romans 9:6-9. In 9:7, he quotes Genesis 21:12. In 9:9, he quotes Genesis 18:10, 14 in conflated form. These passages are directly connected to one another within the original broader narrative of which they are a part, the story of Abraham and the fulfillment of God's promise to give him seed/descendants. In order to prepare for an exegesis of Romans 9:6-9 and Paul's use of these biblical texts, this chapter will look at these texts and associated material in the order of their appearance in their original narrative context. First, there will be an exegesis of Genesis 18:10, 14 and its context, followed by a textual comparison with the text of Romans, and then a survey of relevant interpretive traditions. Then, this same procedure will be followed for Genesis 21:12. Finally, we will seek to draw on what we discover to elucidate what Paul has written in Romans 9:6-9.

The Old Testament Context of Genesis 18:10, 14

Genesis 18:10, 14 are part of a much larger passage encompassing all of chapters 18 and 19.[1] We may divide this larger passage into four sections:[2]

18:1-15 The Lord's promise of Isaac's birth against the backdrop of doubt

[1] See Wenham, 2.40-45, who argues that Genesis 18-19 constitutes a clear unit in his detailed discussion of the structure of this passage. Driver, 191, also views these chapters as a unit, calling them "one of the most graphically and finely written narratives in the OT." Cf. also George W. Coats' treatment, 127-28, 136-48. Although Coats does not formally group 18:1-15 with 18:16-19:38, he does recognize that 18:16-33 is dependent on 18:1-15. Looking to more ancient interpreters, Josephus treats 18:1-15 as part of the story of the destruction of Sodom in *Ant.* 1.196ff. and Philo appears to have taken Gen 18-19 together under the rubrics of Abraham's hospitality and the vision given to him at Mamre in *Abr.* 167.

[2] See Wenham, 2.40. This is a typical construal of the passage's structure, though some commentators might divide the sections into smaller units. For example, Coats (136-48) and Janzen (53-67) agree with Wenham, while von Rad has five sections (he distinguishes 18:17-19) and Davidson has five sections (he divides 19:1-29 into two sections comprising vv. 1-11 and 12-29).

18:16-33 The Lord reveals his plan for Sodom and Abraham intercedes on its behalf

19:1-29 The Lord rescues Lot and his family from Sodom

19:30-38 Lot's daughters commit incest with him and bear his children.

That Genesis 18-19 form a single, unified narrative in the text as it now stands is shown by the continuity of characters,[3] the similarity between the two chapters,[4] and the time references in 18:1 and 19:1.[5] The announcement of Isaac's birth (18:1-15) is directly connected with the following narrative (18:16-33) as Abraham's divine guests get up to leave and are escorted by Abraham, who ends up in dialogue with the Lord over the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah. 18:1-15 is the necessary introduction to 18:16-19:29.[6]

Genesis 18:1 is an editorial comment which summarizes the events of chapter 18 in theocentric terms. We are told that Abraham experienced a YHWH theophany, the end of which is clearly indicated in 18:33 when YHWH leaves Abraham. 18:1-15 has two sections, vv. 1-8 and vv. 9-15. The first half of the passage (vv.1-8) sets the scene for the promise of a son to Abraham and Sarah. Abraham sees three "men," who he pleads with to visit with him for dinner and refreshment. The reader will eventually realize that one of these "men" is actually YHWH himself, and that the other two are angels.[7] This first half of the passage chiefly consists of a description of

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[3] Wenham, ibid.

[4] Ibid, 40, 43-44. See the convenient list of parallels on pp. 43-44.

[5] Ibid, 43.

[6] Cf. ibid, 43.

[7] From v. 1, as well as the alternation of speaker that attaches to Abraham's visitors (e.g., plural, v. 9, singular, v. 10, the Lord, v. 13) throughout the passage, the reader is alerted that the three men of the following verses are somehow related to YHWH's appearance to Abraham. The ambiguity as to their precise identity is well known. The two main options are (1) that the three men together are a manifestation of YHWH (so von Rad, 204); and (2) that one of the "men" is YHWH, and the other two are angels (so most commentators). 18:22, which draws a distinction between YHWH and the men, and narrates that the men went toward Sodom, along with 19:1, which tells us that two angels (הַמַּלְאָכִים שְׁנֵי) arrived at Sodom, are decisive in deciding the question concerning the relationship of these men to YHWH in favor of the latter option. Von Rad's main reason for rejecting this conclusion, that 18:1-16 and 19:1ff. should not be mixed because they derive from different traditions, ignores the character of the biblical text as canonical literature and the commentator's responsibility to deal with the present form of the text; granting the assumption that editorial activity has taken place, he pays insufficient

Abraham's lavish hospitality towards these "men," the true identity of whom he presumably does not know until later on when they begin to display supernatural powers (see 18:9ff.). The point is to demonstrate Abraham's piety through a depiction of his hospitality. This sets the stage for the main concern: the promise of a son to Abraham and Sarah. Abraham is a righteous and faithful man before the Lord, and will therefore receive the fulfillment of his promise.[8] The emphasis of the passage (18:1-15) clearly rests on vv. 9-15 and the promise of a son.

But the emphasis of 18:9-15 is even more specific than the Lord's promise of a son to Abraham and Sarah. The narrative comes to focus on the reliability of YHWH's promise, a theme brought to the fore by Sarah's doubt expressed through her laughter and highlighted by the Lord's rebuke. 18:9 is the first indication since the summary statement of v. 1 that Abraham's visitors are out of the ordinary. Their supernatural knowledge of Sarah's name is revealing. The fact that they use Sarah's new name is significant, for the recent change of Abraham's wife's name from שָׂרַי to שָׂרָה (17:15) reflects God's promise that Abraham would have a son by her.[9] The fact that the visitors ask about Sarah's whereabouts indicates their specific concern for her, and suggests that the following message is as much for her as for her husband.

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attention to the significance of that activity for the meaning of the text.

[8] This is in harmony with the conditional nature of YHWH's dealings with Abraham throughout Genesis. Cf. Gen 12:1-3 where the Lord's blessings are contingent on Abraham leaving his father's house and going forth to the land he would be shown; Gen 17:1-2 where Abraham must walk before the Lord and be blameless so that the Lord will covenant with him and multiply him. Genesis 18:19—a passage which is directly connected to the context under consideration—reveals the same type of idea. Here we are told that the Lord chose Abraham (יְדַעְתִּיו) so that (לְמַעַן) Abraham would command his descendants to keep the Lord's way of righteousness and justice, again, so that (לְמַעַן), the Lord would fulfill his promise to him. This and the preceding verse themselves allude to Gen 12:1-3 mentioned above. Wenham, 2.45, appears to recognize the connection between the depiction of Abraham's godliness and the declaration of God's promise in 18:9-15 when he writes, "Abraham's exceedingly warm hospitality is rewarded by the reaffirmation of the imminent birth of a son to Sarah."

[9] The precise nuance of the name change is uncertain. It is clearly connected to the Lord's promise of blessing on Sarah to give her a child and make her the ancestress of kings and nations. The two names are merely different forms of the same word meaning "princess." It is possible that the name שָׂרָה bore in the culture a more distinguished connotation which was more fitting to one who would bear kings but has been lost to us. Yet it may be more likely that there was no difference in nuance between the two and the mere fact of a change in name was all that was necessary to symbolize the drastic change in Sarah's destiny. For the view that שָׂרַי bore a nuance of "mockery" reflecting a Hebrew word meaning "to mock," and refers here to Sarah's barren condition, see Davidson, 59-60, who follows the NEB.

Indeed, in light of the broader narrative in which God's promise to Abraham of a son by Sarah is at issue, it appears that the message is meant even more for Sarah's ears than Abraham's, since Abraham has already received this promise (17:15-21), and Sarah's response and interaction with the Lord becomes the main emphasis of the passage.

Upon hearing that Sarah was nearby, the Lord[10] utters the astounding promise: "I will surely[11] return to you at this time next year; and behold, Sarah your wife will have a son" (18:10). Now the text makes it a point to let us know that Sarah is physically behind the Lord/visitor.[12] The significance of this fact will become clear when the Lord communicates his awareness of Sarah's reaction to his promise (v 13). Sarah laughs to herself (בְּקִרְבָּהּ) and is behind the speaker; so there is no natural way he could have known her response. Thus the Lord's omniscience is portrayed. This contributes to the main point of the passage by buttressing the presentation of the Lord's greatness and power so that his ability to fulfill his promise is manifested.

Verse 11 presents the difficulties inherent in this striking word of promise. Abraham and Sarah were very old. More specifically, the crux of the matter was that Sarah was past childbearing. Thus the reason for Sarah's laughter (v. 12) is given. The immensity of this obstacle of old age is so great that it is mentioned three times in as many verses (vv. 11-13). Sarah simply cannot believe that such a thing could happen. It seems ridiculous that she could bear a child when so old and past childbearing. In natural experience, it is impossible. So she laughs in unbelief. She doubts YHWH's promise. The Lord's response to Sarah's laughter confirms that it was indeed a laughter of unbelief. His strong rebuke in vv. 13-14 asserts his omnipotence ("Is

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[10] The verb in both the MT and LXX is third person masculine singular indicating one speaker. The text does not directly express the identity of the speaker, but the prominence of the Lord in the context, the fact that it is the Lord who speaks in v. 13 in response to Sarah's reaction to the promise of v. 10, and the nature of the speech as promise all make it virtually certain that the Lord is to be understood as the speaker in v. 10. In any case, whether the words be understood as uttered by YHWH himself or one of his messengers, the promise is to be understood as truly from the Lord.

[11] Note the use of the infinitive absolute, שׁוֹב, which indicates certainty, and is to be expected in this context in which the reliability of YHWH's promise is at issue.

[12] The MT reads הוא, referring to the entrance of the tent as behind the speaker. But the Samaritan Pentateuch and the LXX read היא, referring to Sarah as behind the speaker. היא is probably the correct reading since the point of the narrative is to alert us to the relative positions of the speaker and Sarah. But as Wenham, 48, points out, the point comes through regardless of which reading is adopted.

anything too difficult for the Lord?") and reiterates the promise. Verse 14 contains the thrust of the passage: Sarah will have a son within the year because nothing is too difficult for the Lord. Sarah's puzzling denial of her laughter before an omnipotent and omniscient God along with the Lord's straightforward rejoinder—"No, but you did laugh"—reinforce the main point of v. 14 by drawing attention again to Sarah's unbelieving laughter. Verse 15 is odd given Sarah's denial and the Lord's flat out contradiction of that denial without further qualification or explanation. The scene leaves us with the reassurance of the fact that Sarah did indeed laugh. But it is the very oddness of v. 15 which serves to highlight Sarah's doubt of God's word and so lays greater stress on the crucial v. 14—the Lord declares his dependability in keeping his promise based on his omnipotence in the face of Sarah's unbelief.

The reasons for the emphasis on Sarah's laughter in this passage go beyond the connection to vv. 12-14. The present story presupposes and relies on the similar account of Abraham's response when God first made the same promise to him (17:15-21). Like Sarah, Abraham also laughed[13] in unbelief, citing the same basic reason—he and Sarah were too old. That Abraham's laughter originated from unbelief is shown by his subsequent request that Ishmael would live before God. He essentially ignores God's promise except to laugh at it, and proceeds to request God's blessing on Ishmael. As with Sarah, God rebukes Abraham and reiterates the promise. It is here that God designates that the son's name is to be Isaac (Hebrew יִצְחָק; "he laughs"), an obvious reference to Abraham's unbelieving laughter. Thus Isaac's name itself is a reminder of the infallibility of God's word in accomplishing the seemingly impossible. The name will at the same time become the symbol of God's power to turn the blameworthy laughter of unbelief into the God-glorifying laughter of joy resulting from the fulfillment of his promise (see 21:6).

18:16-33 is the second major section of chapters 18-19. It also falls into two segments, vv. 16-21 and vv. 22-33. The former segment records both the Lord's deliberation over whether to reveal his mind concerning Sodom to Abraham and his initiation of Abraham's intercession on behalf of the city. The text portrays the entire

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[13] Gen 17:17 has the converted imperfect, וַיִּצְחָק , meaning "and he laughed." The promised son is to be named יִצְחָק (Isaac).

interaction between YHWH and Abraham as YHWH's doing, initiated and directed by him. This is simply a natural outgrowth of the omnipotent, omniscient picture of the Lord painted by vv. 1-15. The elaborateness of YHWH's deliberation in vv. 17-19 contributes to the impression that his statement of intention towards Sodom (vv. 20-21) is meant to elicit the ensuing intercession from Abraham (who is portrayed as a prophet privy to the divine counsel).[14] Verse 33 then confirms this impression by stressing the Lord's initiative: "Then YHWH left when he finished speaking with Abraham." From beginning to end the conversation between YHWH and Abraham is presented as YHWH's will and design. The significance of this fact lies in the implication that the point made by the conversation is to be understood as the point the reader is to embrace. It is not as though the text is presenting YHWH as a temperamental deity whom Abraham must plead with to do right. Rather, YHWH is presented as wanting to display his own righteousness, justice, and mercy.

The point of the conversation recorded in 18:23-32 is to demonstrate YHWH's justice in his treatment of human beings.[15] The Lord's justice is the basis of Abraham's intercession (v. 25) and is demonstrated by his granting of Abraham's requests so that he will spare all of Sodom if he finds even ten righteous people (צדיקם) there. In the words of Abraham, YHWH is revealed as "doing justice" (יעשׂה משׁפט, v. 25). This justice consists in distinguishing between the righteous and the wicked, treating them as they deserve and not the same (vv. 23, 25). The Lord's positive response to Abraham's drastic plea shows that such injustice as treating the righteous and wicked alike is truly far from him (הללה, v. 25). Indeed, the Lord's willingness to grant the entire city's preservation for the sake of a mere ten

[14] 18:22 contains the first of the *tiqqune sopherim* ("emendations of the scribes"). Masoretic tradition has it that the scribes intentionally altered the Hebrew text of v. 22 switching the positions of the words ואברהם (Abraham) and יהוה (YHWH) so that the MT presents Abraham as standing before YHWH rather than vice versa, thus avoiding possible disrespect to God by depicting him as subservient to Abraham. If the original reading did have YHWH standing before Abraham waiting for him to speak—and this is probable—then the text's picture of the Lord intentionally eliciting Abraham's intercession is strengthened. On the alleged *tiqqune sopherim*, see Brotzman, *Old Testament Textual Criticism*, 54-55, 116-118. On the portrayal of Abraham as a prophet in Gen 18, see Wenham, 44, 50, 53.

[15] For a layout of various positions and issues surrounding this passage, see Ehud Ben-Zvi, "The Dialogue between Abraham and YHWH in Gen 18:23-32: A Historical-Critical Analysis," who provides valuable bibliographic information in his notes.

righteous not only shows his commitment to justice, but pushes this narrative toward a concomitant demonstration of mercy.[16]

The following description of Sodom's wickedness and destruction and Lot's rescue (19:1-29) then concretely demonstrates YHWH's justice. There is found to be only one righteous person in Sodom—Lot.[17] The fact that the Lord rescues Lot and his family before he destroys the city takes the demonstration of his righteousness to a higher level, revealing that he will not even allow one righteous man to perish with the wicked. Scholars have often puzzled over why Abraham stops his intercession at ten rather than taking it to the logical conclusion of one. While noting various suggestions for an answer to this question, J. Blenkinsopp comments that "historical-critical reading of the text has not produced a satisfactory explanation of this feature of the text."[18] This is probably due to a lack of attention to the literary character of the text. When this is understood, the function of Abraham's petition ending at ten can be readily discerned. We have already argued that it is the Lord (not Abraham) who directs this intercession.[19] As it stands, 18:22-33 reveals the Lord as more than just, for he is willing to spare a whole city of wicked people for a mere ten righteous. By leaving unstated the Lord's willingness to rescue even one righteous from the just destruction of a wicked city, *inter alia*, the text intensifies the demonstration of the Lord's justice in 19:1-29 when the Lord goes above and beyond established expectations in his actual judgment. Indeed, the narrative depicts the Lord's dealings as compassionate (or merciful; חמלה, 19:16) and gracious (חסד, 19:19).

19:29 clearly ties Lot's salvation to Abraham's intercession in 18:23-32. True to his word, God acted justly, demonstrating his righteousness. 19:30-38 fills out the story by recording the origin of the Moabites and Ammonites through the incestuous

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[16] Driver, 196, Hamilton, 25, and Sarna, 133, also recognize that this passage testifies to God's mercy.

[17] Even Lot's wife and daughters turn out to be wicked (19:26, 30-38). Wenham, 2.53, points out that Lot was not even a full citizen; he was a sojourner (19:9).

[18] J. Blenkinsopp, "The Judge of All the Earth: Theodicy in the Midrash on Gen 18:22-33," 9-10. See also his "Abraham and the Righteous of Sodom," 123. We should note that there is merit to the suggestion that the corporate perception of reality among the ancients plays a role. Ten was probably considered the lowest number of a significant grouping. While part of the answer, see below for an even more pressing consideration.

[19] Wenham, 2.53, makes this point in relation to the ending of Abraham's prayer at ten, rightly dismissing the common suggestion that Abraham was too afraid to continue. But he does not go on to consider why the Lord ends the discussion at this point.

conduct of Lot's daughters. The existence of these peoples is therefore shown to be due to Abraham's intercession (and consequently the Lord's justice and mercy). Abraham has become a blessing to the nations by his intercession and the resulting birth of Moab and Ben-ammi, the progenitors of the Moabite and Ammonite nations respectively.

We must now delve deeper into the connections between the major sections of Genesis 18-19. One of our primary concerns is the connection between the fulfillment/dependability of the promise (18:1-15) and theodicy (18:16-33),[20] since these two motifs appear strikingly in Romans 9. A careful examination will reveal that the connections are deep and varied.

On one level, the justice of God serves as a ground for the dependability of his word. God's word is dependable because he is ethically just. The one who would never treat the righteous and wicked alike, and who will do only that which is right as the Judge of all the earth, can be trusted to fulfill his word. This makes two main grounds for the infallibility of the Lord's word: (1) his omnipotence (18:14); and (2) his justice/righteousness (18:16-33).

On another level, the Lord's fulfillment of his promise to Abraham (18:19c) itself functions as a ground for the justification of God provided in 18:22-32. The fulfillment of the promise demonstrates the righteousness of God. We might even say that the righteousness of God consists in the fulfillment of his promise. Since YHWH's decision to reveal his mind concerning Sodom to Abraham initiates Abraham's intercession, and since the entire God-justifying dialogue is to be understood as orchestrated by YHWH, we may consider YHWH's decision to represent the results of that decision, namely, Abraham's intercession and its justification of YHWH. If this be granted, then the fact that vv. 18-19, which highlight the fulfillment of the Lord's promises to Abraham, stand in causal relationship to v. 17, which states YHWH's intention to reveal his mind in the form of a question

[20] Tom W. Willett defines theodicy broadly as "any attempt to explain evil and death in religious terms" (*Eschatology in the Theodicies of 2 Baruch and 4 Ezra*, 32; cf. 11-12). He acknowledges that this definition encompasses many more specific types of theodicy, and provides a survey of Old Testament and early Jewish theodicy on pp.12-32. For a much more thorough treatment of the sources, see A. L. Thompson, *Responsibility for Evil in the Theodicy of IV Ezra*, 5-64. When we speak of theodicy in Gen 18 or Rom 9, we have a narrower definition of theodicy in mind, i.e., justifying the ways of God to human beings.

expecting a negative answer, means that the fulfillment of his promise is the ultimate ground of the Lord's decision to demonstrate his justice through dialogue with Abraham.[21] In short, the Lord is righteous because he fulfills his word.

Relatedly, the Lord's decision to manifest his justice through conversation with Abraham is based on Abraham's role as a blessing to the nations (18:18). We have just seen that 18:18 supports 18:17 causally. Now we must consider the specific promise referred to in 18:18b. The Lord decides to reveal his mind to Abraham because "in him all the nations of the earth will be blessed."[22] Indeed, Abraham's intercession may be seen as a beginning fulfillment of this promise since Abraham intercedes on behalf of "the nations" here, and through that intercession helps to establish the nations of Ammon and Moab.[23] So the very conversation which the Lord enacted to manifest his justice, at the same time effects the fulfillment of his promise, albeit it proleptically.

At this point we might ask whether the specific child-promise implies a distinction among Abraham's descendants so that its fulfillment raises the issue of God's justice in dealing with men. This may be part of the rationale for connecting the theodicy of 18:16-33 with the child-promise of 18:1-15. The text does not draw attention to the distinguishing nature of the promise here. Yet the point is made earlier (ch. 17) and later (ch. 21) in the Abraham narrative of Genesis. In light of this broader narrative, it is plausible that the distinguishing nature of the promise can be taken as

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[21]The precise logical relationships in 18:17-19 are as follows: V. 17 states YHWH's intention to reveal his mind concerning Sodom to Abraham. V. 18 states fulfillment of specific divine promises to Abraham connected to the seed promise, functioning as a ground for v. 17. (The Hebrew conjunction ו at the beginning of v. 18 is best taken as causal as in Gen 15:2.) V. 19 then actually functions as a ground to v. 18, signaled by כי. The logical stress of v. 19 falls on the fulfillment of the Lord's promises to Abraham as this is presented as the ultimate purpose (לְמַעַן) of the Lord's election of Abraham. So then the general statement of the Lord's intention to bring about what he promised becomes the basis of the specific promises of v. 18, and together they form the basis of v. 17.

[22] The translation of this phrase, the basic form of which also occurs in Gen 12:3; 22:18; 26:4; and 28:14, has been greatly debated by Old Testament scholars. The basic issue is how the niphal of ברך is to be taken, whether as a passive, middle, or reflexive. Fortunately, we know Paul took this verb passively (Gal 3:8), whether through his reading of the Hebrew or mediated through the LXX. For a good, concise discussion of the options see Wenham, 1.277-78 (cf. 2.34, for his translation of 18:18), who argues convincingly for a middle sense which would also embrace the passive and reflexive options, "will find blessing in him."

[23] Brueggemann, 169, also links the nations of 18:18 with Moab and Ammon of 19:30-38.

one of the connections between theodicy and promise-fulfillment in Genesis 18.

We may regard 18:16-33 to be the center of chapters 18-19, declaring the justice of God and providing the leitmotif which unifies the sections. Yet we should not lose sight of the major theme of the dependability of God's word. It is a dominant theme throughout the Abraham narrative of Genesis, especially in chapters 17-21. Indeed, chapter 20 will immediately pick up this theme again as the fulfillment of YHWH's promise is threatened by Abimelech taking Sarah as his wife. And as we have seen, the two themes of theodicy and the infallibility of God's word are closely connected in these chapters. Together they constitute the main thrust of the broader context of 18:10, 14 quoted by Paul.

Textual Comparison of Romans 9:9 and Genesis 18:10, 14[24]

It is now time to turn to a textual comparison of Romans 9:9 and Genesis 18:10, 14. The following color codes have been used to classify the relationship between Romans 9:9, Genesis 18:10, 14 LXX, and the MT.

Black = All agree
Blue = NT differs from all others
Green = NT and Genesis 18:10 LXX agree against 18:14 LXX
Magenta = NT and Genesis 18:14 LXX agree against 18:10 LXX
Teal = Genesis 18:14 LXX differs from NT and 18:10 LXX
Red = Genesis 18:10 LXX differs from NT and 18:14 LXX
Dark red = Present in all but NT
Bold = MT without reference to the other passages

[24] Textual comparisons throughout this investigation make allowance for imprecision in translation between Greek and Hebrew. The necessary result is some imprecision in judgments regarding whether the MT agrees with certain Greek renderings.

Romans 9:9-- Κατὰ τὸν καιρὸν τοῦτον ἐλεύσομαι καὶ ἔσται τῇ Σάρρᾳ υἱός.

Genesis 18:10 LXX-- Ἐπαναστρέφων ἥξω πρὸς σὲ κατὰ τὸν καιρὸν τοῦτον εἰς ὥρας, καὶ ἕξει υἱὸν Σαρρα ἡ γυνή σου.

Genesis 18:10 MT-- שׁוֹב אָשׁוּב אֵלֶיךָ כָּעֵת חַיָּה וְהִנֵּה־בֵן לְשָׂרָה אִשְׁתֶּךָ

Genesis 18:14 LXX-- εἰς τὸν καιρὸν τοῦτον ἀναστρέψω πρὸς σὲ εἰς ὥρας, καὶ ἔσται τῇ Σαρρα υἱός.

Genesis 18:14 MT-- לַמּוֹעֵד אָשׁוּב אֵלֶיךָ כָּעֵת חַיָּה וּלְשָׂרָה בֵן

Although most scholars regard Romans 9:9 as a conflation of LXX Genesis 18:10 and 18:14, C. D. Stanley has challenged this view contending that it "founders on the observation that the Pauline quotation contains only one word found in verse 10 and not in verse 14, the preposition κατά."[25] He contends that Paul is quoting only from Genesis 18:14. Yet, by his own admission he is unable to give any clear exegetical motive for such a change. The alternative possible explanations he does mention are less than convincing, viz., that κατά is a more specific temporal designation than εἰς and accords with Paul's dehistoricized treatment of Genesis here, or an unattested manuscript variant, or a memory slip. First, it is not at all clear that κατά is any more specific than εἰς in temporal phrases.[26] But even if so, it is also unclear how a more specific temporal reference would lend itself any better to a dehistoricizing discourse. Furthermore, even if this suggestion were still deemed valid, it could very easily be subsumed under a conflation theory, since it could be regarded as one of Paul's reasons for conflating Genesis 18:10 and 18:14. The latter

[25] Stanley, *Paul and the Language*, 104. However, Stanley fails to note that ἐλεύσομαι is much closer in meaning to 18:10's ἥξω than to 18:14's ἀναστρέψω. This observation is all the more significant when we recognize that ἥξω is a unique translation of אשׁוּב in the LXX of Genesis; see J. W. Wevers, *Notes on the Greek Text of Genesis*, 250. In fact, it is the only occurrence in the LXX of ἥκειν as a translation of שׁוּב; see Edwin Hatch and Henry A. Redpath, *A Concordance to the Septuagint and the Other Greek Versions of the Old Testament (Including the Apocryphal Books)*, s.v. ἥκειν. As for ἔρχομαι, it translates שׁוּב in the LXX only in Judges 11:8 and 2 Chron 10:5.

[26] Stanley's citation of BAGD, s.v. κατά, II.2a, is unwarranted , since the entry makes no comparison with εἰς. Κατά may also be indefinite in temporal phrases (see BDAG, s.v. κατά, 2b) while εἰς can be used definitely as in Gen 18:14 LXX and Acts 13:42.

two possibilities (unattested ms. variant and memory slip) are speculative[27] and therefore inferior to the conflation theory which has evidence to support it in the text, namely, the presence of κατά in LXX Genesis 18:10, and its absence in 18:14, both of which Paul was certainly aware.

Therefore, it appears that the common view of Paul's allusion to Genesis 18 is also the correct one—Paul has conflated LXX Genesis 18:10 and 18:14.[28] Why he did so is not as clear. But I would suggest Paul has taken κατά from Genesis 18:10, knowing full well that τὸν καιρὸν τοῦτον . . . καί is present in both verses, and combined it with ἔσται τῇ Σαρρα υἱός from v. 14, in order to indicate quotation from both. In so doing Paul captures the essence of Genesis 18:1-15 most vividly. Both verses state God's word of promise and would do nicely to encapsulate the heart of the passage. But it is v. 14 which most sharply sets forth the concern of the narrative—the infallibility of the Lord's promise over against a challenge to his faithfulness. Therefore, Paul's citation does lay greater stress on v. 14. Yet, by including κατά from v. 10 he manages to allude specifically to both the original statement of the promise, which is subsequently doubted, and the response to that doubt, which affirms the reliability of the Lord's word. Thus, by the conflation of these two verses Paul forms a sort of allusive inclusio which encompasses the pivotal moments of the narrative and evokes the promise-doubt-affirmation sequence,

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[27] Indeed, Stanley himself has argued persuasively that memory failure is generally an unlikely explanation for differences between Paul and his presumed *Vorlage*. But in this case, memory slip accords with Stanley's questionable assumption that Paul often engaged in non-contextual proof-texting. Although Stanley's study has advanced Pauline studies by setting his citation technique against its socio-cultural context, this assumption keeps him from seeing some good explanations for Pauline alterations of his *Vorlagen* which originate from the original broader context of the Old Testament passages. On this point with some specific examples, see Brian Rosner's review of Stanley's study, 361. We will suggest below that it is just such a concern for the original broader context that has influenced Paul's conflation of Genesis 18:10 and 14. It is also worth noting that Stanley suggests that if memory failure is responsible for Paul's use of κατά, then this slip may have been influenced by Genesis 18:10. But if this is the case, then we would still have a case of conflation on our hands. The issue would then be whether the conflation was intentional or not. Do we have a hazy-minded Paul trying unsuccessfully to quote Genesis 18:14, or a purposeful Paul exploiting his mastery of the biblical text to make his point as effectively as possible? Although we have not yet analyzed the relationship between Romans 9 and Genesis 18, it should already be clear that the thematic and theological parallels between them are striking, This would give support to a theory of intentional conflation here in Romans 9:9.

[28] Of course, it is possible that Paul may simply have made his own translation *en toto* or used a manuscript that is no longer extant. The evidence with which we have to work is limited. However, the evidence we do have seems to support best Paul's quotation as a conflation, as the consensus has concluded.

elegantly and effectively supporting his point in Romans 9:6 that the word of God has not failed, also against a doubting objection.

Paul's use of ἐλεύσομαι appears to be motivated by the desire to present the promise in an eschatologically friendly manner.[29] By leaving out the specific time references of Genesis 18:10, 14, Paul frames the quotation so that it is even more applicable to his present circumstances.[30] Since Paul can assume his audience's familiarity with the outcome of the story,[31] he is free to eliminate the notion of return found in the Old Testament verses without losing the force of the specific context, thereby broadening the application of the promise from the child promise to all the promises of God to Israel mentioned in Romans 9:4, God's faithfulness to which Paul begins to defend in 9:6.

Interpretive Traditions Surrounding Genesis 18:10, 14

We now turn to a survey of the interpretive traditions surrounding Genesis 18:10, 14 that might be relevant for Paul's use of these verses. Given the mass of material available from ancient sources, we must select only what we deem the most relevant to Paul's use of Genesis 18:10, 14 and its context. Many of the issues that interested ancient interpreters concerned specific details of the text such as Sarah's laughter, Lot's character, the identity of the three "men," whether the angels really ate or not, the nature of Sodom's sin, and the nature of God's knowledge concerning Sodom.[32] However, these are not Paul's specific concerns in Romans 9, though his

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[29] Dunn, 541-42.

[30] Stanley, *Paul and the Language*, 104-05. These time references include εἰς ὥρας and the notion of return represented by ἐπαναστρέφων and ἀναστρέψω. Cf. also Aageson's point that Paul generally derives theological principles from Scripture and applies them to his present circumstances in his "Typology, Correspondence, and the Application of Scripture in Romans 9-11." Although Aageson's point has significant merit, his distinction between theology and history is highly questionable for understanding Paul. Paul was most likely deriving theological principles from events he believed to have taken place in history. It is interesting to note that Philo (*Abr.* 126) regarded the language of Genesis 18:10 itself as inherently suggestive of timeless reality (cf. *Mut.* 267).

[31] Even a scholar as skeptical of Paul's first century audience's scriptural knowledge as Stanley states that Paul expects his readers to know this story; see idem, *Paul and the Language*, 104.

[32] See James L. Kugel, *Traditions of the Bible: A Guide to the Bible as It Was at the Start of the Common Era*, 328-50, for a demonstration of these issues from a sampling of ancient texts. Neil

use of Genesis 18 undoubtedly reflects exegetical decisions concerning some of them. As we will argue below, Paul appears to be interested in broader themes found in Genesis 18-19, namely, the steadfastness of God's word and theodicy. As we might expect, these two themes do appear in the literature of ancient Judaism in connection with Genesis 18.

4 Ezra

The late first century book of 4 Ezra alludes to Abraham's intercession on behalf of Sodom in 7:106.[33] This passage rings with similarities to Paul's musings in Romans 9.[34] During Ezra's third vision (6:35ff.) he dialogues with the Lord through an angel mediator.[35] As we saw in the previous chapter, this theodicy discussion begins like Romans 9 with a challenge to the reliability of God's promises to his people (6:55-59). The Lord's answer raises for Ezra the terrible fate of the wicked, and with a question he moves the conversation to that topic. Ezra's sensitive question elicits a strong rebuke similar to Paul's response to his interlocutor in Romans 9:20ff.: "You are not a better judge than the Lord, or wiser than the Most High!" (7:19;

Richardson, *Paul's Language about God*, 34-44, is notable for his treatment of Jewish sources related to Paul's OT allusions in Rom 9:6-13.

[33] For a concise introduction to 4 Ezra, including dating and bibliography, see Bruce M. Metzger's introduction to his translation of the book in James H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 1, 517-524. For a fuller introduction, see the commentary of Michael Edward Stone, pp. 1-47. See also James H. Charlesworth, *The Pseudepigrapha in Modern Research*, 111-16, who has a valuable bibliography. For further discussion of 4 Ezra 7:106 and its context in relation to Rom 9-11, see ch. 3 above.

[34] Indeed, the similarity of 4 Ezra to Romans more generally has given rise to an entire monograph on the subject by Bruce W. Longenecker: *Eschatology and the Covenant: A Comparison of 4 Ezra and Romans 1-11*.

[35] Longenecker, ibid, 148-50, rightly though indirectly warns that it is important to keep in mind that the angel (Uriel) represents the ultimate viewpoint of 4 Ezra and its author. He argues that through his dialogue with the angel, the character Ezra undergoes a conversion from his own view of salvation by ethnocentric, gracious covenantalism to the angel's view of salvation by individualistic legalism. So one must be careful not to take Ezra's words, especially the pre-conversion Ezra, as the point of the narrative. However, for our purposes both Ezra's and Uriel's speech is important because each viewpoint represents potential background for Paul's thought. If Longenecker is correct to regard Ezra's pre-conversion understanding as representative of mainstream first century Judaism, then it is for that reason all the more important.

NRSV).[36] But Ezra remains undaunted. Later in the conversation his concern resurfaces in the form of distress over the small number who will be saved and the consequent large number who will face eschatological torment (7:45ff.). After hearing of what takes place after death to the souls of the wicked and righteous respectively, Ezra asks whether the righteous will be able to intercede for the ungodly on the day of judgment. The answer is negative, "for then all shall bear their own righteousness and unrighteousness" (7:105; NRSV). It is here, in Ezra's response, that we encounter the allusion to Genesis 18:22-32: "How then do we find that first Abraham prayed for the people of Sodom, and Moses for our ancestors who sinned in the desert . . . " (7:106; NRSV) and so on with references to the intercession of Joshua, Samuel, David, Solomon, Elijah, and Hezekiah in vv. 107-110. His point is, "So if now, when corruption has increased and unrighteousness has multiplied, the righteous have prayed for the ungodly, why will it not be so then as well?" (7:111; NRSV). Again, the decisive nature of the world to come stands against the possibility of intercession at that time.[37] This brings Ezra to lament the miserable fate of the vast majority of mankind (7:116-126). The divine response emphasizes human free will, and then connects it to what is one of Paul's chief concerns in Romans 9-11, the concept of faith: "But they did not believe him [Moses] or the prophets after him, or even myself who have spoken to them" (7:130; NRSV; cf. 9:7-12). Ezra then begins to extol God's mercy; he is gracious toward those who repent (7:133). He maintains an extended focus on God's mercy until he turns to the timing of eschatological signs in 8:63. In his prayer Ezra shows deep concern for all people, but then, in a manner reminiscent of Paul's lament for Israel in Romans 9:1-5, narrows his deepest concern to his own people (Israel) as he seeks the Lord's grace and mercy for them (8:15-17).

As Ezra continues, his passionate plea for mercy points up a positive result of man's sinfulness—it gives opportunity for the expression of God's mercy, which is

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[36] The next verse, 4 Ezra 7:20 ("Let many perish who are now living, rather than that the law of God that is set before them be disregarded!" [NRSV]) calls to mind Romans 3:4 ("Let God be true and every man a liar"), which is directly related to Rom 9.

[37] This exchange between Ezra and the angel in which Genesis 18 is alluded to seems to militate against Longenecker's contention that throughout the Ezra-angel dialogues the angel insistently denies that God's mercy can be experienced at all in the present age (*Eschatology and the Covenant*, 97). This is the very point which the angel here concedes to Ezra in order to deny mercy in the age to come. Nevertheless, it may be correct to say that the book does claim that hardly any mercy can be experienced in the present age.

equated to the declaration of his righteousness and goodness: "For in this, O Lord, your righteousness and goodness will be declared, when you are merciful to those who have no store of good works" (8:36; NRSV; cf. also 8:31-32). Paul appears to make a similar point in Romans 9:14-18 where he too connects the mercy of God and the demonstration of his righteousness (cf. Rom 3:3-5). But unlike the thought of Romans 9, the Lord tells Ezra that he will not concern himself with the unrighteous, but only with the righteous (8:37-38). He then compares human beings to seeds and plants (8:41; cf. Paul's comparison of humanity to clay and vessels in Rom 9:20-21 and his olive tree metaphor in Rom 11; cf. also 4 Ezra 9:21f.). Also unlike Paul, Ezra takes exception to such a comparison. Man is not like seed, but has been created in the image of God. Ezra is rebuked however. He cannot love God's creation more than God does. The ultimate answer lies in the free will of the creature:

> For they also received freedom , but they despised the Most High, and were contemptuous of his law, and forsook his ways. . . . though knowing full well that they must die. . . . For the Most High did not intend that men should be destroyed; but they themselves who were created have defiled the name of him who made them, and have been ungrateful to him who prepared life for them (8:56, 58-60; Metzger's translation).

Several aspects of 4 Ezra 6:35-9:25 stand out for special mention because of their relevance to Romans 9. First, there is the pervasive element of theodicy initially raised by a question over the faithfulness of God's word. Second, there is a persistent refrain of human free will as the justification of God's dealings with men (7:10-16, 21-22, 72-74, 127-31; 8:56-58; 9:7-12). Third, this free will is connected to the concept of faith in 7:127-31 and 9:7-12. The reason so many do not choose life is that they do not believe Moses, the prophets, nor the Lord himself. For both Paul and the author of 4 Ezra, the ultimate reason for separation from God is unbelief, though the precise content of that faith is different.[38] Interestingly, the concepts of faith and works are used interchangeably throughout the book.[39] Fourth, there is the heavy

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[38] Cf. William Richard Stegner, "Romans 9.6-29—A Midrash," 46, who makes a similar point with respect to the interpretation of Genesis 21:12 by Paul vis-à-vis Midrash Rabbah.

[39] See Stone, 296.

emphasis on God's mercy from 7:132 on, and a connection to the righteousness of God made in 8:36. The typical Jewish assumption that God forgives those who repent is stated explicitly.

Fifth, there appears to be an allusion to Isaiah 45:11 in 8:7: "For you alone exist, and we are a work of your hands, as you have declared" (NRSV; Isaiah 45:11 reads: "Will they ask me things to come concerning my sons, or concerning the work of my hands will they command me?"). The significance of this allusion is that it follows on the heels of Isaiah 45:9 which Paul alludes to in Romans 9:20-21. In 4 Ezra the allusion is used in a context which deals with God's mercy, and more importantly, expresses concern for Gentiles. God's mercy is unquestionably one of Paul's concerns in Romans 9, and though there is debate over the extent to which the relation of Jew and Gentile is at issue, it is certainly related in some way to the argument (e.g. Rom 9:24, 30). Here we find the author of 4 Ezra alluding to the same context in Isaiah as Paul over similar themes. Sixth, and relatedly, there is the remarkable concern of Ezra for Gentiles as well as Jews (e.g. 7:116-131; 8:4-14).[40] Although this is not the place to enter into a discussion of the place of Gentiles in Paul's argument, as we have just stated, they certainly play some role. That 4 Ezra deals with them sympathetically amidst so many other parallels with Romans 9 merits attention. Seventh, there is the comparison of humanity to seeds/plants. Although the immediate purpose of the comparison and the materials involved are quite different than Paul's potter and clay metaphor, Ezra's response to the comparison highlights one of Paul's main emphases in his metaphor—God as creator and man as creature. Human beings are not like seed whose fate depends on God's bestowal of rain (a point many wish Paul had acknowledged in its equivalent form in Rom 9:20ff.!). The creator/creature relationship calls for God's mercy. While Paul does not explicitly qualify his potter/clay metaphor with recognition of man's dignity like Ezra, he does, like Ezra, carry the metaphor forward to a cynosure of God's mercy. Finally, there are some incidental similarities in the manner of presentation such as Ezra's lament for Israel and expression of their privileged status (8:15-17 and 6:58f. respectively; cf. Rom 9:1-5).

None of this is meant to suggest dependency on the part of Paul or the author

[40] Metzger refers to this as 'his universalism' ("The Fourth Book of Ezra," 521).

of 4 Ezra. That is highly unlikely. The importance of 4 Ezra 6-8 for Romans 9 is that it gives us another first century Jew's perspective on similar issues. It helps us to define more clearly the types of concerns and ideas surrounding Genesis 18 and its related themes in Paul's day. It gives us another reference point against which to better understand Paul's perspective. More specifically, 4 Ezra 6-8 provides us with an example of how Genesis 18 (as well as Ex 32 and Is 45:11) was used elsewhere in Judaism contemporaneous with Paul. We have found not that Paul was necessarily following a specific exegetical tradition, but that he seems to have tapped into a general traditional approach—or perhaps one that was only current in his own time—to Genesis 18 which links it with theodicy, the dependability of God's word to Israel, God's mercy, and a concern for the salvation of the Gentiles. The specifics of 4 Ezra's treatment, like the persistent free will solution to the problem of theodicy, cannot be thought of as determining Paul's argument, but they must be considered when interpreting Paul's stance.

Philo

We now turn to another first century Jewish author, who gives far more attention to Genesis 18-19, Philo of Alexandria. For him, Abraham's hospitality is a dominating theme of the passage.[41] The three "men" of the section are indeed God accompanied by two angels; yet at the same time they represent three different human dispositions. In his exposition Philo touches on issues relevant to theodicy and universalism. He explains that "God, inasmuch as he is not liable to any injury, gladly invites all men who choose, in any way whatever to honour him, to come unto him, not choosing altogether to reject any person whatever" (*Abr.* 127). Unlike 4 Ezra, Philo's assertions of human free will and God's concern for all mankind actually emerge from an exposition of Genesis 18-19, albeit a not so straightforward one. Later in his discussion, Philo touches on theodicy more directly. He reveals that much

[41] He enters into consideration of the passage with a discussion of hospitality in *Abr.* 107, and sums up all of Gen 18-19 as "the vision which appeared to Abraham, and . . . his celebrated and all-glorious hospitality . . ." (*Abr.* 167). All translations of Philo in this chapter are by C. D. Yonge. For a comparison of Paul's thought in Rom 9-11 with the thought of Philo vis-à-vis scriptural interpretation, see K. Haacker, "Die Geschichtstheologie von Röm 9-11 im Lichte philonischer Schriftauslegung."

of his discussion of the destruction of Sodom has aimed to show God's goodness and separation from evil (*Abr.* 142-43). This is why only the two angels went to Sodom; God himself would not directly involve himself in the destruction "so that he might be looked upon as the cause of good only, and of no evil whatever antecedently" (*Abr.* 143). Elsewhere, Philo even connects Sarah's laughter to the absolute goodness of God (*Spec. Leg.* 2.53-55).

In *Leg. All.* 3.9-10 Philo includes a treatment of Genesis 18:23 in his discussion of the principle that the wicked are inclined to run away from God. His understanding of the passage is relevant to Romans 9 for its view of what characterizes the righteous and wicked respectively. Abraham is an example of the righteous who are manifest to the Lord and well known by him, and who stand before him and do not flee. But the wicked flee from the Lord and seek to escape his notice. For Philo, there was no possibility of worthiness before God. Yet one could be righteous and just. In fact, in *Congr.* 106-09 Philo discusses the ten righteous of Genesis 18:32 in connection to humility as the key to acceptance with God. Of course, what makes a person righteous is a chief concern of Romans generally, not least the ninth chapter (e.g. Rom 9:30-33). So there is some similarity in Paul's and Philo's conceptions of what makes someone righteous.[42] There is no legalistic standard of perfect adherence to the Law, but a standard of approaching the Lord in humble faith. The main difference appears to be the nature and content of that faith—trust in Jesus Christ as the Messiah. With Philo we again see the issues of theodicy, free will, universalism, and faith emerging from engagement with Genesis 18-19.

4Q180

It is no surprise that 4Q180, a work known for its interest in angels and destiny, is interested in the angels of Genesis 18-19. Ages of Creation 3 is concerned to explain why God says he will go down to see the situation of Sodom (Gen 18:21). The author was apparently afraid that Genesis 18:21 could be misconstrued to mean that God was not omniscient and did not already know the condition of Sodom. We

[42] I make no claims for Philo's thought generally, only concerning his treatment of Gen 18-19.

are assured that "Before He created them, He knew [their] designs."[43] The point seems to be that God really did know about Sodom's condition, and only went to confirm what he already knew via his foreknowledge. Unfortunately, the text is not very extensive or well-preserved, but it does show that Genesis 18:20f. raised the issue of God's sovereignty and foreknowledge for the author.

Targums and Other Rabbinic Literature

Moving beyond Paul's time, the most striking addition to Genesis 18 by the Targums is the mention of opportunity for repentance for the people of Sodom and the consequent opportunity to be spared.[44] Apparently the targumists felt the need to paint God's justice even larger and more sharply than the biblical text by making explicit what much biblical tradition assumes—that God will mercifully forgive those who repent (cf. Jer 18:1-10; Ezek 18; Jonah 4:2). The possibility of repentance and forgiveness for Sodom is held out in other rabbinic literature as well.[45] Genesis Rabbah even claims that God tried to bring Sodom to repentance for many years prior to the destruction through earthquakes and various afflictions.

This concern to justify God's judgment against the ungodly by pointing to his willingness to forgive the penitent takes its lead from Genesis itself, not in the specific portrayal of God's willingness to forgive, but in the presentation of his mercy and the accentuation of the guilt and responsibility of the Sodomites. Such stress on human guilt is, as S. E. Balentine has argued, a fundamental characteristic common to virtually all Old Testament theodicies.[46] While at first blush such a concern may

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[43] Gaster's translation; Theodor Gaster, *The Dead Sea Scriptures with Introduction and Notes*, 524.

[44] Pseudo-Jonathan, Neofiti, and some versions of Onqelos. Other versions of Onqelos decree destruction for Sodom regardless of repentance. But since they do not make sense as they stand, with J. Blenkinsopp, "The Judge," 3, we should emend to agree in thought with Ps.-J. and Nf.

[45] Blenkinsopp, "The Judge," 3, who provides a valuable survey of midrashim on Gen 18:22-33 vis-à-vis theodicy, documents this fact, though he concludes, "In general . . . not much is made of the possibility of repentance . . . ."

[46] S. E. Balentine, "Prayers for Justice in the OT: Theodicy and Theology." She explains that "in most theodicies the intent is to explain disorder by defending God's integrity, i.e., God's innocence, at the expense of human integrity and innocence" (611). Human sinfulness becomes the explanation and legitimization for pain and suffering (612). This is tantamount to asserting that most OT theodicies are free will theodicies, for the implicit assumption is that human beings have freely defiled themselves.

appear to be absent from Romans 9, its presence in Old Testament theodicies generally and in ancient Jewish interpretation sensitive to the text of Genesis should alert us to the possibility that Paul may draw on this idea in his theodicy.[47]

Stegner has observed that Genesis Rabbah 53:4 juxtaposes Genesis 18:10, Numbers 23:18 (which proclaims the steadfastness of God's word), and Genesis 21:1 (which also testifies to the steadfastness of God's word).[48] He probably stretches the connection of Sarah with the theme of the steadfastness of God's word too far, trying to find significance in her prophetic status in Jewish tradition.[49] Nevertheless, he has made a valuable contribution in drawing attention to the fact that "Paul and Genesis Rabbah agree in juxtaposing the theme of God's faithfulness to His word and God's promise to Sarah."[50] However, his conclusion that Paul appears to be following exegetical traditions is too strongly stated.[51] We need not conceive of Paul as following a specific exegetical tradition also witnessed to by later rabbinic material, though that is possible; rather he is probably following a traditional approach to the text. But this is to be expected since the theme of dependability is so prominent in the Old Testament passage.

Luke

On a larger scale, Thompson, *Responsibility for Evil*, 64, in his survey of the sources of Judaism to ca. C.E. 100, has found that "man's responsibility to choose his own destiny is emphasized in virtually all sources. Even those sources which do not emphasize it, and in fact seem to preclude it, such as the Dead Sea Scrolls, retain vestiges of the concept of freedom and responsibility."

[47] Though lying beyond the scope of the present investigation, I would suggest based on the OT background that Rom 9:19ff. does just this. From his survey of midrashim on theodicy in Gen 18:22-33 J. Blenkinsopp has concluded that "according to the midrash . . . God is not exempt from the responsibility of accounting for his actions" ("The Judge," 7; he considers especially *Bereshit Rabbah Vayyera* 49:9). While many have assumed that Paul is saying that God has no such responsibility in Rom 9:20ff., it remains to be seen whether this assumption is truly warranted when the text is viewed through Paul's Old Testament usage.

[48] Stegner, "Romans 9.6-29," 47.

[49] Ibid.

[50] Ibid, 48.

[51] Dunn, 537, wrongly criticizes Stegner for relying too much on later material; see note 184 in ch. 2 above. Nevertheless, the lateness of the material should caution us against too quickly concluding that Paul followed specific exegetical traditions.

When we turn to the non-Pauline writings of the New Testament we do not find Genesis 18-19 directly connected to theodicy. We do, however, find allusion to the classic statement of the omnipotence of God in the face of doubt found in Genesis 18:14. Luke 1:37 puts the question of Genesis 18:14 in positive form when the angel Gabriel assures Mary of God's ability to give a child to a virgin.[52] The similarity between the Lucan and Genesis contexts is noteworthy. Both contain the promise of a miraculous birth cast into some doubt by the sheer physical impossibility standing in the way of the fulfillment of the promise.[53] Luke may attest to a Christian tradition that drew on Genesis 18:14 as a statement of the faithfulness of God's word. Of course, dependence by Paul is unlikely, but it is probable that he shared in a typical Christian approach to Genesis 18:14.

Hebrews

We also find allusion to Genesis 18 in connection to the concept of faith in Hebrews 11:11. But the allusion is rather general and more to the miraculous conception and birth recorded in Genesis 17-21 than to any specific verse in those chapters.[54] This does not mean that there is no allusion to Genesis 18, but that it is a

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[52] Cf. Matt 19:26; Mark 10:27. It is much less clear that these references are actual allusions because of a significant difference in context and a lack in verbal similarity. Both passages lack the verb ἀδυνατεῖ and the noun ῥῆμα found in LXX Gen 18:14 and Luke 1:37.

[53] In contrast to Sarah, Mary is not presented as doubting the divine promise. Luke portrays her as genuinely confused as to how such a thing could happen. Nevertheless, her question still casts doubt on the divine promise by presenting the obvious impediment to its fulfillment. The contrast between Sarah and Mary may actually be intended by Luke to convey the greater piety of the mother of the Messiah, the true Israel, and the greater glory of the new order dawning in his birth.

[54] If one takes Sarah as the subject of Heb 11:11 as the nominative case would suggest, then the probable reference would narrow to Gen 18 and 21. But it is better to understand Abraham as the subject and αὐτὴ Σάρρα στεῖρα as either a Hebraic circumstantial clause (so the UBS committee) or as a dative of accompaniment (since iota subscripts were not normally indicated in uncial script; so Bruce, 302, and Michel, 262, who are cited by Metzger); see Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*[2], 602; Hagner, 192; Morris, 119-20, 123. For a thorough discussion of Heb 11:11, see Ellingworth, 586-89. If Sarah is taken as the subject of the verse, one could take Heb 11:11 as evidence that the author of Hebrews (and presumably at least some contingent of early Christian interpreters) did not view Sarah's laughter in Gen 18:12 as a doubting challenge to God's word of promise. But this would not be a necessary inference, since one could understand Sarah as having come to faith after experiencing the Lord's rebuke in 18:14, culminating in her joyous response to the promise's fulfillment in 21:6-7.

more abstract and diffuse allusion than Paul makes in Romans 9:9. It still strengthens the mounting impression that Genesis 18 was interpreted as dealing with faith in early Judaism and Christianity, especially when we recognize that many ancient interpreters did not practice non-contextual, atomistic exegesis, but were interested in the stories of their Scripture as wholes. The context of Hebrews 11 makes the point that God-pleasing faith has to do with trusting God's promises even when those promises have not yet been realized. This is similar to the issue Paul is dealing with in Romans 9-11—an apparent failure of God's word, and the proper attitude of faith in response.

The Old Testament Context of Genesis 21:12

Having completed our exploration of Genesis 18:10, 14, we will now take up an analysis of Genesis 21:12 and related material. Genesis 21:12 appears in the account of the birth and weaning of Isaac recorded in 21:1-21.[55] This passage may be divided into two sections: (1) vv. 1-7 (the birth of Isaac); and (2) vv. 8-21 (the weaning of Isaac and expulsion of Hagar and Ishmael). The fact that v. 8 clearly presupposes the birth of Isaac recorded in vv. 1-7 connects the two sections. The next natural milestone in Isaac's life after his birth, naming, and circumcision (all recorded in vv. 1-7), i.e., his weaning (v. 8), provides the context for the expulsion of Hagar and Ishmael. The birth leads to the weaning, and the birth and weaning together lead to the expulsion.

Genesis 21:1, although written in prose like the surrounding narrative,[56] employs the common Hebrew poetic device of synonymous parallelism to emphasize the fact that God fulfilled the promise which was called into question by the impossibly old age of Abraham and Sarah, doubted and laughed at by them, and threatened by Abimelech. Here,

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[55] Those who view 21:1-21 as a unit include Wenham, 2.76ff.; Gibson, 97ff.; Coats, 152ff.; and von Rad, 230ff. Those who do not take it as a single unit generally separate the passage into two units comprised of vv. 1-7 and vv. 8-21, which are obviously related to one another, the latter presupposing the former. Davidson, 83ff., oddly separates the two sections at v. 9, leaving no context for the expulsion of Hagar and Ishmael given his source analysis.

[56] Hamilton, 73, even claims that the whole verse is poetry, citing W. von Soden, "Zum hebräischen Wörterbuch," 160. In any case, the verse displays poetic characteristics.

> we arrive finally at the birth of the awaited child. . . . we have the central fulfillment within the Abraham tradition. The birth of the child is the fulfillment of all of the promises, the resolution of all of the anguish.[57]

Verse 2 then repeats the fact of fulfillment a third time, noting that it came about at the appointed time God had promised to Abraham. Verses 1-2 clearly recall the earlier narrative of Genesis 17 and 18 in which God promised to Abraham the birth of a son by Sarah within a year's time. In fact, the use of the word לַמּוֹעֵד ("at the appointed time") in v. 2 specifically recalls the use of the word in Genesis 17:21 and 18:14 where the Lord speaks the promise to Abraham.

Verse 3 continues the report of the fulfillment of the earlier narrative. Abraham names Isaac (i.e., "he laughs") as God had directed (17:19), recalling the skeptical laughter of Abraham and Sarah, now transformed into a testimony both to God's faithfulness to his word and to the joy that his fulfilled word brought the formerly barren couple. The fact that it was Sarah who bore Isaac to Abraham is also repeated, calling attention yet again to the fulfillment of the promise, since Sarah's maternity was the crucial and problematic issue. The naming of Isaac also depicts Abraham's obedience to God's command, though the emphasis here in v. 3 remains on the fulfillment of God's promise. The naming of the boy sets the seal of consummation on his miraculous birth and testifies to God's faithfulness.

The note of Abraham's obedience is struck even louder in v. 4, which tells us that Abraham circumcised Isaac in accordance with God's command. God's faithfulness to his word inspired faithfulness to his commands in Abraham. The circumcision of Isaac symbolizes the faithfulness of Abraham in commanding his children to keep the way of the Lord (cf. 18:19). Moreover, just as the naming of Isaac underscored his miraculous birth as the fulfillment of promise, so his circumcision concretizes it even more.

Verse 5 resumes the emphasis on the fulfillment of the promise by reporting that Abraham was one hundred years old at Isaac's birth. His great age (along with

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[57] Brueggemann, 180. However, we do not agree with Brueggemann's further assertion that this narrative is understated. Quite the contrary; the threefold repetition of the fact of fulfillment in only two verses states the matter both poetically and fully, eventually giving way to a full blown poem of praise in vv. 6-7.

Sarah's) was the chief obstacle to the fulfillment of the promise. Mentioning this factor in the context of the promise's fulfillment magnifies the fact of fulfillment over against seemingly impossible obstacles, thus magnifying God's faithfulness to his promise and his ability to be so. Verse 5, along with vv. 1-4, naturally functions as the basis of Sarah's celebration of the birth in vv. 6-7. Indeed, the content of v. 5 is repeated more generally in the latter part of Sarah's song (v. 7b). Verse 5 seems to have been introduced primarily in preparation of Sarah's celebratory words.

The narrative climaxes in Sarah's poem of vv. 6-7. She celebrates God's faithfulness to his word with a song of praise. What God has done—made joy for Sarah and for all who hear of his remarkable faithfulness—wells up into a poetic expression of joy. The poem itself makes its primary statement in v. 6, playing on the name of Isaac, which, as we have already noted, means "he laughs" (יצחק): "God has made laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh [יצחק] because of me."[58] Verse 7 accomplishes the same purpose of celebrating the fulfilled promise,[59] but plays a supporting role as a ground for v. 6. No one could have imagined Sarah nursing

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[58] There is a major issue of translation here in v. 6 which turns on the meaning of the preposition לְ and the nature of the laughter referred to. Some have argued that while v. 6a speaks of Sarah's joyous laughter, v. 6b speaks of the laughter of ridicule. Those who hear of Sarah's belated motherhood will laugh *at* her because of her age or because she doubted the word of the Lord. Hamilton, 72, 74, argues for the laughter of ridicule throughout the verse. But ridicule is too out of harmony with the text to be the primary significance of the laughter. The larger context reveals an emphasis on the fulfillment of God's promise and the joy it brings. Moreover, the birth of a son could not be looked at in any other way than as a blessing in the Bible. As Sarah herself put it in 18:12, it would be a pleasure (עֶדְנָה) for her to have a son at her age. Therefore, we join most commentators in hearing here primarily the laughter of joy. This being said, it must be acknowledged that לְ is ambiguous in principle and could bear various meanings in v. 6b such as "at," "with," "concerning," etc. It may be that this ambiguity is intentional and that while the laughter of joy is the primary sense, a secondary reference to the foolishness of doubting God's word is meant. My translation above understands לְ causally, though specification is an equally likely sense of the preposition here. Both of these translations allow for the ambiguity of the Hebrew and allow the interpreter to derive the significance of the laughter from the context.

[59] Hamilton's suggestion , 74, (following I. Rabinowitz, "Sarah's Wish (Gen 21:6-7)") that Sarah is actually wishing for sons rather than one son in a spirit of complaint must rely on a textual emendation that has no textual basis and does violence to the context of joyous fulfillment. The whole passage breathes joy and life. The first five verses have all in one way or another announced the fulfillment of God's promise, the impossible, long-awaited son. To bring the episode to climax with a bitter lamentation from Sarah, which practically rejects the momentous fulfillment of the promise, would be out of step with every fiber of this narrative. The plural בָנִים need not imply a contrast with בֵּן, but may be understood as a plural of generalization, used mainly in poetry (so Paul Joüon, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, 503), or even as a plural of intensity due to the exultant tone of the poem.

children, yet she bore a child to Abraham in his old age. This state of affairs is amazing, and glorifies the greatness of God's act in fulfilling his promise. Here is the reason for the joy of Sarah and everyone who hears of her experience. Thus, the great play on Isaac's name in v. 6 constitutes the main essence of the passage. Westermann is correct to say that Genesis 21:1-7 is intended to bring chapters 17 and 18 to a conclusion.[60]

The second section, vv. 8-21, moves to the next significant occasion of Isaac's life—his weaning. The summary statement that Isaac grew is connected to the statement of his weaning (v. 8), since his weaning is also a mark of his survival in a time of high infant mortality. As such, it holds promise for his permanent place as Abraham's heir. So Abraham threw a great feast to celebrate. At this celebration of Isaac (יצחק), Sarah saw Ishmael mocking (מצחק) him (v. 9).[61] The precise nature of this mockery is uncertain, but probably has to do with Isaac's status as heir or the circumstances of his birth.[62] Coats sums up the situation well:

> The threat of Ishmael throughout the narrative is that he would replace Sarah's son, or Sarah's lack of a son, as the heir of Abraham. Now the wordplay, so crucial for the whole story, sets out the weight of the conflict. . . . It suggests . . . that Sarah saw Ishmael . . . playing the role of Isaac. Indeed, the act implies some disdain on Ishmael's part, perhaps an equivalent to the curse of Hagar in 16:4.[63]

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[60] Westermann, 331ff.

[61] There are two main difficulties associated with this verse. The first is that the object of Ishmael's action is not explicitly identified in the Hebrew text. The LXX adds μετὰ Ισαακ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτῆς (cf. the Vulgate similarly), but should be regarded as an expansive attempt to make explicit what is only implicit from the context. The second difficulty is discerning the meaning of the piel participle מְצַחֵק. In addition to being an obvious play on Isaac's name, it is also an allusion to Sarah's poem of laughter (21:6; Jacob, 137). The qal of צחק means "to laugh" while the piel conjugation can mean "to sport, play" or "to mock, deride" (J. Barton Payne, "צָחַק," 763). So there is a question whether מְצַחֵק has a positive or at least neutral connotation of "play," or a negative one of "mock." The answer might seem obvious given Sarah's reaction, but several commentators have followed the LXX, which represents Ishmael as playing (παίζοντα) with Isaac (e.g. Janzen, 73; Wenham, 82, cites Skinner, Speiser, and Westermann as representatives of this view). However, Sarah's reaction, approved by God, and the total context of the Abraham narrative (cf. Gen 16 where Hagar despised Sarah) suggest that Ishmael was mocking Isaac. Fortunately, we have Paul's judgment on these two questions. In Gal 4:29 he took Isaac as the object of Ishmael's mockery, described as persecution (ἐδίωκεν) of Isaac.

[62] Wenham, 82.

[63] Coats, 153.

This mockery on the part of Ishmael incites Sarah's maternal rage. The sight of the seventeen year old son of her husband's slave-woman acting with disdain towards her son, who was to be Abraham's heir, drives her to demand the expulsion of Hagar and Ishmael (v. 10). Her reason is that Ishmael should not inherit with Isaac.[64]

Quite understandably, Sarah's request greatly distressed Abraham. Ishmael was Abraham's son, and he loved him. The thought of casting him out of his house into a cold, cruel world with no protection was too much for him to bear. Wenham describes Abraham's reaction as explosive, and informs us that

> Elsewhere, men explode in anger when they are merely "displeased" (e.g., Num 11:10; 1 Sam 18:8). When God is "displeased" with someone, death often follows (e.g., Gen 38:10; 2 Sam 11:7). Only here is anyone said to be "*very* displeased."[65]

Therefore, God himself intervenes, addressing Abraham:

> Do not let it be displeasing in your eyes concerning the lad and concerning your slave-woman. Everything Sarah says to you, listen to her voice, for in Isaac your seed will be called. And I will also make the son of the slave-woman into a nation, for he is your seed (vv. 12-13).

God's directive to Abraham not to be distressed over Sarah's demand, but to heed it, is based on two considerations: (1) Abraham's descendants will be named/identified/appointed through Isaac; and (2) God will make Ishmael into a nation. Thus God comforts and assures Abraham in his deep distress so that he will do

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[64] The background to Sarah's request is to be found in the second millennium B.C.E. Lipit-Ishtar Lawcode, which decrees that, "If a man married a wife (and) she bore him children and those children are living, and a slave also bore children for her master (but) the father granted freedom to the slave and her children, the children of the slave shall not divide the estate with the children of their (former) master" (James B. Pritchard, ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, 160). Sarah is demanding that Abraham expel Hagar with the implication of divorce (גרשׁ is a term for divorce in the OT as well as expulsion), and free her and Ishmael, thereby cutting off Ishmael's right of inheritance.

[65] Wenham, 83; emphasis his. The Hebrew term for displeasure here is רעע.

as Sarah asks. Paul quotes the first of these assurances in Romans 9:7. The meaning of this statement is that only Isaac's descendants will be called (or regarded as) Abraham's covenant descendants (cf. Gen 17:15-21).

With the second assurance, fears of Ishmael suffering and dying as a result of expulsion from the safety and provision of Abraham's household can be abandoned. The reason given for making Ishmael into a nation is that he also is Abraham's seed/descendant, just not the covenantal seed. Therefore, he will receive special blessing from God, but not Abrahamic-covenantal blessings.

In response to God's word of comfort, Abraham acts in faith, promptly sending Hagar and Ishmael away (v. 14). The rest of the narrative details Hagar's and Ishmael's ordeal in the wilderness as a result of their expulsion (vv. 14b-19), and summarizes their fate more generally, particularly Ishmael's (vv. 20-21). Hagar and Ishmael run out of water as they wander in the wilderness, and Hagar gives her son and herself up for dead (vv. 15-16). But God miraculously intervenes, reassuring Hagar of his care for the lad, and providing life-sustaining water for them (vv. 17-19).

Verses 14-21 function as a demonstration of God's faithfulness to his promise to Abraham (v. 13; 17:20) and to Hagar (16:10-12) to bless Ishmael. Verses 14-19 demonstrate God's faithfulness with respect to Ishmael concretely, in a specific situation in which death threatened to take the lad. Verse 20 then completes this specific demonstration with a general description of God's care for him: "And God was with the lad, and he grew." The rest of vv. 20-21 give sparse details which mark Ishmael's growth and indicate his well-being. Thus, vv. 14-21 fit into the overall theme of the passage—God's faithfulness to his word.

The main themes of this narrative, namely, the dependability of God's word, the calling of Isaac and his descendants, and the exclusion of Ishmael, are directly related to one another. The first seven verses of chapter 21 declare God's faithfulness to his word of promise, culminating in Sarah's poetic celebration in vv. 6-7. It is then the fulfillment of this promise that leads to the rejection and expulsion of Ishmael. On the most superficial level, the realization of Isaac's birth gives Sarah cause to be concerned for his future inheritance, and to desire the elimination of his rival. On a deeper level, the context of the Abraham narrative, particularly Genesis 17, shows that the promise itself included the notion that Sarah's son, and he alone, would be the

one through whom God's covenant people would be identified. At the first annunciation of the promise in which Sarah is specified as the mother (17:15-21), God makes a distinction between Isaac and Ishmael. Now, 21:12 recalls the distinguishing nature of the promise. The fulfillment of the promise implies the rejection of Ishmael.

But then, ironically, the rejection of Ishmael elicits reiteration of the promise to bless him (v. 13; cf. 17:20) and also puts the fulfillment of that promise in jeopardy by exposing him to the terrors of the wilderness, separated from Abraham's loving protection. This situation leads to the demonstration of God's faithfulness to his promise of care for Ishmael, a promise which goes hand in hand with the more prominent promise of a son by Sarah. So the promise of a son to Abraham and its fulfillment implies both the rejection of Ishmael and the further demonstration of God's faithfulness.

We have seen that the main theme of Genesis 21:1-21 is God's faithfulness to his word. The theme of theodicy which we discerned in Genesis 18-20 may now be related to Genesis 21:1-21 in a way we have already seen within Genesis 18—God's righteousness consists in his faithfulness to his word. "Within the overall plan of Genesis, this account of Isaac's birth and Ishmael's expulsion is of decisive importance in the unfolding of the patriarchal promises."[66]

Textual Comparison of Romans 9:7 and Genesis 21:12

We now turn to a textual comparison of Romans 9:7 and Genesis 21:12, calling for only a brief statement: Romans 9:7 fully agrees with the LXX of Genesis 21:12, itself a close translation of the Hebrew.

Romans 9:7 Ἐν Ἰσαὰκ κληθήσεταί σοι σπέρμα.

Genesis 21:12 LXX ἐν Ἰσαὰκ κληθήσεταί σοι σπέρμα.

Genesis 21:12 MT בְּיִצְחָק יִקָּרֵא לְךָ זָרַע

Interpretive Traditions Surrounding Genesis 21:12

[66] Wenham, 88.

The final step in our investigation of Paul's use of the Old Testament in Romans 9:6-9 before moving to an exegesis of this text is to survey the relevant interpretive traditions surrounding Genesis 21:12. We begin with the Book of Jubilees.

Jubilees

The second century B.C.E. Book of Jubilees cites Genesis 21:12 twice. The first instance comes in Jubilees 16:16 in the context of the report of Isaac's birth.[67] Though not to the same extent as Genesis, Jub 16 emphasizes the fulfillment of God's word to Abraham and Sarah. The author reports that six years after Isaac's birth Abraham experienced a theophany in which the divine blessing was imparted to him in the declaration of both the extension of his life until he would have six more sons and the blessed destiny of his descendants. Here, as part of this divine blessing, we encounter a loose quotation of Genesis 21:12 followed by an intriguing interpretive expansion:

> And through Isaac a name and seed would be named for him. And all of the seed of his sons would become nations. And they would be counted with the nations. But from the sons of Isaac one would become a holy seed and he would not be counted among the nations because he would become the portion of the Most High and all his seed would fall (by lot) into that which God will rule so that he might become a people (belonging) to the Lord, a (special) possession from all people, and so that he might become a kingdom of priests and a holy people (16:16b-18).[68]

First, we may note that Jub 16:16 adds the establishment of a name to the blessing of seed for Abraham. Rather than the addition of a new thought, this should be understood as an interpretive expansion of the naming of seed. Jubilees has created a hendiadys from Genesis 21:12 meaning that Abraham would obtain glory (i.e. a name) through his seed/offspring. This may well represent the author of Jubilees'

[67] Jubilees basically retells the story of Genesis 1 through Exodus 12.

[68] All quotations from Jubilees are taken from O. S. Wintermute, "Jubilees: A New Translation and Introduction."

interpretation of the Genesis 21:12 phrase against the broader narrative context of the Abraham story (Gen 12-25). This small alteration is probably an allusion to the foundational promise given to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3 and Jub 12:22-24, economically drawing on the language of one of the several enumerated blessings—"and I shall make your name great"—as an evocation of the entire sequence. In so doing, the author of Jubilees implies that the fundamental blessings promised to Abraham were to be fulfilled through Isaac and his descendants. The fact that "[t]he promise of fruitfulness for Abraham in Gen. xvii, 6 has been altered to a promise of greatness (Jub. xv, 8)"[69] shows that the author equated greatness with fruitfulness, and perhaps saw greatness as a general description of the promises to Abraham. If this be so, then we have a precedent, accessible to Paul, of connecting the promises to Abraham to Genesis 21:12. This then might shed new light on Romans 9:1-5 and Paul's enumeration of the blessings and privileges of Israel. The fact that he almost immediately moves to a quotation of Genesis 21:12 may indicate that he was conceiving of those blessings and privileges as emanating from the Abrahamic promises, especially the seed promise.

Next, we find that the promise to make Ishmael a nation recorded in Genesis 21:13 (cf. Gen 21:18; 16:10-12; 17:20) is transferred to all of the seed of Abraham's sons. This expansion probably represents a logical extension of the reason given in Genesis 21:13b for the promise: "he is your seed." Nevertheless, we can see a heightening of the promise here in almost eschatological style. The statement that all of the seed of Abraham's sons would be counted with the nations appears to indicate that they would be identified with them in their exclusion from the covenant and their wickedness as Gentiles. This is in line with Jubilees' concern for separation from the impure nations/Gentiles.[70] Already in the second century B.C.E., Ishmael was viewed as representative of all of the seed of Abraham who were not included in the Abrahamic covenant yet were recipients of the blessing of God in a lesser but still

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[69] Gene L. Davenport, *The Eschatology of the Book of Jubilees*, 51 n. 1. Davenport also notes that the promise of fruitfulness is again altered to one of greatness in 15:20, but with respect to Ishmael. This strengthens the likelihood that the author equated the two concepts. But the context prohibits us from perceiving an allusion to Gen 12 in Jub 15:20.

[70] For the exclusive nationalism of Jubilees, see James C. VanderKam, "The Origins and Purposes of the *Book of Jubilees*," 18-19; Wintermute, "Jubilees," 48; John C. Endres, *Biblical Interpretation in the Book of Jubilees*, 228-31.

significant sense. Even in the Old Testament itself, Ishmael came to be associated with the enemies of Israel (Gen 37; Ps 83:7 [Eng. 83:6]).

It is striking how the author of Jubilees now draws out similar implications as Paul from Genesis 21:12, viz., the same principle of distinction evident in the election of Isaac and rejection of Ishmael remains operative beyond that specific case. It is not physical descent from Abraham or Isaac that determines covenant election and blessing, but God's sovereign choice. The author of Jubilees applies the principle in a more concrete and limited way than Paul. There would be a distinction made among the sons of Isaac as there was between Isaac and Ishmael. One of his sons would become the covenant seed, separate from the nations and special to God. All those descended from this one holy seed would be God's chosen people, part of his kingdom, participating in the blessings of his rule, and fulfilling the great promise of Exodus 19:5-6 to be a kingdom of priests and a holy people.[71] The allusion to Ex 19:5-6 suggests that this one holy seed will become a holy nation because of his obedience to God's covenant, the condition laid down in that passage. It is through identification with the one holy seed, Jacob, that God's people are chosen. Jacob becomes the covenant identifier.[72] Thus there is a clear expression of corporate representation in Jub 16:18 evidenced by the identification of the one singular seed with his plural seed.

Paul applies the principle of distinction in a more general and abstract way. Jubilees applies the principle to the next generation, but stopped there. All of Jacob's seed would be chosen by God. But Paul abstracts a general principle of the way God works in salvation history from Genesis 21:12 and applies it to identifying true Israel in the present, just as in Romans 9:10-13 he goes on to find the principle operative in the specific case of Jacob and Esau. Paul proposes a different covenant identifier—faith—and a different covenant representative—Jesus Christ. But despite these differences, we appear to have identified an interpretive tradition stretching back to at least Jub 16:16-18 which took Genesis 21:12 to imply a further distinction among

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[71] It is interesting to find an allusion to Ex 19:6 in this context in light of the allusion to the same passage in 1 Pet 2:9, given that 1 Pet 2:6, 8 allude to Isa 28:16 and 8:14 respectively, as does Rom 9:33, and 1 Pet 2:10 alludes to Hos 2:1 [Eng. 1:10] and 2:25 [Eng. 2:23] as does Rom 9:25-26.

[72] On Jacob's central role in the covenant in Jubilees, see Endres, *Biblical Interpretation*, 228-31.

Isaac's seed, a tradition Paul probably knew from at least Jubilees.[73] We will see below that later rabbinic tradition corroborates our findings.

Yet there is more to learn from Jubilees. Jub 15:30-32 sheds further light on 16:16-18, revealing further connection to themes relevant to Romans 9:

> For the Lord did not draw Ishmael and his sons and his brothers and Esau near to himself, and he did not elect them because they are the sons of Abraham, for he knew them. But he chose Israel that they might be a people for himself. And he sanctified them and gathered them from all of the sons of man because (there are) many nations and many people, and they all belong to him, but over all of them he caused spirits to rule so that they might lead them astray from following him. But over Israel he did not cause any angel or spirit to rule because he alone is their ruler and he will protect them and he will seek for them at the hand of his angels and at the hand of his spirits and at the hand of all of his authorities so that he might guard them and bless them and they might be his and he might be theirs henceforth and forever (15:30-32).

Here Ishmael and Esau are directly related to one another as being non-elect, despite their descent from Abraham, apparently because the Lord knew their character to be wicked. This suggests a conditional election/rejection. Ishmael and Esau are 'counted with the nations' (cf. 16:17). Furthermore, God is said to have caused spirits to lead the nations astray from following him, while Israel is free of any such hindrance and enjoys God's protection and blessing. Thus we appear to have a case of determinism associated with the rejection of Ishmael and Esau as they are associated with the nations. On some readings, Paul's argument in Romans 9 also has a strong deterministic edge. In Jubilees, it is the Gentiles who are chosen to go astray and Israel who is chosen as God's people. For Paul, the reverse is true—and that is what presents the problem that takes Paul three whole chapters to deal with—the Gentiles are chosen as God's people and the majority of Israel is hardened.

Given that there is at least an apparent determinism in both Jubilees' and Paul's treatment of Ishmael, we may note that in Jubilees this 'determinism' is neither absolute nor unconditional according to 10:8, where Mastema's (i.e. Satan's) request

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[73] Based on Charles' evidence, Wintermute, "Jubilees," 49, claims that Paul was clearly familiar with expressions and ideas which appear in Jubilees.

for demons to remain at his disposal for leading the nations astray is based on the evil nature of humanity. Conversely, the election of Israel, which includes protection from spiritual harm unto blessing and relationship with God, will not keep them from falling away from God's covenant, resulting in separation from him like the Gentiles (15:33-34). So Israel's election also appears as conditional in Jubilees, at least with respect to its members remaining in covenant relationship with God.[74]

The second citation of Genesis 21:12 appears in a straightforward retelling of the weaning of Isaac and expulsion of Hagar and Ishmael (Jub 17:6).[75] Like Jub 16:16, 17:6 adds the establishment of a name to the blessing of seed for Abraham. We can see that Paul did not strictly follow Jubilees' interpretation of Genesis since 17:4 interprets Ishmael's action which provoked Sarah's ire to be playing and dancing and bluntly asserts that Sarah was jealous (cf. Gal 4:29). But 17:17 does view the expulsion of Hagar and Ishmael as a test of Abraham's faith. The concept of faith, here embodied in the faithfulness of Abraham, again comes up in connection with Jewish exegesis of a passage alluded to by Paul in Romans 9.

Faith also plays a role in Philo's understanding of Genesis 21. In *Mut*. 138 he tells us that very few can hear and so receive the sound of God-inspired laughter emanating from divine truth.[76] This is due to the evil of superstition in the souls of many. In other words, false faith renders most people unable to hear and receive God. This is relevant to Paul's argument in Romans 9-11 vis-à-vis the hardness motif. For Philo, in view of Genesis 21, it is sinful, false faith that renders one incapable of hearing and receiving God. Could it be so for Paul as well, contrary to some interpreters who would take Paul to be arguing that such inability is due to an unconditional choice of God? It is difficult to see just how Philo could take Genesis 21:6 in this direction, but it is significant that he does given its tie to the context of

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[74] The fact that Jub 15:31 appears to allude to Deut 32:8-9 strengthens our estimation of the relevance of Jubilees for Rom 9, for the Song of Moses (Deut 32:1-43) is alluded to by Paul in Rom 9-11 and considered by some as a determinative influence on Paul's argument (see Bell, *Provoked to Jealousy*; cf. Hays, *Echoes*, 163-64).

[75] Josephus (*Ant*. 213ff.) also retells the story in a rather straightforward way, requiring no detailed treatment. He does add some interpretations of his own, as when he informs us that Sarah loved Ishmael at first.

[76] Philo misquotes Gen 21:6 transforming it into the very opposite: "For whoever hears this will *not* rejoice with me" (emphasis mine). This seems to be an intentional alteration since Philo quotes Gen 21:6 correctly elsewhere (*Det*. 123; *Leg. All*. 82).

Genesis 21:12.

Philo

Philo emphasizes Isaac's supernatural birth as one begotten of God (*Leg. All.* 3.219; *Mut.* 137; *Det.* 124). In line with his name, Isaac represents joy and laughter. Caused by God directly, he is God's special work (*Det*. 124). Yet Philo does not emphasize the corresponding natural birth of Ishmael as Paul does in Gal 4:21-31. What he does emphasize is Ishmael's inferiority to Isaac (*Sob.* 8ff; *Cher.* 3-10; cf. *Post.* 130-31). Isaac was joy and the possessor of wisdom, while Ishmael is associated with elementary instruction and sophistry, immaturity, and even wickedness. For Philo, Hagar and Ishmael represent the necessary but basic knowledge and instruction who give way to Sarah and Isaac of the new dispensation of perfect virtue, wisdom, and joy.

Though the connection is not great, there is some similarity in the way Philo sees Hagar and Ishmael as a necessary stage leading to a more complete stage (i.e. Sarah and Isaac) to the way Paul sees a development in the people of God, the necessary and truly chosen physical Israel giving way to the fulfillment of the Church. Paul identifies true Israel with Isaac (Gal 4:21-31), whether this be understood as the Church (most likely), or as believing physical Israel. The similarity is too general to indicate a common exegetical tradition. It is probably due to the potential inherent in the story. But Philo's use of Genesis 21 gives evidence of another first century Jew's finding in the story of Isaac's birth and Ishmael's expulsion the elementary and necessary giving way to the full and complete.

Targums and Other Rabbinic Literature

Turning to the targums Onqelos, Pseudo-Jonathan, and Neofiti all agree in emphasizing God's faithfulness to his promise in Genesis 21:1-7.[77] Ps.-J., whose

[77] Neofiti does so in a marginal gloss on 21:7. Bernard Grossfeld comments that the addition of Onqelos in 21:7 accentuates God's character of fulfilling what he promises, and cites *Aggadath Bereshith* 28:3: "I command and fulfill what I say; and the Lord remembered Sarah" (*The Targum Onqelos to Genesis: Translated with a Critical Introduction, Apparatus and Notes*, 85).

translation of Genesis 21:9 identifies Ishmael's idolatry as the reason for Sarah's anger, also implicitly includes the idea in its translation of Genesis 21:12, identifying him as one "who has abandoned the training you have given him."[78] Thus, Ishmael's wickedness is given as a reason to Abraham for his rejection. Though much later than Paul, this ancient interpretation reminds us that Paul understood Ishmael's behavior as evil (Gal 4:29) and so could have influenced his understanding of Genesis 21:12 as well.

We have had occasion to consider Stegner's article, "Romans 9.6-29—A Midrash," when discussing Genesis 18:10, 14. In that same article he also draws attention to the resemblance between rabbinic treatment of Genesis 21:12 and Paul's. He points out that "[t]he rabbis frequently quoted Genesis 21.12 to show who belonged to Israel . . . ."[79] He correctly observes that it is significant "that both Paul and later Rabbinic literature use the same text to show who belonged to Israel" and associate Esau with Genesis 21:12.[80] He further calls attention to Genesis Rabbah 53:12 (and *Ned* 2.10, Jerusalem Talmud) which interprets Genesis 21:12, partly based on a partitive understanding of the Hebrew preposition ב, that those who believe in two worlds will be called the seed of Abraham, and those who reject such faith will not be so called. Stegner makes the significant point that both Genesis Rabbah and Paul maintain "it is not physical descent alone, but those who have a certain type of faith or belief who are regarded as children of Abraham."[81] Stegner's suggestion that this is a Palestinian exegetical tradition preserved by Paul, Genesis Rabbah, and *Ned* 2.10, relies too much on a general correspondence. It is an intriguing suggestion which is possible. But it is more probably due to the obvious inherent potential of Genesis 21:12 to act as a primary text for defining true Israel. It is remarkable that both Paul and the rabbis would find the determining factor to be faith rather than ancestry. But it is also a natural step for a spiritual religion, a step that Paul would argue is born out by the text of Genesis itself.

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[78] Maher's translation.

[79] Stegner, "Romans 9.6-29," 44. He cites *San* 59b from the Babylonian Talmud as a typical example.

[80] Ibid, 45.

[81] Ibid, 46.

The other significant point made by Stegner is that all his sources (the Babylonian and Jerusalem Talmuds, and Midrash Rabbah) agree in interpreting ב as partitive, restricting the seed of Abraham to some of Isaac's descendants and not all. To Stegner's references we would add *Ned* 31a, which contains the same interpretation, but even more explicitly identifies those not regarded as seed with the Gentiles/heathen, mentioning Ishmael and Esau. Given the same interpretation in Jubilees, we probably do have an exegetical tradition here, one which found in Genesis 21:12 a source for defining Israel coupled with a restrictive understanding of Israel based on a restrictive interpretation of the preposition ב, and which associated Ishmael and Esau with the Gentiles. Jewish tradition associated Genesis 21:12 with the definition of Israel, the faithfulness of God to his word, and the Gentiles.

Hebrews

Finally, we must consider the citation of Genesis 21:12 in Hebrews 11:18, its only other citation in the New Testament. We have already seen that Heb 11:11 alludes to Genesis 18 and connects it to the concept of faith. Now we see that the same author in the same chapter connects Genesis 21:12 to faith in an even more direct way. In this case, Genesis 21:12 explains the sticking point of Abraham's testing in the call to sacrifice Isaac. The fact that Isaac was the one through whom the covenant promises would be realized made sacrificing him inexplicable, for it would prevent the fulfillment of God's promise. The author of Hebrews, however, goes on to argue that the faith of Abraham by which he offered up Isaac was of such a character so as to rely on the consideration that God could raise the dead. The author of Hebrews does not use Genesis 21:12 to identify the true heirs of God's promise (i.e., the true Israel) as Paul does, but it is significant that his larger argument concerns both heirship (esp. 11:7-9) and faith, more specifically, heirship of righteousness and promise through faith.[82] In Romans 9 Paul uses Genesis 21:12 to prove that the true heirs of God's promises and righteousness are precisely those who believe God and

[82] It is perhaps not insignificant that the language of reckoning (λογισάμενος, Heb 11:19) appears immediately after the citation of Gen 21:12 (cf. Rom 9:8). While the word is not used in the same way as in Rom 9:8, it is interesting that similar language pops up in connection with Gen 21:12.

his promises in Christ. Furthermore, both Heb 11 and Romans 9 appeal to Genesis 21:12 in connection with an affirmation of God's faithfulness to his word, reflecting the tenor of the Genesis context, Heb 11 drawing out even more clearly the emphasis on God's omnipotence found in Gen. This all suggests that a significant portion of early Christianity understood Genesis 21:12 as related to faith, promise, and God's faithfulness to his word.[83]

The New Testament Context of Genesis 21:12 and 18:10, 14

We have finally come to the point at which we can examine Romans 9:6-9 in light of its Old Testament and related background. Many scholars now rightly regard Romans 9:6a as the theme of the whole of chapters 9-11: "But it is not that the word of God has failed."[84] Paul is defending the faithfulness of God to his promises to Israel. As Wright and others have argued, Paul "has systematically transferred the privileges and attributes of 'Israel' to the Messiah and his people."[85] This raises an

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[83] Although he does not consider the nature of the tradition, U. Luz, *Das Geschichtsverständnis des Paulus*, 101, judges that Rom 9:7 and Heb 11:18 probably reflect a community tradition on Gen 21:12 (though he incorrectly cites the OT reference as Gen 11:12).

[84] See note 67 in ch. 2 above. Some regard 9:6a as governing only some of Paul's argument, e.g., W. Kraus, *Das Volk Gottes: Zur Grundlegung der Ekklesiologie bei Paulus*, 298 (he would allow it to extend to 11:10 at most); Moo, 553-54, although even he admits that it "may well represent Paul's chief concern in these chapters [i.e., Rom 9-11]" ("The Theology of Romans 9-11: A Response to E. Elizabeth Johnson," 243); Haacker, 190; E. Brandenburger, "Paulinische Schriftauslegung in der Kontroverse um das Verheissungswort Gottes (Röm 9)," 10, 16ff. (he limits it to 9:6-29, and refers it especially to 9:1-13). Florian Wilk (*Die Bedeutung des Jesajabuches für Paulus*, 311-14) makes an appealing case for finding an allusion to Isaiah 40:7f. in Rom 9:6a (cf. Haacker, 190f.; idem, "Geschichtstheologie," 211 n. 15), but fails to convince for a lack of verbal agreement. It is more likely that Paul makes general allusion to a number of texts which speak of the infallibility of God's word (see Dunn, 538f. for references), though Wilk's case is strong enough for us to conclude that Isaiah 40:7f. is foremost among them. J. Ross Wagner, *Heralds of the Good News: Isaiah and Paul "in Concert" in the Letter to the Romans*, 47 n. 10, is wiser to speak of a "faint echo" and a subtle enhancement of Paul's point.

[85] N. T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology*, 250. Cf. Wright's treatment of Rom 9:1-5 on p. 237 as well as his unpublished doctoral thesis, "The Messiah and the People of God." Cf. also Byrne, 282, who notes that Paul has described "[t]he extension of Israel's privileges to Gentile believers and the inclusion of those Gentiles within the eschatological people of God . . . ." In fact, "All the ancient privileges of Israel—election, calling, divine filiation, inheritance, glory—have been mentioned (esp. in 8:14-39), without discrimination, in reference to this community inclusive of Gentile believers" (ibid); and cf. Brendan Byrne, *'Sons of God'-'Seed of Abraham': A Study of the Idea of Sonship of God of All Christians in Paul against the Jewish Background*, 127ff.; Mark D. Nanos, *The Mystery of Romans: The Jewish Context of Paul's Letter*, 112, who catalogues an impressive list of terminology applied by Paul to both Christians and non-Christian Jews (though Nanos would not agree with Wright's statement); G. K. Beale, "The Old

obvious problem for Paul's argument. If God's promises to Israel have been transferred to the Church (or at least fulfilled in the Church), and the vast majority of Israel remain outside of the Church because of their rejection of Jesus the Messiah, then Israel has not received the fulfillment of the promises made to her and is cut off from God and his salvation. This calls into question God's faithfulness to his promises. If he did not remain true to his word to Israel, then how could he be trusted to fulfill those same promises to the Church? How could he be regarded as faithful or righteous?[86]

The Faithful Word of God and the True Israel (Romans 9:6)

So Paul vehemently denies that any such conclusion can be drawn from what he has said. The word of God has not failed. In speaking of ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ, "Paul means the whole complex of God's address to Israel, recorded in the scriptures and grounding the privileges just listed."[87] This is a broad term which embodies various aspects of God's address to Israel—his purpose, his promises, his election, his written word, etc. Scholars have offered various opinions on the precise meaning of the phrase here such as the purpose,[88] election,[89] promise(s),[90] gospel,[91] or Scriptures[92] of

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Testament Background of Reconciliation in 2 Corinthians 5-7 and Its Bearing on the Literary Problem of 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1," 230-31; Haacker, 180.

[86] Cf. the treatment of the theme of Rom 9-11 in ch. 2 above, especially p. 79, and the articulate descriptions of this problem by Ziesler and Hays quoted there.

[87] Byrne, 293.

[88] Cranfield, 472-73; Sanday and Headlam, 240; Piper, *Justification*, 49-50; E. C. Blackman, "Divine Sovereignty and Missionary Strategy in Romans 9-11," 127; Chae, *Paul*, 218; Bell, *Provoked to Jealousy*, 179; Judith M. Gundry Volf, *Paul and Perseverance: Staying In and Falling Away*, 163; Richardson, *Paul's Language*, 32.

[89] B. Mayer, *Unter Gottes Heilsratschluss: Prädestinationsaussagen bei Paulus*, 170: "Das Wort der Erwählung."

[90] Dunn, 539; Fitzmyer, 559; O. Hofius, "Das Evangelium und Israel: Erwägungen zu Römer 9-11," 300 n. 13 (he rightly recognizes the Abrahamic character of the promise); Kuss, 700; G. Lüdemann, *Paulus und das* Judentum, 52f. n. 118; Schreiner, 491; Moo, 572-73; Johannes Munck, *Christ & Israel: An Interpretation of Romans 9-11*, 34; C. Müller, *Gottes Gerechtigkeit und Gottes Volk: Eine Untersuchung zu Römer 9-11*, 29; Wilk, *Die Bedeutung des Jesajabuches*, 312; Dieter Zeller, *Juden und Heiden in der Mission des Paulus: Studien zum Römerbrief* , 114; Ziesler, 239 (implied); Käsemann, 261 (implied); Brandenburger, "Schriftauslegung," 13, 18 n. 27; Murray, 2.9. Schreiner, 491 n. 1, correctly claims that most scholars opt for this meaning and provides an impressive list of

God. But it is best to understand a broad reference in which certain aspects come to the fore. First, this word has been written in the Old Testament. This is the foundational characteristic on which the others are built. That is partly why Paul goes on to argue his case from Scripture. Any interpretation of the phrase must be able to relate it to Paul's lament in 9:1-5, since the denial of 9:6a arises out of that lament and the accompanying list of Jewish privileges. The apparent failure of these privileges to effect the salvation which is their corollary presents the problem Paul must address. And it is precisely through the Scriptures of Israel that these promised privileges were "spoken." Indeed, in light of the benefits and privileges of Israel, which all emanate from the Abrahamic covenant and promises, this word is one of promise (cf. 9:9, ἐπαγγελίας γὰρ ὁ λόγος οὗτος). Therefore, ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ has its greatest referent in the promises of God to Israel recorded in Scripture.[93] This judgment is confirmed

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scholars. But his inclusion of Piper, idem, is incorrect, for he actually argues *against* promise and advocates purpose as the proper meaning of the phrase. S. K. Williams, "The 'Righteousness of God' in Romans," 281, makes the insightful and intriguing suggestion that the phrase refers specifically to "the pledge to Abraham that through him *all* peoples of the earth would become the children of God through faith" (emphasis his), citing 9:9's reference to the promise of a son by Sarah. But he is wrong to limit the phrase to this specific promise and fails to take account of the logical flow of thought in 9:1-9 and to see that the child promise encompasses the many OT promises which ensure blessing for Israel and that the phrase must answer to the problem of Israel's rejection raised in 9:1-5 with its catalog of Israelite privileges. Nevertheless, Williams has rightly seen that the child promise with its universal scope is important for Paul's argument in Rom 9—even if he places it too soon in the argument—and that Paul's thought in the chapter "centers on the inclusion of the Gentiles into the people of God on the basis of faith"; cf. our treatment of Paul's use of Gen 18:10, 14 below. Moreover, even if he does not have it exactly right, Williams moves in the right direction by connecting the promises of God to Israel with the Abrahamic promise[s]. It might be fair to say that this is the foremost promise Paul has in mind.

[91] E. Güttgemanns "Heilsgeschichte bei Paulus oder Dynamik des Evangeliums: Zur strukturellen Relevanz von Röm 9-11 für die Theologie des Römerbriefes," 40-42; more recently, Angelika Reichert, *Der Römerbrief als Gratwanderung: Eine Untersuchung zur Abfassungsproblematik*, 189f. See also John G. Lodge, *Romans 9-11: A Reader-Response Analysis*, 51-52, on this option. For an extended defense of this position see R. D. Kotansky, "A Note on Romans 9:6: *Ho Logos Tou Theou* as the Proclamation of the Gospel." Heikki Räisänen, "Römer 9-11: Analyse eines geistigen Ringens," 2897 n. 32, is decidedly against the suggestion as is Lüdemann, ibid.

[92] Moo, 572-73, combines this option with the idea of promise. Cf. Schlier, 290.

[93] This is essentially Moo's (ibid) position. Piper, *Justification*, 49-50, makes a good case for taking the phrase to mean the purpose of God by pointing to the "remaining purpose" of 9:11 as parallel. As we have indicated, purpose is surely an aspect of ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ here. But 9:1-5 and 9:8-9 should be recognized as the more immediate context. The problem raised by 9:1-5 is whether what God has said of Israel, what he has promised to them, has been fulfilled. This gives Rom 9 its character as theodicy. Paul is not arguing that God has remained true to his purpose as much as to his word (though the latter includes the former). 9:8-9 show that Paul is indeed thinking more fundamentally of promise, a promise whose purpose remains. For a synonymous phrase (τὸ ῥῆμα τοῦ θεοῦ) in a context with some striking parallels, including the righteousness of God seen in the sinfulness of people, the rejection of

by the parallel phrase, τὰ λόγια τοῦ θεοῦ, found in 3:2 and also referring to the Scriptures of Israel with special reference to the promises of God.[94] Yet God's scriptural promises cannot finally be separated from his purpose or his election or his word or his gospel.

This understanding of ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ underscores the current scholarly emphasis on the Jewishness of Paul and the orientation of the present study, which finds Paul's Jewish heritage to be the most helpful background for understanding his thought. It also reminds us that "it is a mistake to make a hard distinction between the significance the phrase has here and its significance elsewhere in the NT,"[95] for although the phrase may often refer to the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ, Paul's usage should alert us to the fact that such proclamation was conceived of as based on and originating in the Scriptures of Israel and as a fulfillment of God's promises to Israel.

To defend his main assertion that God's word has not failed, Paul states, "for not all who are from Israel are Israel." That is, not all who belong to ethnic/physical Israel are true, spiritual Israel, which is heir to the promises.[96] It is almost universally

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Israel, free will, and the Lord's righteous judgment on both the individual and group, see *Pss. Sol.* 9 (the phrase occurs in v. 2; G. Maier, *Mensch und freier Wille nach den jüdischen Religionspartien zwichen Ben Sira und Paulus*, 342, 400, even suggests that this psalm is an indirect polemic against Qumran's doctrine of predestination and that Paul may have in turn reacted against the psalm's advocacy of free will).

[94] Piper, *Justification*, 125, admits this meaning of the phrase in 3:2 because the following verse speaks of Jewish unbelief and God's faithfulness. It is generally acknowledged that 3:1ff. in some way begins an argument Paul resumes in 9-11 (see note 125 in ch. 2 above). Furthermore, 3:1 begins to speak of the advantages of the Jews, but only mentions τὰ λόγια τοῦ θεοῦ. This phrase is probably a summary description of the more complete list taken up in 9:4-5 (Cf. the usual suggestion that this is only the first of the list continued in 9:4f.; see e.g. R. Scroggs, "Paul as Rhetorician: Two Homilies in Romans 1-11," 277 n. 19; Moo, 560 n. 26; G. Eichholz, *Die Theologie des Paulus im Umriss*, 286). All of this makes the phrase of 3:2 all the more important for understanding 9:6. Kraus, *Volk Gottes*, 298 n. 174, also finds the phrase of 3:2 to be synonymous to the one in 9:6.

[95] Cranfield, 473, though he understands the phrase to mean "the declared purpose of God."

[96] Reading a genitive of possession or an adjectival genitive rather than one of derivation or relationship explicitly indicating ancestral descent. But all of these make good sense and there is no need to press for a precise meaning. All are really in view. In any case, οἱ ἐξ Ἰσραήλ are equivalent to the Ἰσραηλῖται of 9:4, Paul's brethren and kinsmen according to the flesh. See our analysis of 9:4-5 in the previous chapter. This interpretation of the phrase does not demand that the first "Israel" of 9:6 refer to the patriarch Jacob/Israel; it can just as easily refer to the people and the phrase to descent from, or relationship to, the people (cf. Rom 11:1; Piper, *Justification*, 42), despite the contention of Haacker, "Geschichtstheologie," 212 n. 16, who cites Schlatter and Michel. His assertion that the *Volksname* "Israel" always appears with the article unless connected with a preposition (following Blaß-Debrunner-Rehkopf § 262) is simply not true (see e.g., Rom 9:27, 31; 10:19; 11:2, 7). For texts

acknowledged that Paul uses the term Ἰσραήλ in two different senses in 9:6b.[97] But there is debate over the meaning of the second occurrence of Ἰσραήλ. The first occurrence obviously refers to ethnic Israel. But the latter occurrence could refer to either (a) the Church composed of both Jews and Gentiles who believe in Jesus Christ,[98] or (b) Jews who believe in Jesus Christ (i.e. Jewish Christians).[99] Another

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attesting to some sort of belief in salvation based on ethnicity, see Matt 3:9/Luke 3:8 and the famous *m. Sanh.*10:1; cf. John 8:37-39; Dunn, 539, and further references he provides.

[97] Lloyd Gaston, "Israel's Enemies in Pauline Theology," 94, has offered the strange view that οἱ ἐξ Ἰσραήλ refers to those outside Israel, i.e. Gentiles and apostate Jews. But this completely misunderstands Paul's argument and has been soundly refuted on contextual and grammatical grounds by Elizabeth E. Johnson, *The Function of Apocalyptic and Wisdom Traditions in Romans 9-11*, 139 n. 103, 193-95. She notes *inter alia* that "Gaston's interpretation would require ἔξω" rather than ἐκ in this context (idem, 139).

[98] Held by James W. Aageson, "Typology, Correspondence, and the Application of Scripture in Romans 9-11," 55; idem, *Written Also for Our Sake: Paul and the Art of Biblical Interpretation*, 91f.; Karl Barth, *Church* Dogmatics, 2.2.214; Byrne, 292-93 (more or less; on Byrne's view see below); Wagner, *Heralds*, 49f. (in essentially the same sense as Byrne; see esp. notes 16, 18, 19. The idea of the inclusion of Gentiles in Paul's redefinition of Israel is clearer in the original version of his monograph found in his doctoral thesis: J. Ross Wagner, " 'Who Has Believed Our Message?': Paul and Isaiah 'in Concert' in the Letter to the Romans," 54); B. D. Chilton, "Romans 9-11 as Scriptural Interpretation and Dialogue with Judaism," 27, 31; E. Dinkler, "The Historical and the Eschatological Israel in Romans, Chapters 9-11: A Contribution to the Problem of Predestination and Individual Responsibility," 114; J. Christian Beker, "Romans 9-11 in the Context of the Early Church," 46 (changing his earlier position found in his *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought*, 328); E. Earle Ellis, *Paul's Use of the Old Testament*, 137; Güttgemanns, "Heilsgeschichte," 42; Francis Watson, *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles: A Sociological Approach*, 163; Hofius, "Das Evangelium und Israel," 301f. (essentially; "die Heilsgemeinde Israel"); E. E. Johnson, *Function*, 140-41 (seemingly); Lüdemann, *Paulus*, 32, 53 n. 119; Nygren, 361-62; Rosemary R. Ruether, *Faith and Fratricide: The Theolgical Roots of Anti-Semitism*, 98, 105; Schmithals, 339-42; N. Walter, "Zur Interpretation von Römer 9-11," 174; Wright, "Messiah," 193-97; *Climax*, 238, 250; and some early church fathers, e.g. Diodore of Tarsus (see Bray, 247). Cf. Schlier's cautious statement (291); Williams, "The 'Righteousness of God'," 281. Chae, *Paul*, denies this designation (228 n. 64), but it is difficult to see how his formulation, "those who are in Christ Jesus . . . regardless of their ethnic origins" (230), is any different.

[99] This is the view of the majority of scholars and held by M. Barth, "The Testimony of Romans 9-11 and Other Pauline Texts," 34; Cranfield, 473-74; Michael Cranford, "Election and Ethnicity: Paul's View of Israel in Romans 9.1-13," 34 n. 28; Dunn, 539-40; Fitzmyer, 559-60; Bell, *Provoked to Jealousy*; Hübner, *Gottes Ich*, 17; idem, *Law in Paul's Thought*, 58; Käsemann, 263; F. Dreyfus, "Le passé et le present d'Israël (Rom 9, 1-5; 11, 1-24)," 135 (seemingly); Bruce Longenecker, "Different Answers to Different Issues: Israel, the Gentiles and Salvation History in Romans 9-11," 96; Lübking, *Paulus und Israel*, 64, 66ff.; Mayer, *Unter Gottes Heilsratschluss*, 171; Morris, 352f.; Mounce, 197; P. von der Osten-Sacken, "Römer 9-11 als Schibbolet christlicher Theologie," 308; Piper, *Justification*, 65-71; Murray, 2.9-10; F. Müßner, *Tractate on the Jews: The Significance of Judaism for Christian Faith*, 28-29; Forlines, 256; Peter Richardson, *Israel in the Apostolic Church*, 131f.; Douglas C. Mohrmann, "Semantic Collisions at the Intertextual Crossroads : A Diachronic and Synchronic Study of Romans 9:30-10:13," 197 (apparently); Moo, 573-74; Rese, "Israel und Kirche," 212-13; Schreiner, 494; Graham Harvey, *The True Israel: Uses of the Names Jew, Hebrew and Israel in Ancient Jewish and Early Christian Literature*, 228-32; Michael Theobald, "Kirche und Israel nach Röm 9-11," 7; idem, *Die Römerbrief*, 268-71; G. Wagner, "The Future of Israel: Reflections on Romans 9-11," 83f.

interpretation has recently emerged which regards this second occurrence of Ἰσραήλ as ambiguous or indeterminate.[100] Byrne's version of this view has most to commend it:

> Paul has not yet defined this "Israel"; it is better to see him as stating simply that the two "Israels" are not coextensive. This leaves open the possibility that the "(true, called) Israel" can include Gentile believers—a possibility which Paul depicts as a reality in vv 24-29.[101]

This amounts to a cautious affirmation of option (a) (Israel = the Church).

Byrne's point that Paul has not yet defined true Israel must be admitted. So any definition must be derived from the context of Paul's argument, Romans generally, and Paul's other writings. It is important to recognize from the outset that whoever this true Israel is, it is a recipient of both the call of God referred to throughout the chapter and the promised blessings of God described in 9:4-5. Those who support option (b) (Jewish Christians) rely on the fact that Paul's examples from the Old

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Of course, Gaston's view, noted above, constitutes a third option, namely, that both occurrences of Ἰσραήλ refer to ethnic Israel. But this view is so unlikely that we need not give it further consideration. Lodge, *Romans 9-11*, 52, recognizes all three options.

[100] Lodge, *Romans 9-11*, 50-60, 64-67, argues this from a reader-response perspective based on poststructuralist thought which believes meaning to be an activity of readers rather than a property of the text. He speaks of Paul/the implied author as "unreliable" (64), and argues that Paul takes an ambiguous stance towards Israel in Rom 9-11, allowing for "pro-Israel and anti-Israel constructions of the implied reader" (64; cf. 33). But cf. p. 214 where he reveals his opinion that "Israel is *more than* those descended from the patriarchs (9:6b). However, it is certainly not *less than* that" (emphasis his). This is in essential agreement with Gaston (see n. 97 above) and John G. Gager, *The Origins of Anti-Semitism: Attitudes Toward Judaism in Pagan and Christian Antiquity*, 223-25, who think Paul is arguing for the inclusion of Gentiles in Israel with no concept of an exclusion of Jews. Given his poststructuralist perspective, Lodge's work is more useful as a compendium of various interpretations with their supporting reasons than as an exegesis of the text of Rom 9-11, which we would argue in opposition to Lodge should seek to determine Paul's original intention. Charles H. Cosgrove, *Elusive Israel: The Puzzle of Election in Romans*, from a less radical perspective which still accords some role for the reader in constructing meaning, and from a rhetorical perspective via the ancient rhetorical device of co-deliberation, argues that "the identity of true Israel is irreducibly indeterminate in Romans" (xiii). Cosgrove is far more convincing than Lodge because he posits a plausible historical reality from which Paul may have intended to give his readers freedom "to choose what his text will mean within the limits of plausible exegesis" (xiii). But in the end he is not convincing enough and does not in my judgment succeed in showing that what he himself admits to be "a doubtful surprise resolution" (34) was in fact Paul's intent. For further criticism of Cosgrove's approach, from a rhetorical perspective, see Kim, *God, Israel, and the Gentiles*, 118-19 n. 10.

[101] Byrne, 293; note that Byrne had already basically articulated this view earlier, in *'Sons of God'-'Seed of Abraham,'* 130. Cf. Wagner, *Heralds*, 49f.; P.-G. Klumbies, "Israels Vorzüge und das Evangelium von der Gottesgerechtigkeit in Römer 9-11," 142-44.

Testament are of distinction within Abraham's physical descendants. But this cannot count for much since almost any example from the Old Testament would deal with ethnic Israel. In fact, Paul's use of Abraham actually supports a reference to believers in general since Abraham the believer (τῷ πιστῷ, Gal 3:9) was really pre-Israel and associated with faith and universalism in Paul, the New Testament, and early Judaism[102] (cf. Paul's point in Rom 4:10 that Abraham was justified by faith before he was circumcised). Moreover, Paul has already used Abraham significantly in Romans (ch. 4), and this should incline us to interpret what Paul says now as building on what he has already said. He has said that Abraham's seed/descendants are those who believe in Jesus Christ whether Jew or Gentile (the burden of Rom 4).[103] Since this point is central to the epistle to this point, it should weigh heavily in consideration of 9:6.

9:1-5 has also been heralded as supporting a Jewish referent for the second occurrence of Ἰσραήλ in 9:6.[104] Paul has clearly spoken of ethnic Israel in 9:1-5 (τῶν ἀδελφῶν μου τῶν συγγενῶν μου κατὰ σάρκα, v. 3) and related her to the covenantal blessings of Abraham. Therefore, it is claimed that the ecclesial interpretation of Israel would contradict this. But that is the point. Paul's declaration in 9:6b is purposely expressed in a self-contradictory way in acknowledgment of the apparent contradiction.[105] It appears that God's word of promise to Israel has failed precisely because ethnic Israel as a whole has excluded itself from the elect people of God by rejecting the Messiah, the covenant identifier and the representative of the covenant people, thereby forfeiting the covenant promises and blessings. In short, they are not receiving the promised blessings which nevertheless are being realized in the Church

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[102] For a survey of early Jewish uses of Abraham (200 B. C. E. - 200 C. E.) see Jeffrey S. Siker, *Disinheriting the Jews: Abraham in Early Christian Controversy*, 17-27, who highlights three themes in this area: (1) God's promises to Abraham; (2) the faith of Abraham; and (3) the status of Abraham as intermediary. For further literature on early Jewish uses of Abraham, see notes 16, 18, 19, and 23 in Siker, 202-03. Our own treatment of Jewish exegetical traditions surrounding Gen 18 and 21 has found the concepts of faith and universalism associated with Abraham. See also K. Berger, "Abraham in den paulinischen Hauptbriefen," 77-83, for (an older) treatment of Abraham in Rom 9-11; cf. N. L. Calvert, "Abraham," 8.

[103] Cf. Wagner, *Heralds*, 49 nn. 16 and 18.

[104] See e.g. Moo, 574; Stephen Westerholm, "Paul and the Law in Romans 9-11," 222. Cf. our exegesis of Rom 9:1-5 in the previous chapter.

[105] Cf. Dunn, 587.

as Paul has argued throughout Romans even from the beginning.[106] That is the problem that Paul deals with in Romans 9-11, and that is why he must demonstrate God's faithfulness to his word, that is, his righteousness. The answer Paul gives is that the promises were not made to ethnic Israel but to the covenant people of God, the seed of Abraham, the true spiritual Israel.[107] These considerations render hollow the claim that an ecclesial understanding of the second Israel in 9:6 contradicts 9:1-5.

Returning to a point we already began to make, when we take into account that Paul has: (1) explicitly argued that the seed of Abraham are those who have faith in Jesus Christ, whether Jew or Gentile (Rom 4); and (2) explicitly argued that ethnic Jewishness is not true Jewishness, but that inward Jewishness—or circumcision of the heart, or the obedience of faith—makes one truly Jewish whether ethnic Jew or Gentile (Rom 2:17-29);[108] and (3) applied the blessings and privileges of Old Testament Israel to the Church composed of both Jew and Gentile, then we would expect the second occurrence of Ἰσραήλ in 9:6 to be just what Paul has argued about the Church—the elect people of God identified by faith and recipient of the covenantal promises of God to Israel. We may add to this a fact which many advocates of position (b) (Ἰσραήλ=Jewish Christians) admit, that Paul's thought in

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[106] Cf. Rom 1:1-2, where Paul speaks of the gospel of God promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures. Hays, *Echoes*, 34, claims that Paul's placement of this topic at the opening of the letter discloses an urgent concern "to ground his exposition of the gospel in Israel's sacred texts." Indeed, Paul's Old Testament quotations in Romans spiral around "the problem of God's saving righteousness in relation to Israel. The insistent echoing voice of Scripture in and behind Paul's letter presses home a single theme relentlessly: the gospel is the fulfillment, not the negation, of God's word to Israel."

[107] Thus Watson's criticized statement that "the point of 9:6ff is to deny that the Jewish people were *ever* elected for salvation" is on target in that they were never elected for salvation based on ethnicity (Watson, *Paul*, 227 n. 9, emphasis his; criticized e.g. by Dunn, 540, and Schreiner, 494 n. 8; cf. Cranford, "Election and Ethnicity," 35, who supports Watson; and the similar views of Heikki Räisänen, "Paul, God, and Israel: Romans 9-11 in Recent Research," 182; idem, "Römer 9-11," 2900-01, and Hübner, *Gottes Ich*, 20-22).

[108] For an intriguing intertextual study of Rom 2:17-29 see Timothy W. Berkley, *From a Broken Covenant to Circumcision of the Heart: Pauline Intertextual Exegesis in Romans 2:17-29*. He finds that through exegesis of texts like Gen 17, Deut 29-30, Ezek 36:16-27, and Jer 9:26 Paul has redefined Jewish identity spiritually, over against ethnic/national considerations, as circumcision of the heart needed by and available to both ethnic Jews and Gentiles, though allowing for a special place to ethnic Israel in God's plan. Indeed, he finds that 2:17-29 lays "the groundwork for redefining who is true Israel, the children of Abraham" in chapters 4 and 9 (152) and that, "The point in Romans 1-4 is that this spiritual circumcision of the heart is available to, and needed by, both Jews and gentiles" (155).

Romans and elsewhere conceives of the Church as true Israel.[109] Schreiner, who advocates position (b), nevertheless states the case well:

> Paul almost certainly labels the church "the Israel of God" in Gal. 6:16, and this follows from the fact that the church is the true circumcision (Rom. 2:28-29; Phil. 3:3) and the true family of Abraham (Rom. 4:9-25; Gal. 3:7, 14, 29). Moreover, Gentiles are grafted onto the olive tree of Israel (Rom. 11:17-24), and OT texts that refer to Israel are applied to Gentiles who believe in Christ (9:24-26).[110]

Furthermore, the fact that in 9:24-29 Paul represents the called of God to be from both Jews and Gentiles suggests that this is precisely his definition of the true Israel.[111] Finally, redefinition of "Israel" as a group based not on ethnicity but on faith and existential experience of God may be found elsewhere in early Jewish literature.[112]

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[109] See Fitzmyer, 560; Moo, 573-74; Schreiner, 494.

[110] Schreiner, 494.

[111] This invalidates Moo's (574) point that 9:27-29 speak of the remnant, a group within ethnic Israel. He ignores 9:24-26, which refer to the calling of a portion of the Gentiles. The whole of 9:24-29 explicates Paul's understanding of Israel/the called, a "remnant" from both Jews and Gentiles. Mohrmann, "Semantic Collisions," 197, strangely denies an ecclesiological definition of Israel in 9:6b, but essentially admits an ecclesiological definition of "children of God/the promise" in 9:8, which clearly interprets 9:6b-7, as will be demonstrated below.

[112] See e.g. Ellen Birnbaum, *The Place of Judaism in Philo's Thought: Israel, Jews, and Proselytes*. According to Birnbaum, the etymological sense of the name "Israel" as "one who sees God," applicable to both Jews and non-Jews, is primary for Philo, while to belong to Israel one must believe in monotheism. Yet Philo still affirms special standing with God for Jews. Longenecker, *Eschatology and the Covenant*, 152f., 274ff., has also found that for the author of 4 Ezra the term "Israel" is an eschatological term that ultimately refers not to the ethnic covenant people of Israel, but to anyone who is individually righteous by works. Cf. Paul Spilsbury, *The Image of the Jew in Flavius Josephus' Paraphrase of the Bible*, 145, who concludes that Josephus sees obedience to the laws of Moses as equally important to descent from Abraham. He also argues that Josephus often uses the terms Ἰουδαῖοι, Ἑβραῖοι, and Ἰσραηλῖται synonymously, though each term may have its own particular usages (36-42). And cf. also the Qumran community's concept of true Israel as reflected in texts such as CD 3:13-14 (cited by James W. Aageson, *Written Also for Our Sake: Paul and the Art of Biblical Interpretation*, 92). Harvey, *True Israel*, from his study of the use of the same names in ancient Jewish and early Christian literature, concludes that Israel was not used in the sense of "True Israel" or a pure community except in later Christian literature, e.g. Justin Martyr. As noted earlier, Harvey denies that Ἰσραήλ refers to the Church in 9:6. But he does not take sufficient account of the context of Romans and Paul's thought generally. His work seems bent on denying the application of the term "Israel" to the Christian church, admitting only instances of undeniable clarity. Thus he admits that Gal 6:16 is an instance of the concept of a true Israel applied to those who believe in Christ, but concludes due to the polemical nature of the argument that "the name cannot be said to have been usurped by the Christian group at this date" (226). But the important point for us is not whether the Church usurped the name "Israel," but whether Paul could use the term of the Church. Harvey's own treatment reluctantly suggests the answer is yes. For an argument supporting a reference to the church in Gal 6:16 ("the

Excursus: The Translation of Romans 9:6b and the Corporate Nature of Election

John Piper seems to base his understanding of the second occurrence of Ἰσραήλ in Romans 9:6 as referring to the elect within ethnic Israel upon the grammar of the verse.[113] He argues that οὐ γὰρ πάντες οἱ ἐξ Ἰσραὴλ οὗτοι Ἰσραήλ should be translated as "for all those from Israel, these are not Israel." Although this translation might seem peculiar at first, it has been followed by Dunn, Moo, Schreiner, and Wilk.[114] One reason why some more recent commentators might follow Piper or give this translation more credence than one might expect is that Piper gives concrete reasons for his construal of the sentence, whereas virtually no other commentators justify their constructions, as Piper complains. Despite Piper's complaint, the reason for this is probably that the typical construction of the passage is the most natural way to take the Greek. Οὐ would generally modify what immediately follows it rather than a more distant phrase. Therefore, there must be some good reasons to follow Piper's awkward rendering. He gives two reasons for taking οὐ to modify the clause οὗτοι Ἰσραήλ rather than as typically understood, πάντες: (1) οὗτοι refers to a definite group while οὐ πάντες is indefinite; (2) he also points to Romans 7:15 (οὐ γὰρ ὃ θέλω τοῦτο πράσσω, ἀλλ' ὃ μισῶ τοῦτο ποιῶ.) as a grammatical parallel, in which οὐ must modify the verb πράσσω at the end of the phrase rather than the closer verb θέλω due to the contrastive nature of the following phrase. But the arguments do not stand up under scrutiny.

First, while it may be true that the negation οὐ πάντες is indefinite, it is not necessary to press for a definite referent for οὗτοι, for it functions as a virtual copula[115] in this verbless clause, highlighting the contrast between οἱ ἐξ Ἰσραήλ and

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Israel of God") based upon OT background, see G. K. Beale, "Peace and Mercy Upon the Israel of God: The Old Testament Background of Galatians 6,16b."

[113] See especially *Justification*, 65-67. Piper does not say this directly, but does say that 9:6b proves there to be an election within Israel in the context of his discussion of his translation of the phrase. As Schreiner's (493) comment implies, the translation does not demand the Jewish Christian view. But it does favor it.

[114] Dunn, 539, not officially adopting it, but calling it more precise; Moo, 573; Schreiner, 493; Wilk, *Bedeutung des Jesajabuches*, 313. Both Lodge, *Romans 9-11*, and Cosgrove, *Elusive Israel*, 117, note the translation. None of these scholars explicitly analyze Piper's case.

[115] Cf. Mark 6:2 and its parallel in Matt 13:56 where τούτῳ differs in number from the subject and is

the second occurrence of Ἰσραήλ. This seems to be the assumption that lies behind the vast majority of translations. So there is no compelling reason to take οὐ as modifying a phrase so distant on the grounds of definiteness.

As for Romans 7:15, I must question whether οὐ modifies the second clause. Piper is correct to say that οὐ cannot modify θέλω since the next clause would repeat rather than contrast what Paul has just said, as ἀλλ' demands. But this does not mean that οὐ must then modify the next verb five words away in the next clause. Piper appears to assume that οὐ must modify a verb. But that is not the case. Οὐ can modify any word, verb or not, and even clauses.[116] I would suggest that the most natural way to take the Greek would be to construe οὐ as modifying the relative clause ὃ θέλω: "for not that which I wish do I do, but that which I hate, I do" (even more literally, "for not that which I wish, this I do, but that which I hate, this I do").[117] Of course, this literal rendering is quite awkward in English. But we must be careful not to let English translation determine our understanding of the Greek text. The accusative relative clause is thrust forward to the beginning of the sentence for emphasis, while the demonstrative pronoun is also used for emphasis.[118] Perhaps the best translation of Romans 9:6b would recognize the copulative function of οὗτοι and yet capture its simultaneous emphasizing function: "For not all who are of Israel are actually Israel."

The larger concern of Piper's construction of 9:6b is his estimation that it establishes Paul's argument as concerned with individual election unto salvation. Although many modern scholars are convinced that Paul implies nothing about the salvation of individuals in Romans 9,[119] there remains a persistent strain who think

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used as a copula. Cf. also the use of הוּא in biblical Hebrew and Aramaic as a copula.

[116] See BDAG, s.v. οὐ, where Rom 9:6 is also listed as an example of the negation of πάντες. Another option would be to take οὐ to negate the whole sentence.

[117] Cf. Dunn, 375, 389, who takes οὐ to modify an implied verb "to be," tantamount to modifying ὃ θέλω: "for that I commit is not what I want, but what I hate that I do." Accordingly, we might also translate Rom 9:6: "for it is not all who are from Israel who are Israel." This would find support from 9:7a where οὐδ' arguably (see below) negates the whole subordinate clause introduced by ὅτι.

[118] Rom 7:16 furnishes another clear example of the relative accusative placed at the beginning of a sentence for emphasis: εἰ δὲ ὃ οὐ θέλω τοῦτο ποιῶ. Here also, the demonstrative pronoun refers to the relative clause. We should not think that if a relative clause or word is negated that the demonstrative pronoun for that reason could not be used, especially since its purpose is to give emphasis.

[119] Moo, 571, calls this group "an increasingly large number." Indeed, several recent treatments of Rom

that he does. John Piper is probably the most detailed and forceful modern proponent of this view vis-à-vis Romans 9, and is followed by the recent commentaries of Moo and Schreiner.[120] Although the general trend in recent years has been to reject this view, there has been little significant interaction with Piper's arguments on these points, despite the fact that his work is generally regarded as a standard exegesis of Romans 9:1-23.[121] Often phrased as a single issue, there are actually two main issues here which are separate but related:[122] (1) whether Paul speaks of an individual or corporate election; (2) whether he speaks of an election unto eternal destiny or historical role.

Piper argues convincingly that Paul is speaking of eschatological salvation based on his grief-filled lament in 9:1-5.[123] Our exegesis of 9:1-5 has confirmed this insight. Moreover, 10:1 shows that Paul's concern is for the salvation of his kinsmen: "Brothers, the desire of my heart and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation." As Paul moves to a new stage in the argument of Romans 9-11 he restates

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9 have found that Paul is not discussing the eternal fate of individuals: e.g. Byrne, 299; L. T. Johnson, 140; Wright, *Climax*, 238-39; Fitzmyer, 563.

[120] Schreiner has actually dedicated his commentary to Piper. See also Schreiner's article on this subject: "Does Romans 9 Teach Individual Election unto Salvation? Some Exegetical and Theological Reflections;" Moo's essay, "The Theology of Romans 9-11," 252; and Kuss, 928-29. Cf. Jack Cottrell ("Conditional Election"), who argues for an individual election which is (in contrast to Schreiner et al.) conditional.

[121] Piper is cited frequently. Hays, *Echoes*, 206, for example, cites him for his thorough discussion of Paul's exegesis, and Cosgrove, *Elusive Israel*, 105, comments that "Piper makes a strong exegetical case that while Paul's argument focuses on the question of Israel and God's interaction with peoples in history, it establishes, as one of its premises, that God unconditionally elects individuals to eternal glory or eternal destruction, the election to wrath serving the election to mercy."

[122] The issues are probably stated together so often because scholars who opt for individual election usually opt for eternal destiny while those who opt for corporate election usually opt for historical role. Piper, *Justification*, 56, though recognizing both issues elsewhere, states the question as a singular dichotomy when he speaks in terms of "an election which determines the eternal destiny of individuals, or an election which merely assigns to individuals and nations the roles they are to play in history."

[123] Ibid, 17-46, 64-65. Piper argues just as convincingly from the vocabulary and structure of 9:6b-8 and analogous Pauline texts (67-71). For a recent, detailed treatment which argues that Paul does not speak of final division or condemnation in Rom 9-11, see Sven Hillert, *Limited and Universal Salvation: A Text-Oriented and Hermeneutical Study of Two Perspectives in Paul*, 126-151. While detailed, Hillert's argument is unconvincing. His method of identifying uniting or dividing perspectives in argumentation and using them as the key heuristic device of interpretation is dubious, and fails to recognize the complexity with which arguments can be constructed, e.g., that an argument which has an overall purpose of asserting unity of some type might not at the same time establish various types of division among its premises (cf. Cosgrove's description of Piper's work in note 121 above).

his basic concern, his fellow Jews' need for salvation. This arises directly out of the preceding promise of salvation for those who believe found in 9:33. We may regard 10:1 as parallel to 9:1-3;[124] both talk about prayer to God for Israel, and in both Paul speaks of "my heart."[125]

Though not often considered, I would like to suggest that while Paul is speaking of eternal destiny,[126] he does so with respect to groups/corporate entities, not individuals directly. 9:6 is one of Piper's main arguments for individual election and against the idea of corporate election. He argues that 9:6 proves there to be an election of individuals within Israel.[127] Paul is concerned that some individual Israelites are accursed and cut off from Christ. But I would counter that according to Piper's own unusual translation, this phrase is termed in corporate language. How else should we understand the corporate term πάντες? Piper himself unwittingly shows its force when he explains 9:6b as meaning "πάντες οἱ ἐξ Ἰσραήλ are not the *group* to whom salvation was assured by God's word.[128] On the other hand, if we are right and Piper's translation of 9:6b should be rejected, there is still no compelling reason to think that Paul's argument concerns individual election. The negation of πάντες gives no indication of whether its referents are conceived of as individuals or as a group. Moreover, even if conceived of as individuals, there is no indication that election is individual; what Paul says is that they are not among the elect people. Indeed, Paul goes on to speak of classes of people, viz., children of the flesh, children of God, and children of the promise (9:8). Even the individuals Paul speaks of in his unfolding argument are representatives of peoples who are treated as types.

What I am suggesting is that Paul here views the elect primarily as a corporate entity. This does not mean that individuals are not in view at all. Rather, it means that

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[124] Cf. Räisänen, "Römer 9-11," 2907; Gordon P. Wiles, *Paul's Intercessory Prayers: The Significance of the Intercessory Prayer Passages in the Letters of St. Paul*, 256.

[125] τῇ καρδίᾳ μου in 9:2, and τῆς ἐμῆς καρδίας in 10:1.

[126] It is important to remember that this is not the main issue of Paul's argument however. We have already identified that as the faithfulness of God to his word. Moreover, we do not mean that every example Paul uses is of eternal destiny, but that his main argument has to do with it.

[127] Piper, *Justification*, 65-67. Cf. Cranfield's (474) famous phrase "Israel within Israel."

[128] Ibid, 66; emphasis mine; Piper's emphasis removed.

the group is the object of election and that individuals are in view only by virtue of their connection to the group. It is a question of which is primary, the group or the individual. Is the group elect as a corporate entity, and individuals elected by their inclusion in that group, or is the individual elect, and the group elected as a group of elect individuals (i.e. only because it is an association of elect individuals)? The answer to this question is found in the socio-historical context of first century Judaism and the New Testament. For the first century Jew, the corporate view was clearly dominant.[129] This was also the orientation of the Old Testament, from which Paul is developing his theology and argument. Piper's own question is telling: "How else could Paul have argued from the OT for the principle of God's freedom in election, since the eternal salvation of the individual as Paul teaches it is almost never the subject of discussion in the OT?"[130] This only shows how unlikely it is that the concept of individual election unto salvation would even occur to Paul. Of course, it is possible that he departed from the Old Testament conception. But the burden of proof

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[129] Cf. the discussion of "Individual and Corporate Perspectives in Romans 9-11" in ch. 2 above. On the concept of corporate election, see Robert Shank, *Elect in the Son*; William W. Klein, *The New Chosen People: A Corporate View of Election*; Ben Witherington III, *Paul's Narrative Thought World: The Tapestry of Tragedy and Triumph*, 230-33, 246-49; William G. MacDonald, "The Biblical Doctrine of Election"; Herman Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology*, 341-54; B. J. Oropeza, *Paul and Apostasy: Eschatology, Perseverance, and Falling Away in the Corinthian Congregation*, 204-10. Cf. I. H. Marshall, "Universal Grace and Atonement in the Pastoral Epistles"; C. Müller, *Gottes Gerechtigkeit*, 75-78. On the corporate perception of reality in the ancient world, see Bruce J. Malina, *The New Testament World*, 51-70; Walter Bo Russell III, *The Flesh/Spirit Conflict in Galatians*, especially pp. 87-94, and sources he cites in his discussion, though in his RBL review, Charles H. Cosgrove contends that Russell exaggerates the corporate to virtual exclusion of the individual. Cf. Gary W. Burnett, *Paul and the Salvation of the Individual*; Sang-Won (Aaron) Son, *Corporate Elements in Pauline Anthropology: A Study of Selected Terms, Idioms, and Concepts in the Light of Paul's Usage and Background*; and Howard Clark Kee's introduction to his *Knowing the Truth: A Sociological Approach to New Testament Interpretation*, 1-6, in which he traces some of the history of an individualistic tendency in NT scholarship and criticizes this approach, pointing up its inadequacy and its distortion of the social nature of early Christianity and the Jewish milieu out of which it arose. In fact, it is the thesis of his book that such an individualistic "perception of Christianity in its origins is directly contradicted by the study of the New Testament—the New Covenant—which sets out the ways that Jesus and the movement to which his words and works gave rise sought to define participation in the community of God's people" (idem, 1). Kee states our position well when he writes, "It is now evident that the major issue in Judaism from the time of the return of the Israelites from captivity in Babylon—especially in the two centuries before and after the birth of Jesus—was: What are the criteria for participation in the covenant people? This question was fiercely debated between the Jewish nationalists, the priests, and those Jews who had in some degree assimilated to Hellenistic culture, on the one hand, and dissident groups such as the Dead Sea community and the Pharisees, on the other. *Although an act of decision could align the individual with one or another of these competing factions within Judaism in this period, the outcome of the decision was a mode of community identity*" (idem, 5; emphasis mine).

[130] Piper, *Justification*, 64.

should lie upon those who claim that he did.

Again, it is important to understand that such a corporate view of election takes sufficient account of the individual. There need not be an exclusive dichotomy holding that either the group or the individual is elect. Schreiner's assertion that "groups are always composed of individuals, and one cannot have the former without including the latter"[131] would be simplistic and miss the point if applied to the present argument for the primacy of corporate election. The statement is a truism which ignores the fundamental question of how the corporate and individual aspects relate. The answer we have suggested is that Paul continues the Old Testament understanding of corporate election found in the scriptural texts he is interpreting and applying, which regards the group as the object of election and the individual to be elect only by inclusion in the elect people. In Romans 9 Paul speaks of an election which involves salvation. So an individual is elected unto salvation only by connection to the corporate people so elected. His concern is not with who is elected to be in the elect people—election as a concept simply does not apply to entrance into the elect people—but with the elect people and who they are, as well as "the character and mode" of their election.[132]

The same can be said of Schreiner's point that selection of a remnant out of Israel implies the selection of individuals.[133] While this is of course true in the sense that what happens to a group affects the individuals of that group, it tells us nothing about how they are viewed, whether as individuals or as a group. The very use of the collective term "remnant" suggests the corporate view. Therefore, the "individual decision" of chapter 10 does not demand a concept of individual election as traditionally conceived. Chapter 10 reveals how one joins the elect people and the

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[131] Schreiner, 498. Would Schreiner then maintain that there is no difference between the OT and NT conceptions of election, since this point argues for individual election of the individual as an individual as a necessary corollary of corporate election? Schreiner and others who argue for individual election unto salvation implicitly admit that corporate election does not necessitate individual election as traditionally conceived when they assert that the election of ethnic Israel did not ensure salvation for every ethnic Israelite.

[132] Dunn, 540, though Dunn wrongly separates the character and mode of election from the fact of election (cf. Heikki Räisänen, "Romans 9-11 and the 'History of Early Christian Religion' ," 750 n. 54). 9:6b clearly grounds 9:6a with the identity of the true Israel.

[133] Schreiner, 498.

basis of the group's election—faith.[134] Schreiner consistently confuses the distinction between election unto salvation and election to be among the elect people.[135] Paul speaks of the former with respect to corporate entities, but does not use such language of individuals. As we have said, individuals are elect only by virtue of membership in the elect people, a membership which is effected by faith. Indeed, as one progresses through Romans 9 it can be seen that the basic distinction is between two classes of people, believers (i.e. the elect/called) and unbelievers. All of Romans 9-11 concerns distinctions between classes of people, whether believers/unbelievers, Jews/Gentiles, or groups from within Israel and the Gentiles.

Thus we can see how the corporate election of two peoples in Romans 9:12, 13 fits with 9:6b, and we avoid the pitfall of taking Paul's extreme grief in 9:1-5

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[134] One might ask whether the fact that both the means of individual entrance into the elect community and the basis of the group's election are the same indicates that the concept of election encompasses individual entrance into the community. But this does not necessarily follow. Moreover, in Paul's thought, faith permeates all relationship with God to eliminate boasting and glorify him. Faith is a means of apprehending God's blessings, not a work which merits it. Furthermore, the Christocentric character of election and of Paul's soteriology helps clarify the relationship between the individual and corporate aspects of election. Jesus is the elect Son of God, in whom is every spiritual blessing, including election (Eph 1:3-4; even if one does not accept Pauline authorship of Ephesians, it still may be regarded as faithful to Pauline teaching). Those who are in him possess those blessings. As the Messiah, Jesus is both an individual and corporate figure, for he represents and sums up his people in himself. The individual becomes united to Christ through faith. But union with, or incorporation into, Christ, is inherently corporate because of Jesus' identity as Christ, the head of the body (Rom 12:5; 1 Cor 12:12; cf. Col 1:18). All experience of spiritual blessing, whether individual or corporate, only takes place in Christ, and relationship with Christ can only take place through faith. So faith can be both individual means of entrance and corporate basis of election. Theoretically, we could say that the individual is elect unto salvation (only) in Christ. But that is neither Paul's language nor the NT's. Election unto salvation is invariably spoken of in corporate terms.

[135] The same is true of Moo in his Romans commentary, and in his essay, "The Theology of Romans" in which he gives detailed attention to the distinction between corporate and individual election with a view towards resolving the tension between Paul's assertion of the eventual salvation of all Israel and his teaching in Rom 9:6-29 and 11:5-10 (254-58). Moo concedes that Paul's Scriptures and Jewish heritage taught him only of a corporate election, but goes on to argue that the rejection of the gospel by the vast majority of the Jewish people combined with the influx of Gentiles "as individuals, not as a 'people' " into the Church led Paul to individualize "election by insisting that membership in the true people of God was reserved for certain people rather than for a nation" (254). But Moo gratuitously assumes that Paul shifts the locus of election from a people to individuals based on the idea that Gentiles entered the people of God as individuals. Yet the mode of entrance into the elect people does not necessarily impinge on the locus or fact of election itself. Moreover, Paul only speaks of election unto salvation in corporate terms. Furthermore, while it is undoubtedly true that many Gentiles entered the Church individually, this again tells us nothing of how Paul viewed their entrance, whether as individuals or as a people. Most likely, he would have had a corporate perspective akin to Acts 15:14, which speaks of God taking from the Gentiles a *people* for his name. Cf. Paul's corporate view of Gentiles frequently in Romans, and note his language of "the Gentiles" in Rom 11:11-13, 25; 15:9, 16, 27; 16:4, 26.

lightly.[136] We can admit what is obvious—Paul's grief comes from "the pressing problem of eternally condemned Israelites in Rom 9:3."[137] Indeed, the corporate perspective we are espousing intensifies our perception of Paul's grief, for it helps us to observe that Paul seems to have considered Israel as a whole to have rejected Christ.[138] This does not mean that every Jew had rejected Christ; Paul himself is proof of that (11:1). Yet the corporate failure of Israel to receive God's Messiah is evident from Paul's use of the term Ἰσραήλ throughout chapters 9-11. This explains why Paul's grief is so great. And it points up Paul's corporate perspective once again.

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Paul has made the point that not all who are from ethnic Israel are part of the true, spiritual Israel, which is heir to the covenant promises of God. Therefore, God has remained true to his word. The covenant people to whom he had made promises are receiving the fulfillment of those promises.

The Naming of Abraham's Covenant Seed: The Children of the Promise *(Romans 9:7-8/Genesis 21:12)*

Paul confirms our general understanding of 9:6b by his interpretive restatement of the principle in v. 7a: "nor is it that all his children are the seed of Abraham." Most translations and commentators translate τέκνα rather than σπέρμα as the more restrictive term while taking ὅτι in a causal sense: "nor because they are the seed of Abraham are all his children."[139] Byrne argues most persuasively for this reckoning,

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[136] Cf. Piper, *Justification*, 58.

[137] Ibid.

[138] Cf. Räisänen, "Recent Research," 199 n. 36; idem, "Römer 9-11," 2900 (in note 54 he criticizes Piper on this point).

[139] So most translations; Byrne, 293; Cranfield, 473; Fitzmyer, 560; Sanday and Headlam, 240-41; Piper, *Justification*, 67-68; F. Siegert, *Argumentation bei Paulus: gezeigt an Röm 9-11*, 125. The meaning of ὅτι cannot be decided on the basis of grammar. But the use of Οὐχ οἷον δὲ ὅτι in 9:6 suggests that οὐδ' ὅτι in 9:7 may be an echo of the former phrase. It is also worth noting that ὅτι always means "that" in its four other occurrences in the New Testament where it immediately precedes εἰσίν (Matt 16:28; Mark 9:1; Luke 18:9; 1 Cor 3:20).

asserting that the former interpretation destroys the parallelism with 9:6b, which places the more inclusive term (πάντες οἱ ἐξ Ἰσραήλ) first followed by the more exclusive term (Ἰσραήλ).[140] But there is no reason to preserve this alleged parallelism, for 6b and 7a form a chiasm:

(A1) πάντες οἱ ἐξ Ἰσραήλ (inclusive)

(B1) Ἰσραήλ (exclusive)

(B2) σπέρμα Ἀβραάμ (exclusive)

(A2) πάντες τέκνα (inclusive)

This gives the sense of σπέρμα Ἀβραάμ to the second Ἰσραήλ of 9:6b. The Old Testament citations that Paul is about to bring to bear on his argument confirm that he is referring to the covenant seed of Abraham.

Byrne also argues that τέκνα in v. 7 refers to children of God as it does in the parallel v. 8, which explains the scriptural citations of 7b. But σπέρμα is the restrictive term in 7b and 8, while τέκνα appears as a more general term needing qualification to indicate a negative (τὰ τέκνα τῆς σαρκός) or positive (τὰ τέκνα τῆς ἐπαγγελίας) connotation.[141] Lodge points to Paul's use of σπέρμα as an inclusive term in Romans 4:13-18 as an argument against an inclusive sense here.[142] But this objection does not fully understand Paul's argument in Romans 4, where he argues "for a redefinition of the true descendants of Abraham, one that both restricts the referent of 'seed' to those in Christ and at the same time widens the referent by including Gentile Christians."[143] Therefore, Romans 4 actually helps to establish the meaning of σπέρμα Ἀβραάμ here in 9:7 as those who believe in Jesus Christ, whether Jew or Gentile (cf. Gal 3:16, 19,

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[140] Ibid; cf. idem, '*Sons of God*'-'*Seed of Abraham,*' 130 n. 201, where he calls attention to the parallelism with 9:8 as well. But a chiastic relationship can be discerned between 9:7a and 9:8a along the same lines as those outlined below between 9:6b and 9:7a. Perhaps the lesson to be learned here is that structure is far from determinative in this matter, especially in light of other considerations being advanced in the present discussion.

[141] Cf. Dunn, 540. Those who support σπέρμα as predicate include Barrett, 180-81; Dunn, 540; Hays, 206 n. 61; Moo, 575; Schreiner, 494-95; Rese, "Israel und Kirche," 209-10; Kraus, *Volk Gottes*, 298f. n. 175.

[142] Lodge, *Romans 9-11*, 54, 58. Dunn, 540, acknowledges the difference in argument but makes no mention of it as opposing the exclusive sense he argues for.

[143] Wagner, "Paul and Isaiah," 54 n. 22.

29). Thus, the immediate context of 9:7, the broader epistolary context, Gal 3, and the impending Old Testament quotations all suggest that Paul is speaking of σπέρμα as the true covenant descendants of Abraham, who are heirs to his promises.[144]

In any case, Paul's point in both 9:6b and 9:7a is that the covenant descendants of Abraham who are heir to the covenant promises are not identified by physical descent. Paul does not say at this point what does identify the seed of Abraham who are children of God. But Paul has already made that clear in the epistle. The seed of Abraham are identified not by ethnicity, but by faith (Rom 2-4). We cannot cut ourselves off from the preceding argument as if Romans 9-11 is argued in a vacuum and not part of an unfolding argument. Neither can we assume that Gentiles are absent from the argument until much later in the chapter (9:24ff) as is commonly asserted. But because of the context of the epistle, we can assume that Gentiles are part of the argument from the beginning of chapter 9. The fact that 9:1-5 is a response to the exalted and celebratory reflections of chapter 8 shows this to be true. Paul's lament for his fellow Israelites is elicited by their failure as a whole to obtain the fulfillment of the salvific covenantal promises of God, which are nevertheless being realized in the Christian Church made up of Jews and Gentiles. We will not need to wait long, however, for Paul's explanation of what identifies the σπέρμα Ἀβραάμ. That explanation begins with the following quotations from Genesis and Paul's more general explanation of how God has remained faithful to his promises.

We now come to Paul's first Old Testament quotation: "but in Isaac seed will be called to you" (9:7b; Gen 21:12). The fact that Paul introduces this quotation only with ἀλλ', substituting it for the natural grammatical completion of the sentence, shows that he assumes his audience is familiar with Scripture and will recognize it as a scriptural citation.[145] Moreover, Paul is clearly pointing back to the broad Old

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[144] Paul can use the term σπέρμα in a more physical sense as in Rom 1:3, 9:29, 11:1, and 2 Cor 11:22. This reflects the usage of the Old Testament texts Paul interprets. σπέρμα refers to the covenant seed of Abraham in LXX Gen 21:12, and his merely physical seed in 21:13.

[145] Cf. Cranfield, 474; Gal 3:11-12. Dinter, "Remnant," 13, 73, strangely argues that Paul's use of ἀλλά shows that he regarded Gen 21:12 as a problem needing explanation. But the normal contrastive use of ἀλλά accounts for its presence here to present positively what Paul has just stated negatively. Dinter does nevertheless see clearly that, "It is on the basis of Paul's mutually relating or midrashically interpreting these two Genesis texts that the rest of chap. 9 unfolds—but not simply" (idem, 14). Cf. E. Earle Ellis ("Biblical Interpretation in the New Testament Church," 697) who states that ἀλλά "may introduce a citation to correct, qualify or underscore a preceding statement or citation." It is inaccurate

Testament context, for without knowledge of the Abraham-Isaac story the import of the quotation is lost. Indeed, as John Piper has noted, "[m]ost commentators agree that the OT quotations in Rom 9:6-13 assume an acquaintance with the whole story of which they are a part and that without this knowledge the isolated quotations would be virtually unintelligible as part of the argument."[146] The intimate connection of Genesis 21:12 to Genesis 18:10, 14 within the Genesis narrative itself confirms that Paul is pointing to the broad context of his quotations.

On the simplest rhetorical level, Paul uses Genesis 21:12 as the positive expression of the principle that not all of Abraham's physical children are his seed (9:7a), which is itself an interpretive expansion upon the principle that not all who are from Israel are Israel (9:6b). Thus, Genesis 21:12, along with 9:6b-7a, serves as a ground for Paul's programmatic statement in 9:6a that the word of God has not failed. As the positive statement of the general principle expressed in 9:6b-7a, emphasized by the strong adversative ἀλλ', the weight of Paul's argument comes to rest on Genesis 21:12. It may be regarded as the main ground for 9:6a. How Genesis 21:12 can mean that God's word has not failed is revealed by 9:8 which explains the quotation—"That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as seed." Since Genesis 21:12 positively sums up the negative assertions of 9:6b-7a, we can also say that 9:8 explains all of 9:6b-7. This is evident from the parallel structure of the two sections.[147] 9:6-7 states two negative assertions followed by a contrasting positive statement. 9:8 makes a negative assertion in the peculiar fashion of the two negative statements in 9:6-7,[148] placing the negative at the beginning of the sentence, followed by a contrasting positive statement. Consequently, Paul's summation of his defense of God's faithfulness to this point is

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to say that Paul indicates this citation by syntactical dislocation as would Stanley, *Paul and the Language*, 56-57, and Wagner, *Heralds*, 49 n. 17; cf. Michael Fox, "The Identification of Quotations in Biblical Literature." Rather, the syntactical dissonance created by Paul's citation results from his assumption that his audience will recognize the quotation as such. On the other hand, ἀλλά can hardly be considered an introductory formula as Ellis, *Paul's Use*, 160, apparently understands it.

[146] Piper, *Justification*, 60 n. 27. Cf. U. Luz, *Geschichtsverständnis*, 64.

[147] See Piper, *Justification*, 67, for a detailed demonstration of this parallelism. Cf. Brandenburger, "Schriftauslegung," 10; Lübking, *Paulus und Israel*, 62f; Schmitt, *Gottesgerechtigkeit*, 77f.

[148] Cf. ibid.

that only the children of the promise are regarded as seed. We can gain greater insight into this statement as well as Paul's argument generally by attending to his use of Genesis 21:12.

It is striking that the original context of Genesis 21:12 emphasizes both the reliability/fulfillment of God's word of promise, and the rejection of Ishmael,[149] Abraham's physical seed/son. It is so striking because these are among Paul's main themes—the faithfulness of God's word and the rejection of ethnic Israel. The quotation is part of God's assurance to Abraham meant to encourage him to expel Ishmael. It is actually a word of comfort prompted by Abraham's great grief at the thought of expelling his own son, the reason given for the divine directive not to be distressed. Paul now quotes it in response to his own great grief at the apparent rejection of ethnic Israel. This suggests that Paul's argument in 9:6ff. is meant to soothe the grief of his lament in 9:1-5 which introduces the argument. The main word of comfort is that Isaac is the one through whom Abraham's covenant seed will be named. This itself is related to God's central promise of seed to Abraham most fully recorded in Genesis 17:19-20 and 18:10, 14. To cast Ishmael out could potentially threaten God's promise to Abraham since he was his seed in a physical sense. But God reminds Abraham that Isaac is the heir and covenant identifier. So this word of comfort and encouragement is one which affirms the reliability of God's promise.

The significance of the intertextual comfort motif is not to be underestimated. It connects Paul's answer (Gen 21:12) to the problem of the apparent failure of God's promises in the rejection of ethnic Israel in an even more direct way than is usually recognized, rendering the two inseparable. Therefore, we cannot hold that Paul ultimately answers the problem by asserting that all of ethnic Israel will eventually be saved without robbing Genesis 21:12 of its force. That would essentially nullify this portion of Paul's argument. But the intertextual resonance created by Paul's quotation of Genesis 21:12 calls for embracing the rejection of Israel. In a sense, Paul and his readers are called to expel Israel as an ethnic people from its place in their minds and hearts as the elect covenant people and heir.

There is another reason that God gives to ease Abraham's distress—the

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[149] Cf. Chilton's ("Romans 9-11," 28) similar judgment.

promise of a measure of blessing to the nonetheless rejected Ishmael (Gen 21:13).[150] This promise epitomizes Paul's consistent approach of acknowledging privilege and blessing to the Jews while maintaining that their ancestry does not guarantee them the *covenant* blessing.[151] It also appears to have influenced Paul's understanding of the role of ethnic Israel in salvation history, anticipating the argument in Romans 9-11 that Israel as an ethnic entity is rejected from the covenant, but still experiences the blessing of God to an extent, and has an important role in God's plan. Just as Isaac, the child of promise, was heir to the covenant promises, and Ishmael, Abraham's physical offspring, was rejected from the covenant yet granted temporal blessing, so those who believe in Christ are heirs to the eschatological Abrahamic covenantal blessings, while Jews qua ethnic Israel are rejected from those blessings but still granted special advantage and privilege.

Ironically, the fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant and promise means the rejection of Abraham's physical descendants in keeping with the distinguishing nature of God's word to him. Just as with Abraham and Ishmael, the rejection of ethnic Israel is necessary for God to fulfill his promise. But this brings extreme grief and calls forth the promise of a measure of blessing for the rejected. Surprisingly, as with Abraham and Ishmael, the promise, which implies Israel's rejection, also implies the further demonstration of God's faithfulness to them, as Paul eventually reveals that the election of the Gentiles is God's means of provoking Jews to faith in Christ and consequent membership in the true Israel (11:11ff.). This leads us to yet another ironic point deriving from the Genesis narrative—that Ishmael, and now Israel, can eventually be included in the Abrahamic covenant because it had the ultimate purpose

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[150] Cranfield, 475, recognizes that the Gen narrative affirms God's blessing upon Ishmael, but does not develop the point except to say that it indicates that Ishamel is not excluded from God's mercy. Cosgrove, *Elusive Israel*, 71, develops the point more substantially and perceptively by noting that Isaac's role as heir was to bring blessing to all the nations thereby including Ishmael (cf. Schreiner, 497 n. 16). Berkley, *Broken Covenant*, 163-70, develops the point still more substantially, discussing what he calls "The theme of a 'second line' of Abraham's descendants through Ishmael (the displaced firstborn) . . ." (160). By all but denying any real significance to God's blessing upon Ishmael for Paul's argument, Schreiner, 497, and Moo, 576, ignore the clear thematic correspondence between the two contexts and the importance of the whole story which is so obviously invoked by the quotation of Gen 21:12 and 18:10, 14, depriving themselves of valuable exegetical insight in order to maintain the spiritual nature of Paul's argument. But they need not deny Ishmael's rejection from the covenant and its blessing in order to appreciate God's blessing upon him.

[151] See Rom 1:16; 3:1-2; cf. Acts 13:46; 18:6; 19:8-9; 26:23-28.

of bringing its blessing to all nations.[152]

Timothy Berkley has presented a thoughtful assessment of Paul's handling of Ishmael in Romans 9 which can partially complement what we have already said.[153] He asserts:

> In Paul's exegesis Ishmael represents the first in a line of displaced first-born children who make up a 'second line' of inheritance estranged from the covenant. They are estranged until Paul weaves his reference texts together to show how the second line regains status as children of God/children of Abraham in Romans 9. Paul does not include Ishmael in the promise in so many words. But he does include gentiles, for whom Ishmael serves as the first representative, shown by the fact that the themes Paul develops in Romans 9 are embedded in Ishmael's story.[154]

Berkley is to be commended for seeing some of the potential importance of Ishmael for Paul's exegesis. But his understanding of Ishmael's importance is somewhat flawed. His view falters on a misunderstanding of Genesis. Ishmael was not specifically re-included in the promise to Abraham. Ishmael had special status before God and special blessing from him because he was Abraham's physical seed, but he was excluded from the Abrahamic covenant (Gen 17:18-21; 21:10ff.).[155] So in Romans 9, he stands more for those who are rejected by God covenantally, but still experience a measure of blessing. He is the pattern for non-believing Israel, who still retain a measure of God's non-covenantal blessing.

But, it is true that Jewish tradition associated Ishmael and Esau with the

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[152] Cosgrove, *Elusive Israel*, 71, has also seen this point. Our exegesis above corroborates his suggestion that "the promise to make Ishmael a nation is God's answer to Abraham's prayer" in Gen 17:18, "just as the mystery revealed to Paul about the salvation of all Israel can be taken as God's answer to Paul's prayers" in Rom 9:3 and 10:1 (though we would disagree with Cosgrove about the specific meaning of that mystery).

[153] See Berkley, *Broken Covenant*, 163-70.

[154] Ibid, 169.

[155] Cf. Schreiner, 497, and Moo, 576, who make similar points. Sarah's divinely approved statement that Ishmael would not inherit with Isaac, made long after Ishmael was circumcised as a member of Abraham's household, is quite to the point.

Gentiles,[156] and Paul probably did so here in a secondary sense. Even in that sense, Ishmael, in his association with the Gentiles in Genesis itself, theoretically gets back into God's covenantal blessing because the Abrahamic promise included blessing upon Gentiles. But for Paul, ironically, this is how unbelieving Israel gets back in. So Berkley has seen a valid aspect of the significance of Ishmael for Paul, but it is a secondary significance. His treatment suffers from lack of serious exegesis of Genesis 17, 21, and Romans 9.[157] But his analysis helps show the polyvalent nature of Paul's symbols/types/examples. Ishmael's story is complex enough to make him a type of anyone who is excluded from the covenant, whether Jew or Gentile. But he most closely typifies the physical descendant of Abraham who is excluded. That is the main course Paul follows in Romans 9. Nevertheless, just as for Paul the rejected Jew can be identified with the Gentile due to their common plight of separation from God (9:24-26; cf. Rom 2-4), so Ishmael can subtly point toward the inclusion of the Gentiles even while proclaiming the inclusion of Jews. That is one more factor that makes the Abraham narrative of Genesis ideal for Paul's theological treatment of God's faithfulness vis-à-vis Israel, the Church, Jews, and Gentiles.

As we have already said, Romans 9:8 gives Paul's explanation of Genesis 21:12, and hence of his whole argument thus far in support of the assertion of 9:6a. Therefore, it is crucial to understand the precise meaning of this verse. The first question of interpretation to address regards the meaning of τὰ τέκνα τῆς σαρκός. This is a relatively easy identification due to the use of the phrase κατὰ σάρκα in 9:3, 5 to

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[156] Gen 37; Ps 83:7 (Eng. 83:6); Jub 15:30-32; 16:16-18; cf. *Ned* 31a. S. Lyonnet, "Le rôle d'Israël dans l'histoire du salut selon Rom 9-11," 266, points out that Esau and his descendants became the type of the enemies of Israel, citing Amos 1:11; Obad; Ps 137:7.

[157] In considering the epistolary context of Rom 2:17-29 vis-à-vis Rom 9-11, he gives too much weight to the unspoken sub-plot of Ishmael, which he further mistakenly takes to be primarily inclusion. It is in fact exclusion with an additional, subtle sub-plot of inclusion. Berkley is certainly correct to discern the importance and influence, even prominence, of the Ishmael sub-plot in Paul's argument, but it should not be taken as the sole source for Paul's argumentation. He mistakenly identifies the Ishmael sub-plot as the source for Paul's citations in 9:7-9. This misses the explicit argument of Rom 9 in context and apparently misunderstands Gen 18 as part of the Ishmael sub-plot. Though certainly related to the Ishmael plot, it is misleading to classify Gen 18 by Ishmael. Much truer would be to say that the Ishmael plot is part of the Isaac story, as the very use of the term "sub-plot" attests! One further point to note is that Ishmael's first-born status finds no parallel in the situation of Gentiles. This does not disqualify him from representing them, but does make him a more appropriate type of the rejected physical descendants of Abraham.

indicate physical descent or relationship.[158] The meaning of τέκνα τοῦ θεοῦ is also simply determined. It is almost self-evident that the phrase refers to those who belong to God and are the recipients of all of his saving blessings. For Paul, that means those who believe in Christ. He develops the concept quite explicitly in chapter 8. There he emphasizes that children of God are those who have received the eschatological blessing of the Spirit and who are heirs together with Christ of the glory of God.[159] This is directly related to what we have seen in Genesis 21:12 where the issue is inheritance of the covenant blessing, yet another line of evidence that, for Paul, the Abrahamic covenant promises are eschatological and salvific.

A more difficult question is the meaning of τὰ τέκνα τῆς ἐπαγγελίας. Perhaps the safest starting point in ascertaining the designation's meaning is to compare it to the contrasting concept, τὰ τέκνα τῆς σαρκός. We have just seen that this latter designation means "physical children," a genitive of description. If we apply this to the former phrase the meaning is "children characterized by promise."[160] While this is probably correct, the meaning still remains vague, and there are other types of genitives that are compatible with this basic sense that will yield greater clarity. So I

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[158] Cf. the use of τὴν σάρκα in 11:14 to indicate kinsmen/ethnic relatives. κατὰ σάρκα also refers to physical descent in 1:3 and 4:1. Its repeated use in chapter 8 is more complex and theological, but not completely unrelated to ethnic realities. For Paul, the term σάρξ refers to the human condition without respect to God. This can be neutral, as when it designates physical flesh, ancestry, or human beings viewed in physical existence, but often turns negative to connote human existence separated from God and opposed to him. It is interesting to note that σάρξ is used heavily in LXX Gen 17 (see vv. 11, 14, 24, 25) of the physical flesh in which circumcision was performed, a passage which is closely related to the passage Paul quotes from. The overtones emanating from Gen 17 mediated to Rom 9 through its close relationship to Gen 18 and 21 help attach a connotation of Law-keeping as well as ethnicity to σάρξ in this latter context.

[159] The basic phrase τέκνα/τέκνων θεου is found elsewhere in Paul only in Rom 8:16, 21 and Phil 2:15. As implied above, the Rom 8 context is determinative for Paul's usage here. But the Phil passage is also noteworthy, for there Paul alludes to Deut 32:5, which is part of the Song of Moses, a passage from which Paul later quotes (Rom 10:19) and has been identified by some as particularly influential on his argument throughout chapters 9-11 (see n. 74 above). Intriguingly, Deut 32:5 declares that the people of Israel are not God's children because of their sinfulness in the context of a declaration of God's faithfulness and justice (32:4). In Phil 2:15, Paul inverts this passage by applying the opposite assertion to his (predominantly Gentile) Philippian church—by their unity they can be blameless and innocent children of God. On Phil 2:15 see Fee, 245. The fact that the faithfulness of God is a theme of the Song of Moses quoted in Rom 10:19 suggests that Paul is still defending 9:6a at that point.

[160] Moo, 576 n 32, words the descriptive genitival option this way, though he opts for a genitive of possession for both phrases. There is very little difference between the two. For an extended treatment of the concept of promise in Rom 9:8 against the OT background, see Luz, *Geschichtsverständnis*, 66-70.

would like to suggest that this is a genitive of description bearing several nuances which can be gleaned from two passages in Galatians where Paul deals with similar material, and of course, from the broader context of Romans and the intertext of Genesis.

In Gal 3:26-29,[161] Paul speaks to a predominantly Gentile congregation, telling them, "for you are all sons of God [υἱοὶ θεοῦ] through faith in Christ Jesus" (v. 26) and that "if you are of Christ, then you are seed of Abraham [τοῦ Ἀβραὰμ σπέρμα], heirs according to promise" (v. 29). Here we have the collocation of the concepts of sonship (= τέκνα τοῦ θεοῦ), the seed of Abraham, heirship, and promise. Being children of God is through faith in Christ, which is equivalent to being seed of Abraham, in turn equivalent to being heirs according to promise. This suggests that τὰ τέκνα τῆς ἐπαγγελίας means those who are the seed of Abraham and heirs according to promise through faith in Christ.

Gal 4:21-31 treats the same OT context dealing with Isaac and Ishmael as Romans 9:7! In 4:23 being born according to the flesh (κατὰ σάρκα) is contrasted with being born through promise (δι' ἐπαγγελίας). Then, in 4:28 we encounter the same basic phrase as in Romans 9:8, its only other occurrence in the NT; Paul writes to the Galatians, ὑμεῖς δέ, ἀδελφοί, κατὰ Ἰσαὰκ **ἐπαγγελίας τέκνα** ἐστέ. Now the following verse contrasts being born according to the flesh with being born according to the Spirit (κατὰ πνεῦμα), implying that being children of promise means to be born through or according to the Spirit.[162] In the context of Galatians, to be born according to the Spirit especially means to have received the promised Spirit by exercising faith in Christ. Children of promise are those who believe in Christ and are consequently incorporated into Christ, made children of God and therefore heirs, and thus have received the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of adoption and heirship.[163]

When we return to Romans, we find that chapter 4 emphasizes that those who believe in Christ become the promised seed of Abraham and heirs. Romans 8 also

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[161] Piper, *Justification*, 68-70, draws attention to this passage in a helpful discussion of the meaning of τὰ τέκνα τῆς ἐπαγγελίας in which he also highlights Gal 4:21-31 and Rom 2:25-29. Although his discussion is insightful, he draws some unwarranted conclusions which appear to be born from his particular theological concern to argue for individual, unconditional election.

[162] Ibid.

[163] Gal 3:1-14, esp. vv. 2, 5, 7, and 14; 4:4-7.

emphasizes the Spirit, sonship, and heirship. Possession of the Spirit of God/Christ indicates that one belongs to Christ (8:9), and the Spirit is the spirit of adoption, meaning heirship also. The argument of Romans to this point gives every indication that those who have the Spirit and who are children and heirs are those who have believed in Christ. Thus all the evidence points to understanding τὰ τέκνα τῆς ἐπαγγελίας as those who have believed in Christ and so received the Spirit of adoption and heirship. They are children of God who have been born through (believing) promise and by (God's effecting of his) promise, promised children who are also heirs to promise. In sum, they are children characterized by promise in every way.

The idea of children born both through faith in God's promise and by God bringing his promise to pass is supported by the Genesis context, which Paul will go on to quote from again as a ground for the assertion of 9:8. There God promises Isaac's birth, and then shows forth his power by sovereignly bringing it about over against Sarah's doubt of his word.[164] Abraham is also presented as believing God's promise of a son by Sarah.[165] At least that is how Paul understood it in Romans 4:19-22, where he interestingly considers this to be justifying faith in fulfillment of Genesis 15:6.[166] He also regarded faith as the means through which Abraham would obtain fulfillment of the promise of innumerable descendants (4:18).[167] Thus Isaac was a child/seed characterized by promise, promised to Abraham, and born both through Abraham's faith in God's promise and by the means of God's sovereign power.

The mention of Romans 4 leads us to consider the use of the verb λογίζομαι in 9:8, since it is used extensively (11^{x}) in the former location. There it refers to God's reckoning of those who believe in Christ to be righteous, and thus heirs of the promise

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[164] See Gen 18:14: "Is anything too difficult for the Lord?"

[165] Although Abraham doubts the promise of a son by Sarah at first (Gen 17:17-18), the narrative presents him as quickly putting his faith in that promise by recording his prompt obedience to the command that accompanied it. Moreover, the overall narrative of the Abraham story depicts him as a man of faith even though struggling with failure and doubt at times.

[166] Rom 4 is especially relevant to 9:8, which recalls the former chapter through the repetition of key vocabulary—ἐπαγγελία, λογίζεται, and σπέρμα (Dunn, 541).

[167] Cf. Gen 15:5; 17:4-5.

to Abraham, equivalent to the seed of Abraham.[168] Those who are merely ethnic descendants of Abraham (roughly equal to οἱ ἐκ νόμου)[169] are not heirs, but those who are of the faith of Abraham (τῷ ἐκ πίστεως Ἀβραάμ). Λογίζεται in 9:8 does not so much emphasize God's sovereign freedom in election as commonly suggested,[170] but the fact that God's call in Paul's argument refers to a designation or naming, i.e., a divine reckoning of election. Stemming from Romans 4, the resonant connotation of the word in collocation with seed and promise is to reckon, regard, or identify those who believe in Christ as the true seed of Abraham, who are heir to God's promise to him. Genesis 21:12 makes it clear that the seed referred to is the *covenant* seed of Abraham.[171]

The verb κληθήσεται in Paul's quotation of LXX Genesis 21:12 clearly has the meaning "to name/recognize/identify/designate." It translates the Hebrew verb קרא which has the same meaning. The intent of Genesis 21:12 in both the MT and the LXX is to indicate that Abraham's covenant descendants would be identified by descent from Isaac. There is little doubt that this is the meaning of the term in Genesis. But is this its meaning in Romans 9?

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[168] Τῷ σπέρματι in v. 13 = κληρονόμοι in v. 14. This use of λογίζομαι supports the position that the language of justification in Paul refers to covenant membership (see e.g., N. T. Wright, *Climax*, 148, 203, 214, foreshadowed by Ellis, *Paul's Use*, 121, who follows and cites A. Fridrichsen, "Jesus, St. Paul, and St. John," 50f.), a now common view (see note 15 in ch. 5 below). Cf. E. P. Sanders' (*Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion*, 544-46) position that the language of righteousness in Paul is transfer terminology indicating entrance into the body of the saved.

[169] This is to state the issue in the conceptual terms of Rom 2 and 9. Paul's "of the Law" terminology in Rom 4 certainly does not primarily refer to ethnicity, but it most probably includes it. Those who keep the whole Jewish Law including its prime boundary markers of circumcision, food laws, and Sabbath, are primarily ethnic Jews. The two concepts (i.e., total Law keeping and Jewishness) are inseparable. This gives some support to the so-called New Perspective on Paul, though I would not embrace it without qualification. On the mounting scholarly opposition to the New Perspective, see note 213 in ch. 2 above; on my view of the New Perspective, see chapter 5 below.

[170] E.g. by Cranfield, 476; Byrne, 294; Moo, 577 n. 34; Fitzmyer, 561. After all, Paul is defending God's calling of a spiritual Israel on the basis of faith rather than ethnicity as faithful to what he had spoken.

[171] Wright's depiction of Paul as a covenant theologian is right on target, and finds corroboration from our investigation of Paul's engagement with Scripture. See *Climax*; idem, "Romans and the Theology of Paul," as well as Richard Hays' ("Adam, Israel, Christ—The Question of Covenant in the Theology of Romans: A Response to Leander E. Keck and N. T. Wright") call for such exegetical corroboration of Wright's approach. In Hays' judgment, "Future work must focus on the question of 'covenant' in Paul's theology. This issue is crucial for any reconstruction of the theology of Romans . . ." (84). The current investigation helps to fill this need.

Most notably, Cranfield has argued for this understanding.[172] But BDAG have suggested that in Romans 9:7 the sense of the verb approaches that of "to be" and translates, "in (through) Isaac you are to have your descendants."[173] However, this ignores the LXX attempt to translate קרא and the depth of Paul's engagement with the Genesis narrative. Moreover, BDAG actually make a point of emphasis here, and do not deny the naming sense to the verb.[174] "Very oft. the emphasis is to be placed less on the fact that the name is such and such, than on the fact that the bearer of the name actually is what the name says about him."[175] But it must be remembered that the depiction of existential state derives from the name/naming and cannot be separated from it. BDAG leave determination of the proper emphasis in translation to the subjective feeling of the interpreter. But we have two objective factors which help fix the sense of "name/identify."

The first is the Old Testament background already discussed. There the verb clearly means "to name," just as it does in Paul's quotations from Hosea 2:25 and 2:1 (Heb./LXX) in 9:25-26. It is true that both the Hebrew and LXX Greek can bear a fuller meaning in which the name expresses character or existence; that is the case here. But as implied above, this is a fuller use of the term rather than an alternative, and translating more weakly by "to be" obscures the richness of the term and the derivation of the contemplated character of the resulting state of existence. Second, Romans 9:8, which interprets 9:7b/Gen 21:12, uses the term λογίζομαι ("to reckon/regard") in place of καλέω. Therefore, we have solid contextual evidence that Paul took 9:7's κληθήσεται in the sense "be named/regarded."

Some commentators would retain the more theological sense of call as a creative summons of God to become part of his people.[176] Schreiner points to Romans

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[172] Cranfield, 474. Cf. Dunn, 540-41; Zeller, *Juden*, 119 n. 155. For a consideration of Paul's use of "calling" language in Romans 9-11 against the background of Acts, see R. W. Wall, "Israel and the Gentile Mission in Acts and Paul: A Canonical Approach," 452-57.

[173] BDAG, s.v. 1d; italics removed.

[174] Moo, 575, appears to miss this point when he claims that κληθήσεται "could here mean *no more than* 'shall be' " and cites BDAG; emphasis mine. But he is correct to call BDAG's translation a paraphrase.

[175] BDAG, s.v. καλέω, 1d.

[176] Moo, 575-76; Schreiner, 495-96; cf. Dunn, 540-41.

4:17 where καλέω appears to mean "call/summon into existence."[177] But upon closer examination, it is rather the naming sense which stands behind the verb in this instance. The phrase in question literally reads: ". . . before whom he believed, God who gives life to the dead and calls the things not existing as existing" (κατέναντι οὗ ἐπίστευσεν θεοῦ τοῦ ζῳοποιοῦντος τοὺς νεκροὺς καὶ καλοῦντος τὰ μὴ ὄντα ὡς ὄντα). Rather than the idea of God summoning things into existence per se, the thought is of a designation which effects the new existence, as at the original creation. The ὡς and participle support such an interpretation,[178] as does the fact that a summoning sense requires us to imagine the divine word as addressed to things which do not exist.[179] Even if a summoning sense be maintained, the OT background and the immediate context are of even greater weight for determining the meaning of καλέω in 9:7 than is the possible echo of 4:17. But if we are correct, then the echo of 4:17 becomes even more significant, for in the context of Paul's argument there, the call of God which creates refers not only to the promised birth of Isaac,[180] but even more directly to Abraham's seed/heirs who will inherit his divine promise, both Jew and Gentile, 4:17 supporting 4:16. The designating call of God establishes its multi-ethnic objects as his (Abrahamic) covenant people.

This naming sense has considerable import for understanding Paul's argument

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[177] Ibid.

[178] Cranfield, 244, admits the difficulty of ὡς for the common translation, but suggests it expresses consequence, a rare meaning in the NT. But there is no need to appeal to such an uncommon meaning. ὡς can introduce a characteristic quality of a thing and bear the meaning "to be": "calling the things not existing as/to be existing" (see BDAG, s.v. 3, and the UBS Greek-English dictionary).

[179] This is not impossible, just less likely than a meaning which does not require such an awkward metaphor. Philo's phraseology in *Spec. Leg.* 4.187 (τὰ γὰρ μὴ ὄντα ἐκάλεσεν εἰς τὸ εἶναι) could be adduced in support of this idea. But notice that his construction lacks ὡς and a participle. The construction, εἰς τὸ + infinitive is best seen as denoting result here so that the phrase refers to God's declaration (not summons) which results in existence. I am not really quibbling with the translation "call into being" as much as the perceived idea which lies behind it, in my view, a declaration/designation rather than a summons. Both views discern a creative/effectual call. Byrne, *'Sons of God'-'Seed of Abraham,'* 131ff., makes much of "καλεῖν as the exercise of a power virtually synonymous with creation itself" and assigns it a basic meaning of "call into being" throughout Rom 9:6-29. But his approach founders on a fact he acknowledges—Paul's explicit interpretation of καλεῖν in terms of recognition. This, together with the fact that the verb carries a naming sense in its OT context, militates against Byrne's apparent suggestion that Paul interprets it in Gen 21:12 to mean "call into being."

[180] Schreiner, 495.

in Romans 9.[181] A problem with many readings of Romans 9 is that the crucial concept of calling is understood as a creative summons rather than a creative naming. When we understand that a creative naming is at issue, we can see more clearly that Paul's argument does concern who is truly elect of God, i.e., who bears the name/status of God's covenant people who are heir to the covenant promises.[182] So when Paul takes up God's justice in how he has fulfilled his promises, he is defending God's right to designate the Church as his covenant people, based not on ethnicity but on faith (hence, 9:12, οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων ἀλλ' ἐκ τοῦ καλοῦντος), rather than God's right to choose some to summon to become part of his people. The latter lends to a Calvinistic predestinarian emphasis in the passage, while the former finds such an emphasis foreign to the text.[183] This conception sees that corporate election and heirship are at issue, not individual salvation per se, though the former directly impinges on the latter; the individual's salvation depends on whether or not he is part of the elect people. For Paul, calling and election are virtually synonymous. Calling is the application and appellation of election, the act of designating a group as God's elect

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[181] J.-N. Aletti, *Israël et la loi dans la lettre aux romains*, 173 n. 2, considers the divine call concept to be the thread which ties the different arguments of Rom 9 together, and thus more important to the argument than the concept of election.

[182] Howard Clark Kee's (*Knowing the Truth: A Sociological Approach to New Testament Interpretation*, 5, 63, 70-102) conclusion (following Alan Segal, *Rebecca's Children: Judaism and Christianity in the Roman World* and numerous works by Jacob Neusner) that community identity was the central issue between early Christianity and Judaism in the first century strengthens our conclusions concerning the nature of calling and the concern of Paul's argument in Rom 9-11. Indeed, recall Kee's statement quoted earlier: "It is now evident that the major issue in Judaism from the time of the return of the Israelites from captivity in Babylon—especially in the two centuries before and after the birth of Jesus—was: What are the criteria for participation in the covenant people?" (idem, 5). See also James C. Walters, *Ethnic Issues in Paul's Letter to the Romans: Changing Self-Definitions in Earliest Roman Christianity*, 20: "Judaism was no unified entity, but rather a cluster of movements engaged in self-definition."

[183] Cf. the classic Arminian approach to Rom 9 which argues that Paul defends God's right to fix the terms of salvation as based on faith rather than works-righteousness (see James Arminius, "Analysis of the Ninth Chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans"). Although steeped in a Reformation understanding of Paul and the Law, which was not privy to the refinements of later centuries, Arminius' approach is insightful and suggestive, and deserving of far more attention than it has received in modern discussion. Cf. L. Cerfaux, "Le privilège d'Israël selon Saint Paul," 11, who finds that καλεῖν can indicate election, though rarely, citing Isa 41:9 and 51:2; we would question his judgment as to its rarity. Contrast C. Müller's (*Gottes Gerechtigkeit*, 78f.) treatment of καλεῖν as a term of predestination in Rom 9-11, referring to a call which creates faith in the individual. Berger, "Abraham," 83, supports our understanding of Paul's argument as having to do with defending God's right to elect based on faith. He rightly argues that Paul's use of Abraham in Rom 9 does not differ at its core from his usage of Abraham in Rom 4.

people. This should inform our understanding of calling in 9:12 and finds confirmation near the end of the chapter in the Hosea quotations which bear the same naming sense (9:24-26).

Excursus: The Implications of Calling in Genesis 21:12 and Romans 9 for Understanding the Concept in the Rest of the New Testament

The naming sense of the call concept evident in Genesis 21:12 and Romans 9 is suggestive for our understanding of the idea in the rest of the New Testament. The concept has two basic senses in the NT, exemplified by the two basic senses of the key term, the verb καλέω: (1) to name/identify/designate; (2) to invite/summon.[184] It is typically assumed that the figurative/theological concept of calling developed from the summoning sense of the terminology.[185] The Christian calling vis-à-vis salvation or service is generally understood to be a divine summons or invitation to that salvation or service, a call which many take to be effectual or creative. But, since Paul regards God's call as a naming in Romans 9, the opportunity arises to reassess the figurative concept of calling in the Pauline corpus and the rest of the NT. I would submit that the figurative Christian calling did not develop from the summoning denotation, but from the naming sense, and refers to God's designation of the Christian community as the elect people of God, his beloved children, who, as members of his family, bear the name of God and his Christ.[186] The calling of the

[184] As my use of multiple terms shows, there are various nuances within these two basic meanings. But they all fit under the basic rubrics of naming or summoning, and we will use these broad designations for the sake of simplicity.

[185] See e.g. BDAG, s.v. καλέω, 4. Cf. treatments of the concept in the standard dictionaries: e.g., K. L. Schmidt, *TDNT*, 3.487-96; L. Coenen, *NIDNTT*, 1.271-76; Colin G. Kruse, *DPL*, 84-85; G. W. Bromiley, *ISBE*, 1.580-82. The article of J. Eckert, *EDNT*, 240-44, is notable for showing awareness of the naming sense of calling in relation to salvation, citing Rom 9:25-26 (see p. 241), though he does not explore the ramifications of the observation. For what may be the most extensive treatment of Paul's concept of calling, see now Stephen J. Chester, *Conversion at Corinth: Perspectives on Conversion in Paul's Theology and the Corinthian Church.*

[186] W. W. Klein has argued this same basic point with respect to Paul's thought alone in a provocative article which has gone almost completely unrecognized ("Paul's Use of *KALEIN*: A Proposal"; though Eckert, ibid, does list it in his bibliography) and less technically in his *New Chosen People* (199-209). Interestingly, Klein eschews significant attention to Rom 9:7 and takes his cue from Rom 9:25-26 based on the obvious naming sense of καλέω in those verses evidenced by the double accusative. By contrast, we begin with Rom 9:7, yet arrive at similar conclusions.

individual Christian would refer to her entrance into the Christian community, i.e. her conversion, when she would come to share in the name and attendant blessings of the eschatological messianic community. In terms of speech-act theory, such naming is performative language which transforms the status of its objects as well as their objective and existential reality.[187] More specifically, naming is a perlocutionary act which may be identified as a verdictive or declarative utterance, an ontological and institutional action of God which effects a new state of existence and brings about a divinely actuated "world-to-word-fit."

The verb καλέω occurs 148 times in the NT, the noun κλῆσις, 11 times, and the adjective κλητός, 10 times. The naming sense occurs far more often in the use of the verb than does the summoning sense. I have identified 78 indisputable cases of the former,[188] 34 instances of the latter,[189] and 36 cases which are usually considered instances of divine summoning, but are uncertain in light of the present argument.[190] It is my contention that all or almost all[191] of these are instances of the naming of Christians, whether this take the form of explicit identification (as in the undisputed 1 John 3:1) or appointment (e.g., Heb. 5:4) or some other nuance. The same holds true for every occurrence of κλῆσις and κλητός with the sole exception of Matthew 22:14,

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[187] On speech-act theory in biblical interpretation, see Anthony C. Thiselton, *New Horizons in Hermeneutics*, especially pp. 16-19, 282-312, 361-67, and Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Is there a Meaning in this Text? The Bible, the Reader, and the Morality of Literary Knowledge*.

[188] Matt 1:21, 23, 25; 2:23; 5:9, 19 (2x); 21:13; 22:43, 45; 23:7, 8, 9, 10; 27:8; Luke 1:13, 31, 32, 35, 36, 59, 60, 61, 62, 76; 2:4, 21 (2x), 23; 6:15, 46; 7:11; 8:2; 9:10; 10:39; 15:19, 21; 19:2, 29; 20:44; 21:37; 22:3; 22:25; 23:33; John 1:42; Acts 1:12, 19, 23; 3:11; 4:18; 7:58; 8:10; 9:11; 10:1; 13:1; 14:12; 15:22; 15:37; 27:8, 14, 16; 28:1; Rom 9:7, 25, 26; 1 Cor 15:9; Heb 2:11; 3:13; 11:18; James 2:23; 1 Pet 3:6; 1 John 3:1; Rev 1:9; 11:8; 12:9; 16:16; 19:11, 13.

[189] Matt 2:7, 15; 4:21; 9:13; 20:8; 22:3 (2x), 4, 8, 9; 25:14; Mark 1:20; 2:17; 3:31; 11:17; Luke 5:32; 7:39; 14:7, 8 (2x), 9, 10 (2x), 12, 13, 16, 17, 24; 19:13; John 2:2; Acts 24:2; 1 Cor 10:27; Heb 11:8; Rev 19:9.

[190] Rom 4:17; 8:30 (2x); 9:12, 24; 1 Cor 1:9; 7:15, 17, 18 (2x), 20, 21, 22, 24; Gal 1:6, 15; 5:8, 13; Eph 4:1, 4; Col 3:15; 1 Thes 2:12; 4:7; 5:24; 2 Thes 2:14; 1 Tim 6:12; 2 Tim 1:9; Heb 5:4; 9:15; 1 Pet 1:15; 2:9, 21; 3:9; 5:10; 2 Pet 1:3. It should be noted that the following discussion is limited mostly, but not exclusively, to these disputed cases, precisely because they are disputed.

[191] See my treatment of possible objections below. The fact that we are dealing with what is widely recognized as technical terminology (Schmidt, *TDNT*, 3.489, asserts that it is "clear that in the NT καλεῖν is a technical term for the process of salvation. . . . we may and must assume that there is an element of technical usage even in passages where it is not obvious.") pushes for a uniform meaning throughout the figurative uses of the terms, though it does not absolutely demand it.

where κλητός clearly means "invited."[192] We might even say that naming is the unmarked meaning of καλέω and cognates; when present, any idea of summoning derives from the context rather than the word itself.[193]

When we posit the naming sense of call for the passages traditionally understood as a summons, we find that it makes even better sense. So in Romans 1:1 and 1 Corinhtians 1:1 Paul is a called/designated apostle and his Roman readers are named/designated Christians among the Gentiles (Rom 1:6), that is, they are designated/identified as Christ's; they are named/identified his holy ones (Rom 1:7; cf. 1 Cor 1:2). For the Corinthians to consider their calling was for them to consider their conversion (1 Cor 1:26), the time they were designated children of God or saints. They were to remain in the life situation they were in when they were called, that is, became Christians/were designated as God's own (1 Cor 7:15-24). And the addressees of 1 Peter were called/designated (children) by the Holy Father God, and therefore were to be holy as he (1 Pet 1:14-17). While we could multiply examples, these should suffice to make the point.

Intriguingly, name/naming language and familial themes often occur in connection with the call concept. Paul's identity as a called apostle, received through Jesus Christ, the *Son* of God, had its ultimate purpose in bringing glory to the *name* (τοῦ ὀνόματος) of Jesus Christ (Rom 1:1-5), as did the called status of Paul's Roman addressees (1:5-6), to whom Paul conveyed grace and peace from God the *Father* (1:7). God's call creates the promised *descendants/family* of Abraham, who is the *father* of all who believe (Rom 4:16-17). Those who are called according to God's purpose are those who have been predestined to conformity to the image of his *Son*, and who are his *brothers* (Rom 8:28-29). Israel is beloved for the sake of the *fathers*

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[192] Κλῆσις appears in Rom 11:29; 1 Cor 1:26; 7:20; Eph 1:18; 4:1, 4; Phil 3:14; 2 Thes 1:11; 2 Tim 1:9; Heb 3:1; 2 Pet 1:10; and κλητός in Matt 22:14; Rom 1:1, 6, 7; 8:28; 1 Cor 1:1, 2, 24; Jude 1; Rev 17:14. 1 Cor 7:20 is also an exception of sorts, where κλῆσις might mean something like "situation in life" (cf. BDAG, s.v. 2). But even if so, the question still remains whether this meaning derives from naming or summoning. I would argue that it relies on naming, an appointment to a life situation rather than a summons to it. Matt 22:14 has puzzled some scholars who assume that it refers to an effectual summons. It then becomes necessary to explain how those who are effectually called can at the same time not be chosen. Recognizing that the term means "invited" just as the cognate verb clearly means "to invite" in the rest of the passage (Matt 22:3, 4, 8, 9) removes the difficulty.

[193] However, this may be going too far. On the idea of unmarked meaning, see Mary-Louise Kean, "Markedness."

(τοὺς πατέρας), "for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable" (Rom 11:28-29). The called saints of Corinth call upon the *name* of the Lord Jesus Christ. Those who were called for the purpose of fellowship with the *Son* of God, are exhorted as *brothers* by his *name* (1 Cor 1:9-10). And the Corinthians are exhorted as *brothers* to consider their calling. The author of Ephesians[194] grounds his exhortation to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which his readers were called (4:1) with his prayer and doxology addressed to "the *Father* from whom the whole *family* [πατριά] in heaven and on earth is *named* [ὀνομάζεται]" (Eph 3:14-15),[195] a calling which is connected to the one God and *Father* (4:4, 6). The Colossians, who were called in one body (3:15; this must be the one body of Christ), were to do everything in the *name* of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the *Father* through him (3:17). Paul encouraged the Thessalonians as a *father* would his own *children* to walk worthy of the God who called them (1 Thes 2:11-12). Perhaps the most striking example comes in 2 Thes 2:11-12, where being worthy of their calling is part of what will result in the *name* of the Lord Jesus being glorified in the Thessalonian believers, and their being glorified in him. Here worthiness of the calling is directly related to bringing glory to the name of the Lord Jesus, most likely because that is the name they bear. Their worthy conduct brings honor to the family name. They are *brothers* who were called with a view toward gaining the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ and upon whose behalf God the *Father* was invoked to give them comfort and strength (2 Thes 4:14-17). The author of Hebrews considered Christians to be the *seed* of Abraham, *brothers* of Jesus, and holy *brothers* who partake of a heavenly calling (Heb 2:16-3:1). Indeed, "both the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one; for which

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[194] This is not to challenge Pauline authorship of Ephesians, which I hold to, but a recognition that many do argue that he did not author the epistle. Such language generally should not be taken as indicative of my view of authorship on a given NT book.

[195] Most translations translate πᾶσα πατριά as "every family" in accordance with normal Greek grammar, but the construction is best understood as "a Hebraism which has affected Koine usage" (the language is from Lincoln, 156, commenting on Eph 2:21 where he cites LXX 1 Chron 28:8; LXX Amos 3:1; Acts 2:36; 17:26; Rom 3:20; 11:26, and references C. F. D. Moule, *An Idiom-Book of New Testament Greek*, 94-95; he does not see such influence in 3:15) in light of the prior content of the epistle which emphasizes the unity of Jews and Gentiles in Christ who have been raised up with Christ into the heavenlies (2:6). I do not mean to suggest that the οὖν of 4:1 does not indicate an inference from the whole of the theology of chapters 1-3, the so called indicative of the first half of the letter which then leads to the imperative of the second half, but to recognize that it is most immediately connected to the prayer and doxology of 3:14-21.

reason he is not ashamed to *call* them *brothers*, saying, 'I will proclaim your *name* to my *brothers* . . ." (Heb 2:11-12). 1 Pet 3:8-9 encourages the type of *brotherly* love (φιλάδελφοι) which returns a blessing for a curse as the purpose of the Christian calling, with a greater purpose of inheriting a blessing. And Jude 1 regards those who are the called as beloved in God the Father. Familial language in connection to calling may also be found in Eph 1:17-18 (the *Father* of glory), Phil 3:13-14 (brothers), and 1 Thes 4:5-6 (brother).

Why all this appellative and familial language in contexts which speak of calling? I would suggest that mention of the name of Jesus Christ as a name appears as much as it does because those who have been called, those who belong to Christ, have been called by his name as his own people, so that they bear his name and have become his family; being in him who is the Son of God, they have become God's children as well, brothers and sisters of Jesus and one another. As bearers of the divine name, their behavior will bring honor or disgrace to the family name.[196] Therefore, exhortations to holy and righteous living which are often the purpose of calling might appeal to the family name/namer, and familial address is often used as an implicit appeal to the familial relationship effected by the naming of the messianic community.

The fact that the theological concept of calling almost always describes Christians and often refers to Christian conversion or existence also argues strongly for the naming sense in such cases. This does not make the summoning sense impossible, but it does render it less likely than naming. For use of the concept as a designation for Christians and their life adheres more closely to a corresponding sense of designation than to one of summons. Moreover, the summoning sense requires an additional conceptual step to arrive at the intended meaning; it requires adding the idea of response to the call so that call means something like "the summons you heard and responded to," and calling, "the summons which you responded to," and called, "having responded to the divine summons." This seems less likely than an explanation which does not necessitate an additional idea, but simply refers to the

[196] On the importance and significance of, and connections between, honor, family, and name in the socio-cultural milieu of the first century Mediterranean world, see Malina, *New Testament World*, 28-62.

effective act of naming.[197]

One might object to this understanding of calling because the concept is often presented in relation to a goal (e.g. 2 Thes 2:14; 1 Tim 6:12) or to present privilege or responsibility (e.g. Col 3:15; 1 Cor 7:15; Gal 5:13), which makes good sense as a summons *to/toward* the goal, privilege or responsibility. However, these passages make just as good sense, even better in light of the evidence we have reviewed, when they are understood as speaking of the purpose or goal of the naming. It is not a summons to or toward something, but an appointment to[198] or a naming for/with a view toward some responsibility or blessing. The prepositions used in such cases can bear any of these meanings.[199] In some cases, it is clear that purpose is in view, as for example, when the construction εἰς τοῦτο is used (1 Pet 2:21; 3:9).[200]

A more substantial objection may be made on the basis of three passages in which the preposition εἰς looks like it means "into," either because of a possible spatial metaphor (in two cases, 1 Pet 2:9 and 1 Thes 2:12) or because of the language of relationship which suggests the idea of entrance (1 Cor 1:9). 1 Pet 2:9 is the most forceful of these because it describes calling as out of (ἐκ) darkness, an obvious spatial metaphor, and εἰς God's marvelous light. But even here, the meaning of εἰς is more probably "for/with a view toward." The idea would be that God has named believers so that they are taken out of the darkness of sin and separation from God with a view toward the light of his eternal glory (cf. 1 Pet 5:10, ὁ καλέσας ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν αἰώνιον αὐτοῦ δόξαν ἐν Χριστῷ). This interpretation is supported by two considerations. First, in two of the five references to calling in 1 Peter, purpose is the certain meaning of attendant responsibility and blessing (2:21; 3:9), while one is not

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[197] Cf. Klein, "*KALEIN*," 57 (esp. n. 10).

[198] Cf. 1 Chr 23:14 LXX where καλέω + εἰς means something like "designate to/name among"; Dan 4:30 LXX: "appointed to/for the purpose of." Cf. also the use of εἰς with the verb of appointment, τάσσω, to mean "appoint to [eternal life]" in Acts 13:48; "designate/set/devote to" in 1 Cor 16:15; "set/direct to" in Hag 1:5 LXX.

[199] The usual preposition in such cases is εἰς. Among the controverted references I have identified, εἰς is used in 1 Cor 1:9; Col 3:15; 1 Thes 2:12; 2 Thes 2:14; 1 Tim 6:12; 1 Pet 2:9, 21; 3:9; 5:10; ἐν in 1 Cor 7:15, 18, 22; Gal 1:6; Eph 4:4; Col 3:15; ὡς in 1 Cor 7:17; διά in Gal 1:15; ἐπί in Gal 5:13; 1 Thes 4:7; and ὑπό in Heb 5:4.

[200] For εἰς τοῦτο as denoting purpose, see BDAG, s.v. εἰς, 4f.

accompanied by a relevant prepositional phrase (1:15), and the other is uncertain as to whether it is a summons or naming to eternal glory (5:10). This slightly favors the idea that the author of 1 Peter would have viewed the positive side of calling in relation to its purpose rather than in relation to a sphere of destination. Secondly, the author continues his sentence with a clear allusion to Hosea 2:1 (Heb./LXX; cf. 2:25), in which καλέω clearly has a naming sense. But even if one should still insist on a summoning sense for καλέω in this instance, that would not mean it must bear such a sense everywhere else (this also applies to the other individual passages dealt with below). Our case would still stand.

1 Thessalonian 2:12 might also contain a spatial metaphor in the reference to kingdom (βασιλείαν). But the kingdom of God is not primarily a spatial reality in the NT, and even if so, it would still make just as good sense for God to call with a view toward that kingdom as to call to it, especially as the call is also for his glory. Moreover, as argued above, the familial language surrounding the passage points toward our view. The situation is much the same with 1 Corinthians 1:9, which states that the Corinthians were called εἰς fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ. It makes just as good sense to understand fellowship as the purpose of the calling as it does to take it as a reality entered into, especially since the former also implies the latter and Paul immediately goes on to exhort by the *name* of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Yet another objection might proceed from the fact that calling takes place through (διά) the gospel (2 Thes 2:14). Must this not mean that the Thessalonians were called through the gospel summons? No, not at all. Rather it probably refers to the bestowal of the Christian name/identity upon placing their faith in the gospel message,[201] as the reference to election by faith in the truth immediately preceding suggests.

All of this drives us to call for a reappraisal of the call concept in the New Testament which recognizes that it has to do with naming rather than summoning. If this view be accepted, then the traditional notion of effectual calling would be eliminated, for it is based on the idea of a *summoning* which effectively creates the response of faith and obedience to the call. While this is not the only possible

[201] Cf. Klein, "*KALEIN*," 64.

interpretation of a summoning call—it could simply be used of Christians to emphasize God's grace in inviting sinful people into his kingdom and glory—the question becomes moot when the summoning background is abandoned. The Christian call is effectual. But it does not create a response; rather it is itself a response to the faith of believers which effectually identifies them as members of the Christian covenant community, bearers of the name of God their Father and of Christ their brother.

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The Word of Promise: Genesis 18:10, 14 (Romans 9:9)

Romans 9:9 now provides the ground for the important clarification of 9:8 by showing that Isaac, the typical covenant descendant through whom the covenant descendants would be named, was indeed a child of promise.[202] Thus bolstered, Paul's interpretation of Genesis 21:12 that only those who believe are regarded as the seed of Abraham supports God's faithfulness asserted in 9:6a, for the promise was made only to the covenant seed. The frequent observation that the predicate ἐπαγγελίας is thrust forward to the beginning of the sentence for emphasis makes Paul's stress on promise and its concomitant, faith, unmistakable. That 9:9 stands in causal relationship to 9:7-8 evidences the fact that Paul is interacting with the whole story of the Abraham narrative.

The conflation of Genesis 18:10, 14 constitutes Paul's second quotation from the OT in Romans 9. Again, he does not explicitly signal the quotation but assumes that his audience will recognize it. It is directly related to the first quotation of Genesis 21:12, which originally came in the context of a fulfillment of the promise recorded in 18:10, 14. Paul makes similar use of the Genesis 18 promise as does the text of Genesis. As we have seen, the promise's fulfillment brought about the

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[202] It might be helpful at this point to remember the interpretive parallelism between 9:7 and 9:8:
Ἐν Ἰσαὰκ (9:7) = τὰ τέκνα τῆς ἐπαγγελίας (9:8)
κληθήσεταί σοι (9:7) = λογίζεται (9:8)
σπέρμα (9:7) = εἰς σπέρμα (9:8).
See above for a definition of what it means to be children of promise/characterized by promise in light of the Gen context referred to by Paul.

expulsion of Isaac and the ensuing divine assurance quoted by Paul. In 9:9 he similarly grounds 21:12 with 18:10, 14. Taken together, the two passages show that more than physical ancestry was at issue in Genesis since Isaac and Ishmael were both physical descendants of Abraham. The difference between them was that Isaac was born through faith in God's promise and by his miraculous intervention.

It is remarkable how well suited Genesis 18:10, 14 is to the point Paul is making, for the reliability of God's word is of paramount importance in the context of those verses. Moreover, Genesis 18:10, 14 encapsulate the height of the theme's expression in the narrative. So in its original context, the (now conflated) quotation argues for the very same point Paul is seeking to defend—the faithfulness of God's word. Genesis 18:14 points to God's omnipotence as the basis for his faithfulness. This strong affirmation of God's omnipotence echoes throughout Romans 9 and is surely reflected in the emphasis on God's sovereignty embedded in the chapter.

What is just as remarkable is a point that has, as far as I know, gone unrecognized. That is, this adamant Old Testament declaration of God's faithfulness which Paul quotes is directly linked to what Paul would have considered the first and paradigmatic Old Testament theodicy—the dialogue between Abraham and YHWH over the fate of Sodom. This dialogue has several characteristics which make it important for understanding Romans 9, including its justification of God in the context of the dependability of his word, a concern for God's mercy, and a concern for the salvation of what are essentially Gentiles.

The Genesis narrative in 18:16ff. portrays Abraham as a prophet who is allowed into the mystery of the divine counsel concerning YHWH's intentions toward a people. It is in this prophetic aura that Abraham enters into intercession on behalf of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, risking his own life. By invoking this context, Paul dresses himself in the cloak of Old Testament prophetic intercessory language, portraying himself as a prophet with privileged access to the divine counsel and privy to God's secret intentions. This metalepsis serves the rhetorical function of presenting Paul to his audience as a trustworthy interpreter of Scripture, and more than that, as himself a prophet who stands in the biblical tradition of speaking the very word of God. It is not that Paul's audience would understand him to be claiming such a status directly. But the rhetorical effect of the echo subtly casts Paul in this light, perhaps

unconsciously raising the scripturally astute hearer's perception of the Apostle. Paul subtly communicates that he has prophetically ascertained the Lord's will toward Israel.

This observation confirms the estimation of others that Paul takes a prophetic stance in Romans 9-11.[203] It also sheds more light on Romans 9:3 where Paul contemplates intercession for Israel in which he would be willing to be accursed for the sake of his kinsmen. While we have already seen that Paul probably alludes to the *locus classicus* in the OT of self-sacrificial intercessory prayer (Ex 32) in 9:3, there is no reason to choose between Genesis 18 and Exodus 32, since Paul alludes to both contexts and would have considered the two to be related, recorded by the same hand. Given the fact that the Genesis texts seem to occupy a more primary place in Paul's argument, it may be that Genesis 18 helped lead him to Exodus 32. In any case, it is significant that he alludes to both, for the former describes Abraham's intercession on behalf of Gentiles, and the latter Moses' (another prophetic figure) intercession on behalf of Israel. This is another indication that Paul is concerned not only with Israel at this point, but with both Jews and Gentiles.[204] The irony is, as we have observed in the figure of Ishmael, that Israel is now thrown in with the Gentiles because of their rejection of Christ. Paul can now plead for God's justice and mercy towards them as Abraham did for Sodom. His allusion to the Genesis 18 context helps signal their new position. (It also gives new significance to Paul's quotation in 9:29 from Isaiah 1:9 which refers to Sodom and Gomorrah.)

This leads us to a consideration of the fact that Genesis 18:16ff. draws attention to the blessing of the Gentiles in Abraham; all the nations of the earth will be blessed in him. Genesis 18:18 presents this motif as a reason for why YHWH will disclose his mind to Abraham. It is also the reason why he reveals the mystery of Israel to Paul,

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[203] See Craig A. Evans, "Paul and the Hermeneutics of 'True Prophecy': A Study of Rom 9-11;" idem, "Paul and the Prophets: Prophetic Criticism in the Epistle to the Romans (with special reference to Romans 9-11)"; idem, "Prophet, Paul as"; Douglas C. Mohrmann, "Paul's Sermon to the Churches at Rome: Romans 9-11 as Theological Speech and Apostolic *Parousia*," 12; Luz, *Geschichtsverständnis*, 108-09. Cf. Norman A. Beck, *Mature Christianity in the 21st Century: The Recognition and Repudiation of the Anti-Jewish Polemic of the New Testament*, 109; D. W. B. Robinson, "The Salvation of Israel in Romans 9-11," 82; K. Barth, *CD*, 2.2.202; B. Corley, "The Jews, the Future, and God (Romans 9-11)," 46.

[204] Contra Kuss, 699. Chae, *Paul*, 215ff. (see esp. 224), argues from a different but complimentary perspective that Paul's argument concerns Gentiles as well as Jews from the beginning of Rom 9.

the apostle to the Gentiles (11:13). Paul appears to view himself as a means of God fulfilling this great Abrahamic promise as he seeks to bring the Gentiles to the obedience of faith (1:5). What is more, just as Abraham's divinely initiated intercession on behalf of Sodom was a proleptic fulfillment of God's promise to bless all the nations in him, so Paul's justification of God, revelation of the mystery of his will, and intercession on behalf of Israel in Romans 9-11 works toward the fulfillment of this same promise.

In our exegesis of Genesis 18 we found that the fulfillment of God's promise to make Abraham a great nation and to bless all the nations in him was the ultimate ground of his decision to demonstrate his justice through dialogue with Abraham. God's righteousness depends on his blessing all the nations in Abraham, for that is what he promised him (Gen 12:3). Paul's transumption argues that far from being a failure of God's word or an injustice perpetrated by him, the bestowal of the blessing of Abraham upon Gentiles, which necessitates the rejection of Israel qua ethnic Israel, is necessary for God to be true to his word. God would be unrighteous otherwise. His word would indeed fall to the ground in that case. Paul saw that in order for God to fulfill his word and bless the Gentiles in Abraham he must separate ethnicity from covenant membership.[205] The great nation descended from Abraham would lose its ethnic orientation so tied up with the Law. Paul probably understood the connection between the two promises contained in Genesis 18:18 (great nation and Gentile blessing), themselves representative of all the Abrahamic promises, to be that through the great nation descended from Abraham would come the means of blessing the Gentiles—Christ, who would himself sum up the true Israel in himself, and constitute that new Israel of Jews and Gentiles who believe in him. As Philo found in Ishmael a

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[205] This insight bridges the gap between the differing approaches of Leander E. Keck, "What Makes Romans Tick?" and N. T. Wright, "Romans and the Theology of Paul," to the theology of Romans. For, according to Richard Hays, "Adam, Israel, Christ," 71, almost every theological difference between the two follows from their divergent estimations of the importance of covenant in Paul's thought in Romans. Yet Keck's marginalization of covenant is based on what he takes to be "Paul's fundamental concern for the salvation of all humanity" (Hays, idem, emphasis removed; cf. Keck, idem, 24). Our investigation has found that it is precisely the salvation of all humanity that Paul found to be the goal of the covenant (a point already made in Wright's essay); it was God's means of accomplishing universal salvation. This point ultimately vindicates Wright's conception of covenant as central to Paul's argument. J. D. G. Dunn, "Did Paul Have a Covenant Theology? Reflections on Romans 9.4 and 11.27," has recently shifted his position (stimulated by E. J. Christiansen, *The Covenant in Judaism and Paul: A Study of Ritual Boundaries as Identity Markers*) on this issue and argued that covenant was not a central category for Paul's theology. But our findings contradict his argument as well.

figure of the elementary and necessary giving way to the full and complete,[206] so Paul views the necessary and truly chosen physical Israel to have given way to the fulfillment of the Church; the great nation has finally reached the height of its greatness in Christ, having shed its ethnic trappings for the righteousness of faith. This turn of events does not empty Jewish ethnic identity of some advantage; there remains a special though not superior place for the Jew.

There is a circularity to God's reasoning in Genesis 18:17-19. God chose Abraham because he would inherit God's promises, and God chose him in order to accomplish what he promised him. The significance of this circularity for Paul derives in part from the content of those promises, culminating in the blessing of the nations in Abraham. God's ultimate purpose was to establish a worldwide family through Abraham and the mighty nation descended from him. Indeed, this is the ultimate purpose of Abraham's election. From the very first utterance of God's promise to Abraham (Gen 12:1-3), the blessing of the Gentiles appears as the climactic end of the promise. The fact that the context Paul quotes from connects election with this theme argues strongly that Paul does too in Romans 9, especially since this theme figures prominently in the epistle as a whole and fits in with a related principal theme of unity between Jew and Gentile in the Church. Rather than dealing only with Israel at this point in the argument, Paul is dealing with the relationship between Jew and Gentile, raised by the rejection of ethnic Israel and the accompanying election of the Church. More precisely, he is defending God's faithfulness to his promises to Israel vis-à-vis his right to designate only those who believe in Christ as heirs to those promises regardless of ethnicity.

The justification of God is a most striking aspect of Genesis 18:16-19:38 in light of Paul's argument in Romans 9-11. In both passages the defense of God's justice arises out of his contemplated judgment on a people, and moves beyond an assertion of his justice to an affirmation of his mercy. Paul's emphasis on mercy in his argument may well find its first impulse in Genesis 18-19. Moreover, just as Genesis 18-19 moves from a defense of God's faithfulness to his word to a defense of his justice/righteousness, so Paul moves in his argument. It is likely that the logical connections between the two themes evident in the OT context obtain in the New.

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[206] Philo, *Sob.* 8ff; *Cher.* 3-10; cf. *Post.* 130-31.

For one, the justice of God serves as a ground for the dependability of his word. Paul's audience can know that the God who is the Judge of all the earth (Gen 18:25; cf. Rom 3:6) only does that which is right. That means he would never go back on his word. It is unthinkable. Therefore, God's word has not fallen despite any appearance to the contrary. Secondly, God's word cannot fail because he is omnipotent. Nothing is too difficult for him (Gen 18:14; cf. Rom 9:19ff.; 11:33-36), so nothing can stand in his way of fulfilling his promises. Thirdly, the righteousness of God consists in the fulfillment of his promise. In both Genesis 18 and Romans 9 his promise especially comprises the inclusion of the Gentiles in the blessing of Abraham. This is in fact, the purpose of election—the righteousness/glory of God through the fulfillment of his promise in the blessing of all the nations of the world.

Abraham's entreaty in Genesis 18:22-33 is designed precisely to show that God is just and will not slay the righteous with the wicked, that he does not treat the righteous and wicked alike, and that he does not disregard the moral state of people. This suggests that Paul is not thinking in Romans 9 of double predestination or unconditional election which determines individual destiny without regard for the moral state of people. The Lord's dialogue with Abraham helps to define what Paul understood by God's righteousness. God's rescue of the one righteous man/family in Sodom provides further testimony of God's concern for justice. It must be admitted that this passage does reveal a concern over individual destiny, and that Paul seems to carry this concern into Romans 9 to a degree. But it must also be remembered that even in Genesis 18-19 the emphasis is still on groups (the righteous, the wicked, the city, 50, 40, 30, the family, etc.); so with Paul. His emphasis is on groups/peoples, though he gives some attention to individuals and is concerned to show that God's justice extends even to his treatment of individuals (though again, not as individuals per se, but as members of a group). The Genesis 18 justification of God stands behind Paul's theodicy in Romans 9 echoing Abraham's eloquent plea—

> Far be it from you to do such a thing, to slay the righteous with the wicked so that the righteous become like the wicked! Far be it from you! Shall the judge of all the earth not do justice? [Gen 18:25]

It alerts us that Paul will address this theme shortly, and that these quotations anticipate the development of Paul's argument in its attention to theodicy, God's

justice, human freedom/responsibility, and the calling of the Gentiles.[207]

Summary/Conclusion

Structurally, Genesis 21:12 functions as the primary text of the sustained scriptural argument of 9:6-29, similar to the later rabbinic proem midrash form; Genesis 18:10, 14 functions as the secondary text.[208] This structure gives a discrete form to the section 9:6-29 and makes Genesis 18-21 the centerpiece of Paul's argument. Given Genesis 18:10, 14's supporting role, Genesis 21:12 stands out as the main ground for Paul's assertion of God's faithfulness in 9:6a, a divine word of comfort addressed to his profound grief over his kinsmen. The rest of chapter 9 up until v. 29 arises out of this main concern to identify the true heir of the covenant promise and serves to further support Paul's interpretation and use of Genesis 21:12 with a view toward supporting the programmatic assertion of 9:6a that the word of God has not failed. Thus, Romans 9:6-29 may legitimately be called a midrash on Genesis 21:12 directed toward the faithfulness of God's word in the face of the rejection of ethnic Israel and calling of the Church vis-à-vis the Abrahamic covenant and the fulfillment of its promises.[209]

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[207] See pp. 357f. in chapter 5 below for consideration of how our reading of Rom 9:1-9 relates to the interpretation of 9:10-13, which completes the basic section of which the former is a part and could be cited to challenge the corporate character of Paul's argument as put forward in this investigation.

[208] Stegner, "Romans 9.6-29," 38-41; E. Earle Ellis , *Prophecy and Hermeneutic in Early Christianity*, 155; idem, "How the New Testament Uses the Old," 203f. See pp. 101f. in ch 2 above.

[209] Hays' (*Echoes*, 1-14, 161) skepticism concerning the usefulness of the designation "midrash" for Pauline interpretation is generally on target; cf. Moo, 550 n. 9, 569f. n. 6. In addition to other related methodological problems, the label does tend "to bring the interpretive process to a halt, as though it had explained something, when in fact we should keep pressing for clarity" (Hays, idem, 14). But if the label is ever warranted, surely it is here, where Paul has woven a large number of scriptural texts together in elucidation of a main text. It is well recognized that the foundational sense of the word is "interpretation." That is partly why there has been so much confusion and disagreement over the correct use of the term, for the disagreement comes over what type of interpretation it should signify. I would suggest that the term may at least be used of cases of clear extended biblical interpretation which draw in a number of OT texts in connection with a primary text or theme, as observable in the rabbinic midrashim, what G. K. Beale, "The Use of the Old Testament in Revelation," 263-65) identifies as the literary prototype and thematic uses of the OT. Cf. R. Scroggs, "Paul as Rhetorician," 290, who relates Rom 9-11 to "the homiletic midrash which brought together many individual texts to illustrate one point, or one verse (the proem texts)," though he finds it most closely related to the Jewish tradition of narrating the events of *Heilsgeschichte*. On the idea that Gen 18-21 serves as a virtual literary prototype for Rom 9-11 see below.

Our investigation has discovered that Genesis 21 and 18-19 are far more significant for Paul's argument in Romans 9-11 than has been previously recognized. Through them, Paul draws his audience into the Scriptures of Israel and casts their eschatological present into the biblical story of Abraham, Isaac, and Ishmael. Provoked to overwhelming grief at the accursed state of Israel and faced with a challenge to the faithfulness of God's word, Paul has gone to the Scriptures and found there the pattern for his own response and the content of his own teaching. Indeed, the broad contours of Paul's argument in Romans 9-11 are anticipated by the story of Abraham in Genesis 18-21.

Faced with exceeding grief over the rejection of ethnic Israel from inheritance of the covenant blessings, Paul finds a divine word of comfort directed to Abraham over the expulsion of his physical child from the covenantal household which assures him that the covenant descendants will be determined through the child of promise, the rejection of the merely physical seed being necessary for the covenant and promise to be fulfilled. This same word of comfort is tied to the promise of special blessing and care for the nonetheless rejected physical offspring, who may also eventually find even covenantal blessing as part of the nations of the world. Faced with an accompanying charge against God's faithfulness to his word to Israel if Paul's gospel of covenant fulfillment for all who believe in Christ regardless of ethnicity be true, Paul finds an Old Testament context which argues explicitly though narratively for the faithfulness of God's covenant word over against a challenge to his faithfulness with a view toward the inclusion of all the nations in the covenant blessing of Abraham. Donning the mantle of a prophet, Paul intimates that God's glorious justice and mercy, which are conditioned upon the moral state of people, find expression in the fulfillment of his covenant promise to bless all the nations in Abraham. Just as it has been claimed that Deuteronomy 32 contains Romans *in nuce*,[210] and we have been able to claim in the previous chapter that Exodus 32-34 contains Romans 9-11 *in nuce*, we may now also say that Genesis 18-21 contains Romans 9-11 *in nuce* as well. Paul has used the Old Testament context as a virtual

[210] Hays, *Echoes*, 163-64. Paul probably would have understood Gen 18-21 to contain Deut 32 itself, and Ex 32-34 for that matter, in *nuce*.

literary prototype upon which to build and pattern his argument.[211]

We have found that many of the themes Paul deals with in Romans 9 are also present in ancient Jewish interpretive traditions surrounding Genesis 18 and 21. The former raised for ancient interpreters the issues of theodicy, the dependability of God's word to Israel, God's mercy, universalism and concern for the salvation of the Gentiles, God's sovereignty and foreknowledge, human free will, and faith. The latter chapter engaged ancient interpreters in the issues of the Abrahamic promises, the symbolic role of Ishmael as representative of the descendants of Abraham excluded from the covenant yet retaining a measure of blessing, corporate representation, identification of Isaac's seed based on a principle other than ethnicity, election and its basis, definition of the true Israel, determinism, ability to relate to God, faith, incomplete/complete stages in God's plan, the faithfulness of God's word, and the Gentiles. While in most cases Paul was not saying the same things about these issues as his fellow ancients, these interpretive traditions must have had some influence on him. He could not completely escape the effect of his socio-cultural milieu. Yet our investigation has not discovered any instances of clear dependence by Paul. Rather, he appears to have developed his stance mainly from a fresh encounter with Scripture in light of his experience of Christ and his Church. He has combined relatively straightforward biblical interpretation which abstracts principles from the OT text based on analogy, and in which he has identified certain legitimate emphases of the text such as the fact that more than physical descent was at issue in determining Abraham's covenant seed and the stress on promise and God's faithfulness to his word, with a typological exegesis which sees the eschatological events of redemptive history presently taking place to be prefigured in the story of Abraham, Isaac, and Ishmael.

To state Paul's argument in Romans 9:6-9 plainly: despite the fact that ethnic Israel has been rejected and the word of God spoken to Israel has been fulfilled in the Church made up of Jews and Gentiles, the word of God has not failed, because the physical seed of Abraham is not the true Israel, heir to the covenant promises, but the true Israel is the community of those who have believed in Christ whether Jew or

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[211] I qualify with "virtual" because Paul has not strictly followed the form and structure of the Gen narrative, but has adopted its plot for the basis of his argument in Rom 9-11. Ex 32-34 fits the mold of a literary prototype for Rom 9-11 even better.

Gentile. Paul's basic argument in support of his contention is summed up most succinctly by Genesis 21:12, pregnant as it is with intertextual significance—"In Isaac seed will be called to you."

Chapter Five

The Significance of Paul's Use of the Old Testament in Romans 9:1-9 for the Exegesis and Theology of Romans and for Pauline Intertextuality

The Exegesis and Theology of Romans 9-11 and the Epistle as a Whole

Broad Exegetical Insights[1]

Paul's interpretive activity in Romans 9:1-9 reveals that the issue of who are the true people of God is central to chs. 9-11. It is, in fact, hardly separable from the generally agreed upon main theme of Rom 9-11—the faithfulness of God to his word to Israel. Indeed, this major theme of divine faithfulness arises only because the issue of who are the true people of God has been raised by Paul's argument in Rom 1-8, which has placed Jews and Gentiles on the same footing, asserted God's impartiality, insisted that justification and salvation come only through faith in Christ, and applied the name and language of election and its blessings to the multiracial Church of Christ. Paul's identification of the Church of Jews and Gentiles as the covenant people of God inescapably raises the question of Israel and God's faithfulness to her. This question of the identity of the true Israel then comes to dominate Paul's argument in ch. 9, and to some extent chs. 10-11 also, as he defends God's faithfulness to his promises to Israel despite his rejection of her and his election of the Church. Indeed, his defense of God's faithfulness in ch. 9 takes the form of a defense of God's right/freedom to elect whom he chooses as his people.

The OT background behind the beginning of Paul's argument in Romans 9-11 (i.e., 9:1-9) helps us to detect the direction of his argument by its concern for this very

[1] It should be noted that there is necessary overlap between the various headings and subheadings in this chapter. It is very difficult to separate exegesis from theology or Paul's use of Scripture. Nevertheless, even though the headings are somewhat artificial, they are still helpful to aid an orderly presentation of our findings.

issue—who are the covenant people and on what basis are they so reckoned. The answers it provides through Paul's own prophetic-apocalyptic-Jewish-Christian perspective are that God's covenant people are none other than the Church of Jews and Gentiles, the eschatological messianic community identified by God's call in his free mercy on the basis of promise and faith. Paul's allusions reveal that his calling language speaks of the naming/identification/recognition of God's covenant people. Even near the end of the chapter Paul is still speaking of calling (9:25-26), where it is crystal clear that he speaks of the naming of God's people as his sons.

This understanding of the thrust of Romans 9 helps us to discern the function of chs. 10-11 more fully. We have argued in ch. 2 that 9:30-11:32 supports the main thesis statement of 9:6a by showing the guilt of Israel (9:30-10:21) and the faithfulness of God to his promises to her (9:30-11:32). God was faithful to fulfill his promises in the gospel and is not to be blamed because ethnic Israel rejects the realization of those promises, which have been offered to them freely in Christ. But now we may also say that Romans 10-11 also supports the point represented negatively by 9:6b,[2] and positively by Paul's citation of Gen 21:12 in Romans 9:7 and its clarifying interpretation in 9:8. Romans 10-11's support of 9:6a and 9:6b/9:7/9:8 respectively should be regarded as complementary. The support for 9:6b is to be found in its discussion of the basis of inclusion in the true Israel—faith in Jesus Christ, and God's grace and mercy. Romans 10 especially further reveals the identity of the true Israel, and even more explicitly, the basis for participation in her. Additionally, we can also now appreciate more sharply that this same issue of the identity of the covenant people and the criteria for covenant membership looms in the background of the previous chapters (Rom 1-8). Romans 2 and 4 are especially put into sharper relief.

Our intertextual exegesis has repeatedly emphasized the importance of covenant for Paul's argument. The whole of Romans 9-11 must be seen in a covenantal context. Paul is defending God's covenant faithfulness to his covenant word vis-à-vis his covenant promises. The covenantal significance of Paul's argument

[2] I alluded to this above in ch. 1, p. 6 and ch. 2, p. 78.

has, of course, been noticed before.[3] But it is a matter of controversy,[4] and Richard Hays has called for attention to this very issue in order to move scholarship forward in its understanding of Paul's theology, especially in Romans.[5] Indeed, Hays suggests "that the study of Paul's exegesis of scripture might offer us the only viable way to adjudicate the question of the role played by 'covenant' in Pauline theology."[6] Therefore, this investigation is especially suited to contribute to addressing this crucial question before Pauline scholarship. Our analysis bears out the covenantal approach, contributing to the corroboration of the perspective represented by N. T. Wright.

Relatedly, our investigation has found Paul to have a fundamental corporate perspective in Romans 9-11. This carries forward the orientation of the texts he is interpreting in all their covenantal richness. The corporate and covenantal thrust of Paul's argument ties into two complementary factors we have found in both the OT background and the text of Romans 9-11. For one, Paul's argument concerns both Jews and Gentiles from the very beginning. It is the enjoyment of the blessings of the covenant by a predominantly Gentile church that forms the contrasting backdrop to the Jews' rejection of those same blessings, the former exacerbating the latter to no small degree. And that raises the other factor related to a corporate covenantal perspective, viz., that Paul considers ethnic Israel to be anathema, i.e., rejected from the covenant and its elect status, and under its fatal divine curse.

Theological Insights

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[3] See especially, N. T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology*, 231-57; idem, "Romans and the Theology of Paul," 56-62.

[4] See notes 171 and 205 in ch. 4 above.

[5] Again, see note 171 in ch. 4 above, and cf. note 205 of the same ch.

[6] Richard B. Hays, "Adam, Israel, Christ—The Question of Covenant in the Theology of Romans: A Response to Leander E. Keck and N. T. Wright," 86. Hays comments further that N. T. Wright's thesis concerning the significance of covenant in Second Temple Judaism "will prove sustainable only if it can be shown in detail that Paul actually draws consistently on covenant language and exploits scripture in a way that highlights covenant themes. How does Paul's treatment of the scriptural texts handle the themes of continuity and discontinuity with Israel? Romans offers a rich trove of evidence to be explored on this question." These are the very types of questions that this investigation addresses from the required intertextual perspective.

The intertextual calling motif, the corporate-covenantal character of Paul's argument, and a number of exegetical conclusions I have drawn in the course of this investigation have decidedly theological ramifications. We have observed a dynamic interaction between God's sovereignty and human will and action in the OT texts that has been suggestive for understanding Paul's rhetoric. Paul regarded God as both omnipotent (cf. Gen 18:14) and just, one who would never treat the wicked and the righteous indiscriminately. He held a conception of the divine sovereignty that found God to maintain ultimate control while limiting his own determinations to some extent so that he might respond to the free will of his creatures and grant them important roles in the outworking of his cosmic plan of salvation.

Paul speaks not of unconditional eternal decrees regarding individual election and salvation, but of the corporate election and naming of God's people. For Paul, the divine call is not a gospel summons that irresistibly creates a response of faith and obedience; rather it is a naming of those who are in Christ through faith as his covenant people. Applied individually, Christian calling refers to conversion, when one comes to share in the name and attendant blessings of the eschatological messianic community. To be sure, election and its appellation (i.e., calling) have to do with eschatological salvation, which necessarily affects individuals. But both of these divine actions apply first and foremost to the people of God as a group, and then to individuals as members of the elect people.[7] Therefore, election and calling are conditional upon faith in Jesus Christ. In traditional theological terminology, Paul's use of the OT in Romans 9:1-9 argues for an Arminian rather than a Calvinistic interpretation of Romans 9, albeit on untraditional grounds.

Beyond this, the picture of God that emerges is one of the utmost moral goodness and beauty. In addition to being completely just, he is absolutely faithful and thoroughly merciful. He also appears to be triune. Jesus Christ is the glory/personal presence of God which bestows the divine election and may be called God. By the same token, the Holy Spirit is also the glory/personal presence of God

[7] To be more theologically precise, election and calling apply first and foremost to Christ, the elect Son of God and corporate representative of the covenant people, and then to the people united to him in the New Covenant by faith, the individual members of which enjoy the blessings of the covenant.

that conveys election. On the eschatological front, where both Christ and the Spirit also belong, we have seen that Paul considered the Abrahamic promises of the OT to be eschatological in nature. They have now been brought to inaugurated fulfillment in Christ and belong ideally to ethnic Israel and believing Gentiles but practically only to the eschatological people of God, which is the Church of Jesus Christ.

Paul is best taken as a covenant theologian, which means that the theological concept of covenant is foundational to his theology,[8] coloring and directing much of his thought. Paul conceived of the gospel and the events of salvation-history wrought in Christ as the outworking of the covenant between God and Israel described in the Scriptures. This reading of Paul is crucial to understanding him on his own terms, for he claims that his gospel is the fulfillment of the Scriptures of Israel (e.g., Rom 1:1-5; 3:21f., 31). Romans and the gospel it presents stand or fall with Paul's interpretation of Scripture. But how could his interpretation of the Scriptures stand if he were to dispense with the covenant so central to them while plundering promise after promise from that covenant? Consequently, we may say that Romans and Paul's gospel stand or fall with his interpretation of the covenant. We can sum up some of the practical implications of Paul's covenant theology by the words continuity and fulfillment—in relation to the Old Covenant, Scripture, the Law, Judaism, Israel, between Israel and the Church, etc. Although there are undeniable elements of discontinuity and the nature of the continuity Paul envisages may be varied, complex, and often times surprising, it all centers on Christ and his fulfillment of the covenant purposes of God.

Paul's identity as a covenant theologian raises the hotly debated issue of the so-called New Perspective on Paul with its postulate of covenantal nomism as the pervasive pattern of religion in first century Judaism.[9] This investigation certainly gives some support to the New Perspective with our findings of significant continuity

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[8] We may follow Gordon P. Hugenberger, *Marriage as a Covenant: A Study of Biblical Law and Ethics Governing Marriage Developed from the Perspective of Malachi*, 171, in defining "covenant" as "an elected, as opposed to natural, relationship of obligation established under divine sanction."

[9] For the standard description of this pattern, see E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion*, 422. For a convenient and concise description of the tenets of the New Perspective, see D. A. Hagner, "Paul and Judaism: Testing the New Perspective," 76-82, though it should be kept in mind that the New Perspective is not really one uniform perspective. For a more colorful summary using the acronym TULIP, see Francis Watson, "Not the New Perspective." On the mounting opposition to the New Perspective, see note 213 in ch. 2 above.

between Paul and Judaism, his positive view of the Law[10]—one of Israel's greatest privileges (Rom 9:4; cf. 3:1-2) in fact—his attack on a notion of salvific Jewish national privilege in his argument for the faithfulness of God in Romans 9:1-9, etc. However, this is limited support since we treat only one text. To see that Paul attacks Jewish ethnocentrism in Romans 9:1-9 is not to deny that he attacks a Jewish notion of works-righteousness elsewhere in his writings. Similarly, to see that Jewish interpretive traditions surrounding the scriptural texts Paul uses in Romans 9:1-9 reflect similar concerns to those of the apostle is not to deny that legalism might be found in relevant Jewish literature.

In my view, the New Perspective has identified an important emphasis in Paul's view of the Law and its works, but does not exhaust his view.[11] In some places Paul refers to works understood as human effort or achievement. Nevertheless, Paul's emphasis often falls upon ethnic identity markers in harmony with the covenantal orientation of first century Judaism and early Christian concerns that the New Perspective has rightfully thrust to the forefront of Pauline scholarship such as the place of Jews and Gentiles in God's economy of salvation. On the other hand, it seems likely that Paul would have found the concept of staying in the covenant by obedience, and therefore what Sanders calls covenantal nomism, to be incompatible with God's grace.[12] It also seems likely that some first century Jews presupposed God's grace on the ideological level à la covenantal nomism while falling into a de facto legalism.[13] Moreover, Richard Bauckham is probably correct to point out that "the basic and very flexible pattern of covenantal nomism could take forms in which

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[10] However, this is not a universal tenet among proponents of the New Perspective nor is the New Perspective necessary to advocate a generally positive view of the Law for Paul. Nevertheless, it would seem fair to say that the New Perspective has given impetus to such an assessment of Paul among some of its influential voices such as Dunn and Wright.

[11] Although it should be noted that Dunn himself has never restricted "the works of the Law" solely to circumcision, food laws, and Sabbath, but admits that it refers to whatever the Law requires; see his view along with the complaint that he has been repeatedly misunderstood, in J. D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 358 and esp. note 97.

[12] A common point made by critics of the New Perspective; see e.g., Moo, 215f., and the literature he cites in note 82. It is also important to remember that there is serious question over the approapriateness of Sanders' categories ("getting in" and "staying in") for assessing first century Judaism; see e.g., D. A. Carson, "Summaries and Conclusions," 543-47.

[13] Another common observation; see e.g., Hagner, "Paul and Judaism," 84-88; Colin G. Kruse, *Paul, The Law, and Justification*, 296; Moo, 216f.

the emphasis is overwhelmingly on meriting salvation by works of obedience to the Law, with the result that human achievement takes center-stage and God's grace, while presupposed, is effectively marginalized."[14] But at this point the foundation of the New Perspective is shaken, though it has brought many valuable insights and a welcome corrective to the traditional conception of first century Judaism as universally a religion of meritorious legalism. The better route is to recognize the complexity of Second Temple Judaism and that Paul sometimes attacked actual Jewish ethnocentrism, sometimes actual works-righteousness, and perhaps often a complex mixture of the two.

But where does all this leave us with respect to Paul's pattern of religion? It would not be accurate to call Paul a covenantal nomist, but not because covenant was merely peripheral to his theology nor because of some sort of Law/gospel contrast inherent in his thought. Rather, to use Sanders' terminology, for Paul one enters the covenant and its blessings through faith and remains in the covenant and its blessings through faith. However, faith for Paul necessarily produces obedience to the covenant Lord and his Law so that from a certain point of view good works might be considered necessary for staying in the salvific covenant relationship. But this is not the best way to put it since faith is the determinative issue and works are merely its fruit. In Romans 9:1-9 Paul argues that true participation in the covenant was always by faith. If we have to label Paul's pattern of religion, let me suggest Christocentric covenantal faith-nomism.

Paul's focus on faith in Christ establishes his covenantal theology upon grace, for the divine favor is provided in Christ/the New Covenant and is accessed (Rom 5:2) and maintained freely through faith in Christ. For Paul, grace and faith go hand in hand; faith is what makes effective possession of the promises of God according to grace (Rom 4:16). Justification by faith may not be *the* center of Paul's thought, but it lies at the center of his thought in a complex of ideas swirling around Christ and what

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[14] Richard Bauckham, "Apocalypses," 174. I would hasten to add that bold advocacy of attempting to earn merit before God appears to be relatively rare in the literature of Second Temple Judaism. For characterizing the variation within Judaism in general based on the relevant texts, Kruse, ibid, helpfully speaks of texts which stress observing the Law and texts which stress God's election and grace. It does seem that covenant and the Law figured prominently in Judaism generally, though there could be exceptions even to this rule, at least in relation to covenant (see e.g., Paul Spilsbury, "Josephus"; David M. Hay, "Philo of Alexandria," 370).

God has accomplished in him and the New Covenant. While the vocabulary of God's righteousness is rich and multifaceted, to a significant degree it should be understood covenantally as God's faithfulness to fulfill his promises. Likewise, the vocabulary of human righteousness should be understood as referring especially (though by no means exclusively) to covenant membership.[15] Furthermore, the covenantal contours of Paul's theology actually bring together the forensic and participationist aspects of his thought.[16] For participation in Christ is by faith and equivalent to participation in the covenant while justification by faith involves God's declaration of the covenant status of those who believe in Christ.[17]

Some Specific Exegetical Insights Elsewhere in Romans 9-11

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[15] For a helpful description of the recent weight of scholarly opinion concerning righteousness language as relational rather than merely forensic in the OT, first century Judaism, and Paul, see Gary W. Burnett, *Paul and the Salvation of the Individual*, 117-31 (Stanley E. Porter, "The Concept of Covenant in Paul," 282f., 284f., seems unaware of this development in his recent article, critical of a lack of attention to words other than διαθήκη for understanding the concept of covenant and arguing that the concept is related to righteousness language in Paul). Though I agree that righteousness language in these spheres was more fundamentally relational than forensic, it is going too far to suggest that ethics was not part of its fundamental essence (contra Burnett, idem, 127). The covenantal character of both human and divine righteousness in biblical and post-biblical usage is indeed foundational, but there seems to be plenty of places that the ethical character of righteousness actually comes to the fore while still present covenantal concerns recede to the background. Even more importantly, there was not a thoroughgoing dichotomy between covenantal status and obligation on the one hand and ethical character on the other. Indeed, faithfulness to one's covenantal obligations is an acutely ethical issue. Cf. Mark A. Seifrid, "Righteousness Language in the Hebrew Scriptures and Early Judaism," 422-27, who correctly challenges too sharp a distinction between status and behavior, but whose attempt to separate covenant from righteousness seems misguided and subject to Porter's criticism mentioned above.

[16] Cf. Wright, *Climax*, 213f. As Seifrid, "Righteousness Language," 424, observes, "the word ברית signifies a distinct relationship, which often calls forth quasi-forensic and familial language."

[17] It is ironic that Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 513f., argues that covenant was not fundamental to Paul's thought because it does not adequately account for his participationist soteriology. On closer reflection, it is actually Paul's covenantal convictions that account for his participationist transfer terms! Indeed, Sanders' (ibid, 544-46) own distinction between justification in Paul as a transfer term verses Judaism's use of the term as one of covenant status maintenance is invalid. For Paul the language of justification/righteousness can be applied to either the "transfer" or to the resulting continuing status because of the covenantal significance of the language. This is similar to Paul's concept of calling, which can refer in a special way to the time when the believer is first called a member of the covenant (i.e., conversion), but also to the continuing status of membership in the covenant community. Perhaps it is worth noting here that even Paul's concept of imputation is grounded in covenant theology; imputation is a covenantal practice of regarding and treating others based on their covenant membership/identification with the covenant representative.

The insights we have gained through the present study carry implications for virtually every verse in the rest of Romans 9-11. As the introductory and early stages of Paul's argument, Romans 9:1-9 set an orientation with which to approach the larger passage. Having set forth some of the more important broader emphases established by Romans 9:1-9, understood intertextually, we should note a few of the places in the rest of chapters 9-11 where our findings most directly impinge on exegesis.

To begin with, we have seen that the background of Romans 9:9/Genesis 18:10, 14 identifies the ultimate purpose of Abraham's covenantal election to be the fulfillment of the Lord's promise to Abraham. In the context of Genesis, God's promise is to culminate in the blessing of all the nations of the world in Abraham. This is the purpose of Abraham's election according to Genesis 18:17-19. All of this in turn suggests that the debated phrase ἡ κατ᾽ ἐκλογὴν πρόθεσις τοῦ θεοῦ in Romans 9:11 refers to the same purpose of election,[18] found as it is in the Abraham cycle of Genesis to which Paul continues to allude in Romans 9:10-13 (cf. Rom 4 and its concern for inheritance of the Abrahamic promises). Thus, Paul's use of the Old Testament again steers us away from an individualistic predestinarian reading of Romans 9, now specifically of 9:10-13, and helps us to see that Paul maintains focus upon God's right to identify whom he will as his covenant people. More specifically, he maintains focus upon God's plan of including Gentiles in the covenant and the necessary consequence of excluding unbelieving Jews, since faith is the means by which the whole world, Jews and Gentiles, can participate in the covenant and its blessings. This perspective is confirmed by the fact that 9:10-13 actually supports 9:8, furnishing further substantiation for the contention that it is the children of the

[18] It is beyond the scope of the present discussion to analyze this phrase and the various options for its interpretation in detail. That must await a detailed intertextual exegesis of Rom 9:10-13 such as we have conducted in 9:1-9. For some of the options, see Moo, 581 n. 53. For a thorough view of the grammatical options of the general construction, see BDAG, s.v. κατά, B, esp. B7. Suffice it to say here that most options are compatible with the interpretation we are suggesting, as are the views of most interpreters. However, the view of John Piper, *The Justification of God: An Exegetical and Theological Study of Romans 9:1-23*, 53, which practically takes the phrase κατ᾽ ἐκλογήν as epexegetical, indicating that God's purpose is to be one who elects, is inherently inimical to the view we are advancing because it understands the phrase itself to designate the purpose it speaks of. While possible grammatically, Piper's view is one of the less likely options. Perhaps the most likely meaning of the phrase is also the one that commands the most scholarly support in one way or another, effectively taking it to reveal election as the manner in which the divine purpose operates.

promise (rather than the children of the flesh), who believe in Christ and have the Spirit, that are regarded as children of God and covenant seed.

A superficial reading of 9:10-13 might suggest that Paul speaks of individual election because he uses individuals as examples. But as we have seen, he has already used Abraham and Isaac in 9:7-9 in relation to corporate election, and, as is commonly pointed out, the Old Testament passages Paul quotes in 9:12-13 refer primarily to the peoples represented by these individuals.[19] Hence, Paul's consideration of the divine decision about Jacob and Esau before they were born applies to the character of Israel's corporate election and is employed to argue that the fulfillment of God's purpose/promises to bless the world rests not on human works but on his sovereign freedom to designate whom he will as his covenant people on whatever basis he chooses. Individuals figure into the picture by consequence of their participation or lack thereof in the corporate covenant on the terms God lays down. Our conclusions about Paul's intertextually based concept of calling in 9:6-9 lend further support to this reading of 9:10-13 in primarily corporate terms since it has emerged as a primarily corporate concept that applies to individuals based on their relationship to the covenant community and its representative. Indeed, Paul's intertextual use of the concept supports the claim, based on the deduction that the works/calling contrast of 9:12 is equivalent to the familiar Pauline works/faith contrast used earlier in Romans, that its reappearance in 9:12 implies faith as the condition of election in the New Covenant.[20] For the divine call is pronounced over those who believe.[21]

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[19] Gen 25:23; Mal 1:2-3; see e.g., Cranfield, 479; Bruce, 193. Moo 585 n. 69, lists a number of representatives of this view. Those who do not think Paul carries forward the corporate perspective of the OT texts include Moo, 584-86; Piper, *Justification*, esp. 56-72 (see also his list of representatives of this view on pp. 57f. and n. 26); cf. Dunn, 544.

[20] Moo, 583 n. 60, lists several representatives of this view; see also Barrett, 182f., for the claim that the two contrasts are equivalent. The main problem with this interpretation is that the same circumstances which preclude election and rejection on the basis of anything the twins had done must also preclude faith as a condition of election in their case since they also would have been unable to exercise faith before birth. (Surprisingly, neither Moo, 582f., nor Piper, ibid, 52f., specifically makes this point in his argument against the allowance of faith as a basis for election in Rom 9:12. Moo correctly admits that Paul's anti-works language does not exclude faith as a basis for election, but ironically [in light of our view] argues that his calling language does. It is also interesting that Piper, ibid, 53, asserts that, "The counterpart to works in conjunction with election (as opposed to justification) is always God's own call (Rom 9:12b) or his own grace (Rom 11:6)," when in the very place Paul links grace, faith, and calling, he says that it is faith that makes heirship of the promises, i.e., election, according to grace [Rom 4:16-17]. Piper's restriction of faith to justification is reductionistic,

Similarly, Romans 9:15's citation of Exodus 33:19 cannot be interpreted as some sort of statement of God's righteousness in unconditionally electing individuals to salvation or damnation as was common in the past and as is still advocated by a handful of influential commentators. This verse requires a detailed exegesis founded upon the analysis of its Old Testament background which we have provided in chapter three that goes beyond the scope of our present purposes. Here we can only make a few suggestive observations. First, Paul's use of the Old Testament in Romans 9:1-9 urges us to take 9:15 as a statement of God's merciful character and freedom to determine the basis on which he bestows his mercy, and therefore, who will receive it. Moreover, his mercy in this intertextual context again has to do with covenant and election. In Exodus, God speaks in relation to the question of whether he will again acknowledge Israel as his covenant people. Thus, Paul is again defending God's right to choose whom he will as his covenant people generally and his righteousness in electing the Church specifically. As for the concept of the hardening of Israel to which Romans 9:15 is directly connected, our examination of Paul's use of Exodus

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missing its intimate interconnection with other aspects of Paul's theology.) But Paul's point is not to argue for individual, unconditional election, but in harmony with the corporate significance of his OT intertext, for God's sovereign freedom in corporate election, which would include his right to lay down any conditions he chooses for participation in the elect people. Surely it would be reading too much into Paul's observation about the prenatal divine decision about Isaac's children to contend that he subtly meant to teach that God makes such a decision about each individual concerning his eternal destiny prior to his own birth. It is better to take Paul's own cue by paying attention to the interpretation of the observation that he provides: that God's purpose to save the world is accomplished by an election based not on works, but on God's own decision about who he will designate as his covenant people. Forlines, 258, is correct to point out that, "The fact that God's choice of Jacob was made before he was born does not within itself prove that God's choice was not by works. God in his foreknowledge could have chosen Jacob on the basis of works if He had desired to do so." Indeed, some have astutely argued that Paul here counters a certain stream of Jewish theology, represented by Philo, *Leg. All.* 3.88, that took Jacob's election to have rested on God's foreknowledge of his deeds (ἔργα) (see Dunn, 543; Moo, 583 n. 60). This seems probable, but even if not, it at least shows contemplation of God's foreknowledge to be a factor in the first century discussion about the basis of election. This suggests that Paul was not arguing that the fact of the prenatal divine decision necessarily proves his conclusion, but that it supports and emphasizes it; his comment provides an interpretation of the event, and the interpretation he provides denies works as a basis of election and highlights God's freedom in election.

[21] See esp. our exegesis of Rom 9:7-8 and the discussion of the phrase τὰ τέκνα τῆς ἐπαγγελίας and the concept of calling in ch. 4 above. It is significant that the designating call of God spoken of in Rom 4:17 is based on faith, and in the context of establishing the Gentiles as part of Abraham's covenant seed, "calls the things not existing as existing," while the indisputably naming call of God in Rom 9:25-26 calls "the one who was not my people, 'My People', " and "sons of the living God," "and the one not beloved, 'My Beloved'," also referring to Gentiles who are said shortly thereafter to attain righteousness by faith (Rom 9:30).

32-34 would suggest both a divine judicial hardening rather than a divine prevenient decree and a stress on Israel's own character and guilt.

As for the vexing question of the meaning of τέλος in Romans 10:4, our observations concerning the covenantal orientation of Paul's argument and its focus on the fulfillment of the Abrahamic promises, which are to be understood as previously developed in the Mosaic covenant and its Law, support a primary teleological meaning. This is not to say that the idea of termination is not present at all. It probably is, but as a result of the Law's fulfillment in Christ. Thus, both goal and termination are in view in Rom 10:4,[22] but our intertextual exegesis of 9:1-9 suggests that goal is the more primary meaning.[23]

Finally, we must comment on the supreme interpretive debate of Romans 9-11, located in 11:26. Our investigation has found Paul granting the name and blessings of the true Israel to the Church. Significantly, he states this negatively as a principle in 9:6b, which is directly connected to the programmatic statement of Rom 9-11, viz., 9:6a. Indeed, 9:6b is itself programmatic, standing over 9:7-11:32 in some measure, as we mentioned earlier in this chapter. Therefore, while the interpretation of 11:26, which involves numerous questions,[24] is far beyond the scope of this study, we can dispel a very frequent objection to an ecclesiological understanding of Israel in the verse, namely, that it is thoroughly implausible that Paul would shift the meaning of Israel from one verse (11:25) to the next (11:26) or that he would use the term Ἰσραήλ differently in 11:26 than in the rest of chs. 9-11.[25] For one cannot

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[22] See esp. Moo's (641) common sense comments combining the two basic senses of τέλος.

[23] Two recent intertextual investigations have also affirmed a double meaning of goal and termination with a primary emphasis on the former: J. Ross Wagner, *Heralds of the Good News: Isaiah and Paul "in Concert" in the Letter to the Romans*, 152ff. (see esp. 152 n. 104); Douglas C. Mohrmann, "Semantic Collisions at the Intertextual Crossroads : A Diachronic and Synchronic Study of Romans 9:30-10:13," 237-40; cf. Shiu-Lun Shum, *Paul's Use of Isaiah in Romans: A Comparative Study of Paul's Letter to the Romans and the Sybilline and Qumran SectarianTexts*, 220 n. 128; Timothy W. Berkley, *From a Broken Covenant to Circumcision of the Heart: Pauline Intertextual Exegesis in Romans 2:17-29*, 194. Intriguingly, Mohrmann, idem, 239, asserts that Rom 10:4 echoes 9:4-5, giving greater weight to the present argument.

[24] For recent treatments of Rom 11:26 that are especially attuned to Paul's use of the OT, see Wagner, ibid, 276-98; Shum, ibid, 235-45; Florian Wilk, *Die Bedeutung des Jesajabuches für Paulus*, 64-73; cf. James M. Scott, " 'And Then All Israel Will Be Saved' (Rom 11:26)." For recent literature on this passage more generally, see Wagner, ibid, 277 n. 190.

[25] See e.g., Cranfield, 576; Moo, 721.

reasonably argue this in relation to a unified argument like Romans 9-11 in which Paul begins with a programmatic assertion essentially redefining Israel as the Church and then goes on to spend much of his argument developing this redefinition in one way or another. Indeed, the polyvalence of the term in Romans is well known.[26] The objection is particularly weak when one considers that Paul's programmatic assertion concerning the identity of the true Israel uses two different definitions of Israel in one half of a verse! Therefore, I would submit that my intertextual exegesis of Romans 9:1-9 supports an ecclesiological interpretation of Romans 11:26 along the lines argued by N. T. Wright.[27] This also argues for the consistency of Paul's argument.

Exegetical Insights into the Epistle as a Whole

Our findings in relation to Romans 9:1-9 also help to clarify Paul's argument in the epistle as a whole. They serve to confirm the recent approach of Pauline scholarship in Romans that interprets the letter primarily via corporate and covenantal concerns,[28] concerns that we have identified as the main thrust of Romans 9:1-9. Thus, it is not only true of Romans 9, but also for the epistle as a whole that we find among Paul's main concerns the identity of the covenant people of God, the faithfulness of God to his covenant promises, and the relationship between Jews and Gentiles in the divine purposes. Indeed, the fact that the main concerns of Romans 9:1-9 identified by our investigation coincide with the conclusions of the majority of recent scholarship regarding the main concerns of Romans further supports our

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[26] See e.g., Charles H. Cosgrove, *Elusive Israel: The Puzzle of Election in Romans*; U. Luz, *Das Geschichtsverständnis des Paulus*, 269f.

[27] See Wright, *Climax*, 246-51; idem, "Romans and the Theology of Paul," 59-62.

[28] For a documented description and critical assessment of this current consensus, see Burnett, *Paul*, 91-114. Burnett approves of this current trend in Romans scholarship in general, but rightly seeks to redress an overemphasis on collective to the exclusion of individual concerns. But in his concern to rescue the individual aspects of Paul's thought, he does not quite strike the right balance himself. While some of his comments point in the right direction, his focus on the individual too often seems to lead him to pit corporate concerns against individual concerns in Paul's thought rather than stressing that individual concerns are present within the context of corporate ones, and are in fact, dependent on them (i.e., individual concerns are a function of corporate concerns). Cf. note 214 in ch. 2 above, as well as the whole section in which it is found. Berkley's recent intertextual investigation (*Broken Covenant*) corroborates corporate and covenantal concerns as central to Romans.

position and the increasingly popular view that Romans 9-11 is indeed the climax of the theological argument of Romans (chs. 1-11).

It is this theological climax that has demonstrated to us so clearly that Paul's opening statement on the gospel of Jesus Christ as the fulfillment of the promises of the Scriptures (1:1-4) is not merely a nod at tradition, but a foundational part of his gospel and its explication in Romans. Our intertextual investigation of Romans 9:1-9 would suggest that understanding Paul's use of the OT is of paramount importance for fully understanding this grand epistle. Indeed, I would suggest that attention to Paul's use of the OT may well be the most important avenue for understanding his epistles in general at this juncture in the history of Pauline scholarship.

Paul's Use of the Old Testament

The three allusions we have investigated can only go so far for generalizing about Paul's use of the OT. But general practices are observed from a collection of individual instances. Therefore, while recognizing the limited nature of the data we have to work with, it is nonetheless valuable to reflect on the implications that this study might have for Paul's use of the OT in general with sensitivity to the history of research in this area. Each analysis of individual instances of Pauline intertextuality in NT scholarship contributes to the growing body of literature on Paul's use of Scripture in specific texts. Together these individual investigations will offer an account of Paul's interpretive activity. Moreover, practices we observe here receive confirmation as general tendencies when observed by others in other texts and simultaneously contribute to the confirmation of their conclusions regarding Paul's use of the OT.

Textual Issues

We have found that in his citations from Genesis, Paul has used the LXX. The allusion to Exodus 32:32 in Romans 9:3 has no verbal correspondence with the intertext. But we may note that Paul's quotation from the same general context (Ex

33:19 in Rom 9:15) is an exact quotation of the LXX. So our investigation supports the standard view that Paul's quotations of Scripture rely on the Septuagint.

However, Paul's conflated quotation of Genesis 18:10, 14 in Romans 9:9 presents a unique wording in its use of ἐλεύσομαι in place of ἐπαναστρέφων ἥξω of Genesis 18:10 LXX and/or ἀναστρέψω of Genesis 18:14 LXX, both of which render Hebrew שׁוּב.[29] This raises the possibility that Paul used a Greek manuscript that is no longer extant or made his own translation from Hebrew. Unfortunately, the data is inconclusive in this case since Paul could have reasonably changed either of the Septuagint renderings without substantially altering the sense of the quotation while simultaneously sounding the eschatological chord he obviously wanted to strike. Of the possible options it appears that Paul adapted the ἥξω of Gen 18:10 LXX, since ἔρχομαι and ἥξω are reasonably close in meaning. Therefore, this investigation again supports the consensus that Paul generally relied on the LXX for his scriptural quotations, but it in no way argues against the possibility that he sometimes made use of Hebrew.[30]

J. Ross Wagner has recently classified the conflation of texts as an interpretive strategy employed by Paul in his citation of Isaiah in Romans 9-11.[31] While he finds that the conflation of texts is sometimes unintentional, he also finds that it is often filled with interpretive significance arising from Paul's understanding of the biblical

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[29] See our textual comparison of Rom 9:9 and Gen 18:10, 14 in ch. 4 above.

[30] Cf. ch. 2 above, pp. 120f. and notes 246 and 247. I am skeptical of the current trend—but not consensus—of assuming that when a given Pauline quotation of Scripture agrees with the MT against the LXX, he has used a Greek text—lost to us—that had been revised toward a Hebrew exemplar. I think it likely that Paul knew and used Hebrew in his interpretive activity, and find it questionable to favor on principle a conjectural assumption of a manuscript for which there is no evidence in a specific instance in light of the fact that it is entirely plausible that Paul read Hebrew, the NT evidence favors the possibility, and it is the simplest construct to account for various data. However, Wagner, *Heralds*, 126-36, 170-74 (cf. 344f.), has made good cases that Paul has made use of Greek revisions of LXX Isaiah toward a Hebrew exemplar in Rom 9:33 (Isa 8:14/28:16) and Rom 10:15 (Isa 52:7). Nevertheless, it should be noted that the likelihood in the former case is that both Paul and the author of 1Peter made use of a Christian testimony (see e.g., Michaels, 94; Dunn, 584; E. Earle Ellis, *Paul's Use of the Old Testament*, 89, following C. H. Dodd, *According to the Scriptures: The Substructure of New Testament Theology*). It is interesting to note that Moisés Silva, "Old Testament in Paul," 631, lists seven instances of Paul agreeing with the MT against the LXX in his comprehensive list of OT citations in Paul, and none of these comes from Isaiah, the specific focus of Wagner's study (Silva's classification of verbal agreements/disagreements is necessarily general; he lists Rom 10:15 as agreeing with neither the MT nor the LXX).

[31] Ibid, 346-51. Cf. Ellis, *Paul's Use*, 49-51.

text. We have found this to be the case with Paul's conflation of Gen 18:10, 14, where he combines pieces of the pivotal moments of the narrative, evoking a scriptural pattern that mirrors the situation he is addressing and supporting his point of the faithfulness of God with exquisite artistry.[32] Thus, Paul communicates his understanding of the biblical text and its relationship to the present stage of redemptive history by intentional conflation.

At the same time, the allusion to Exodus 32:32 in Romans 9:3 shows how revealing research into Paul's allusions (as opposed to his quotations) can be, confirming our methodology in its appreciation of allusion on a par with quotation. Indeed, for research purposes, attention to allusions may be even more necessary given the traditional emphasis upon quotation over allusion.

Paul's Hermeneutic

We have found Paul's interpretive practices to be at home in a first century Jewish context. He addresses many of the same issues that his contemporaries did in the biblical texts he alludes to. And in some cases he even appears to follow prior interpretive tradition. But for the most part, Paul breaks new ground in his bold and brilliant interpretive activity. This is no doubt due largely to Paul's own genius and religious experience. But these have been directed by Paul's interpretive presuppositions, apparently shared with the other NT authors.[33]

We have seen a concept of corporate solidarity at work in Paul's approach to Scripture. This is true in his allusion to Exodus 32:32, through which he identifies profoundly with the Jewish people and contemplates appeal to the faithful remnant as embodied in himself. It is even more so with Paul's quotation of Genesis 21:12 in Romans 9:7, in which we are told that Abraham's seed would be identified by relationship to Isaac. Paul understands this to be equivalent to the identification of Abraham's seed by relationship to Jesus Christ, the true seed of Abraham (cf. Gal 3) and corporate representative of the covenant people. Paul's intertexual activity reveals

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[32] See again our textual comparison of Rom 9:9 and Gen 18:10, 14 in ch. 4 above.

[33] For a description of such presuppositions as commonly identified, see ch. 1 note 54 above.

that the concept of corporate solidarity was especially (though not necessarily exclusively) a covenantal matter.

The emphasis that we have observed in Paul's use of the OT on matters of covenant and election supports Hays' controversial assertion that Paul's hermeneutic was ecclesiocentric rather than Christocentric.[34] But we must beware of getting sidetracked by mere terminology here. The point of labeling Paul's hermeneutic as ecclesiocentric is to acknowledge that he most often uses Scripture "to argue for a particular vision of the church"[35] or to make application to the life of the church. This is not to deny that he engages in theocentric or Christocentric interpretation at times, but to identify the typical focus of his interpretive activity. Hays is right to point out that: (1) even though Paul's hermeneutic is theocentric, his focus is not (typically) on God's activity in itself but on God's activity as directed toward his people;[36] and (2) Christological interpretation is the substructure upon which ecclesiocentric interpretation is based.[37] But all of this is to be expected given the contingent character of Paul's letters, which were written to address the situations of churches.

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[34] See Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, ch. 3. But the basic point was observed long before Hays' work sparked such controversy by Ellis, *Paul's Use*, 115 (I have been impressed by how frequently various conclusions drawn in recent work on Paul's use of the OT are to be found in essence in Ellis' classic study, suggesting that the judgments of Wagner and Shum to the effect that the works of Koch and Stanley [and Shum adds Lim] supersede Ellis are rash [Wagner, *Heralds*, 6 n. 23; Shum, *Paul's Use of Isaiah*, 4 n. 16; and see Dietrich-Alex Koch, *Die Schrift als Zeuge des Evangeliums: Untersuchungen zur Verwendung und zum Verständnis der Schrift bei Paulus*; Christopher D. Stanley, *Paul and the Language of Scripture: Citation Technique in the Pauline Epistles and Contemporary Literature*; T. H. Lim, *Holy Scripture in the Qumran Commentaries and Pauline Letters*]); cf. D. Moody Smith, "The Pauline Literature," 275. For critiques of Hays' position, see James A. Sanders, "Paul and Theological History," 53f.; J. Christian Beker, "Echoes and Intertextuality: On the Role of Scripture in Paul's Theology," 68f. And for Hays' compelling response, see Richard B. Hays, "On the Rebound: A Response to Critiques of *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*," 77f. and 93ff. respectively. Silva, "Old Testament," 639, supports Hays on this point, while Mark A. Seifrid and Randall K. J. Tan, *The Pauline Writings: An Annotated Bibliography*, 107, remain skeptical. Mohrmann, "Semantic Collisions," 9f., questions the validity of the whole debate, arguing that Paul's hermeneutic is too complex for such exclusive categories (but see below).

[35] Hays, *Echoes*, xiii.

[36] Hays, "On the Rebound," 77f. It would be more accurate to categorize Paul's theology as theocentric rather than his hermeneutic. But at a deeper level, everything is unquestionably theocentric/Christocentric for Paul since the glory of God is the ultimate reality and goal of all things for him. But there has got to be a way to indicate that Paul most often uses Scripture primarily in relation to the Church.

[37] Hays, *Echoes*, 120f.; idem, "On the Rebound," 93f. This point is tied to the concepts we have observed of covenantal/corporate solidarity and Christ's covenantal/corporate representation of his people.

Nevertheless, Paul's ecclesiocentric hermeneutic testifies to the fundamental community orientation of the apostle's gospel as an expression of his theology.[38]

Perhaps the most fundamental Pauline interpretive strategy that we have observed is typology. In each allusion we have studied, Paul has consistently operated on a typological approach to Scripture. He has found the contemporary events of the present eschatological moment prefigured in the salvation history of Israel. It is through the events of *Heilsgeschichte* that he understands the present events of the eschatological age inaugurated in Christ. They are the lens through which he interprets them, even as God's eschatological works in Christ fashion his perception of redemptive history. Thus, the content of the OT contexts Paul alludes to suggest to him what God is doing now, and what his own response and that of his readers should be.

It has long been recognized that typology is a central feature of Paul's scriptural interpretation.[39] What has escaped the notice of Pauline scholars, however, is the utter depth of Paul's typological approach to the OT. We have seen in his allusions to Exodus and Genesis that his entire personal response to the circumstances surrounding him was conditioned by what he found in Scripture. Even his emotional reaction was largely determined by the Scriptures through which he interpreted his

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[38] This refers not only to Paul's theology proper, but equally to his Christology and pneumatology.

[39] See James W. Aageson, "Typology, Correspondence, and the Application of Scripture in Romans 9-11," for a rare objection to typology as a feature of Paul's scriptural interpretation; cf. Sanders, "Paul and Theological History," 54. Hays, ibid, 161, admits to the centrality of typology in Paul's interpretation of Scripture, but contests that it is itself a method of interpretation (cf. the similar, earlier comments of E. Earle Ellis, "How the New Testament Uses the Old," 210f., and the comments of L. Goppelt, *Typos: Die typologische Deutung des Alten Testaments im Neuen*, 183, 243f. [now available in English translation: *Typos: The Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament in the New*], to which he refers; cf. also David L. Baker, "Typology and the Christian Use of the Old Testament," 324, 328f., and the opposing comments of G. K. Beale, "Did Jesus and His Followers Preach the Right Doctrine from the Wrong Texts?" 401f.) and argues that it is unconcerned with history. He defines typology as "a framework of literary-historical sensibility that creates the hermeneutical conditions necessary for the metaphorical linkage of scriptural text and contemporary situation." Aageson also thinks Paul was not concerned with history, and that is why he rejects the concept of typology in favor of what he terms "correspondence." Against Aageson (and the similar view of U. Luz, *Das Geschichtsverständnis des Paulus*, 30-33) and in favor of the importance of history for Paul's use of the OT, see Smith, "Pauline Literature," 279. Gordon P. Hugenberger, "Introductory Notes on Typology," 337, appears to trace the view that separates typology from history to M. D. Goulder, presumably in his *Type and History in Acts*. But the majority of scholars are surely correct to recognize in typology a historical character (see Baker, idem, 324f.).

times. Paul truly lived and breathed Scripture, and to a degree that has seldom been fathomed despite the common appreciation of its supreme importance to him.

Related to Paul's typological interpretation but distinct from it is his analogical approach.[40] This may be seen especially in his treatment of Genesis 18-21. There we find Paul extracting a principle of how God works in salvation history and applying it to the contemporary situation. Just as promise rather than physical descent was the basis of the Lord's covenantal election in the case of Abraham/Isaac/Ishmael, so it is in the present phase of redemptive history. This is another way of saying that faith rather than ethnicity is the basis of election in the New Covenant age. It is a principle by which the faithful God acts. But it is more than that. In this case it is an analogical principle that plays into a typological configuration. That is, as this specific principle is actualized in the present eschatological age it produces a pattern that significantly reproduces former personages and events so that the former may be regarded as pointing forward to the latter in the divine intention vis-à-vis their recording in the text of holy Scripture.

Another aspect of Paul's interpretation of Scripture related to typology and also widely recognized by scholars that we have seen in Paul's use of the OT in Romans 9:1-9 is his eschatological perspective.[41] Simply put, Paul finds each of the passages to which he alludes to have special significance for the present age of salvation history when the purposes and promises of God have come to inaugurated fulfillment in Christ. This is tied to another widely recognized aspect of typology and Paul's interpretive practice—escalation. So the apostasy, punishment, and restoration of Israel in relation to the golden bull-calf adumbrates the same pattern vis-à-vis Israel's rejection of the Christ, bearer and mediator of the eschatological fulfillment of the promises of God. The New Covenant formed in these latter days is the great hope of Israel, the promised restoration of the holy writings and the Deuteronomic tradition. Similarly, both the rejection of contemporary Israel seen in the rejection of Ishmael recorded in Genesis and the promise to Abraham take on an obvious

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[40] The principle of analogy is obviously at work in typology, but analogy can operate apart from typology.

[41] Ellis, "How the New Testament Uses the Old," 207, observes an eschatological perspective in Paul's use of the OT in Rom 9:7-9.

heightened significance in the critical time of fulfillment. Each of these situations is fuller when contemplated on this side of the cross and carries a more urgent message to those who encounter it.

Yet another aspect of Paul's scriptural interpretation evident from this investigation is his attention to the narratives contained in the passages he alludes to. Thus, this study has provided some corroboration for Stockhausen's suggestion that one of Paul's fundamental principles of OT exegesis is that he

> takes as the basis for his interpretative task the Torah; that is to say, narrative texts from the Pentateuch are usually (perhaps always) at the core of his arguments. In interpreting selected Pentateuchal narratives, he is usually (perhaps always) extremely concerned with the stories themselves—that is, with plot-line, character, narrative event and especially the inexplicable, unusual or unmotivated character or action.[42]

It is striking that Stockhausen articulated this principle on the basis of 2 Corinthians 3-4 and Galatians 3-4 apart from Romans 9. Whether or not she has isolated a consistent principle of Pauline exegesis, her findings together with ours surely demonstrate at least a Pauline tendency. When we consider that a number of scholars now regard Paul's hermeneutic to be based on a narrative framework of interpretation,[43] we can conclude that his concern for the larger story of the narratives he alludes to is indeed a general principle of Pauline exegesis and that his foundational use of Pentateuchal narratives is at least a Pauline inclination.

We have further been able to confirm a pattern of Pauline interpretive activity that has been observed by Richard Hays in other texts—Paul's OT allusions frequently anticipate the next or otherwise later stage of his argument.[44] As Hays describes it, "an unvoiced element of the explicitly cited text subliminally generates the next movement of discourse."[45] This is evident in a number of themes evoked by

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[42] Carol K. Stockhausen, "2 Corinthians 3 and the Principles of Pauline Exegesis," 144.

[43] See ch. 2, p. 121 above with note 250; Mark A. Seifrid and Randall K. J. Tan, *The Pauline Writings: An Annotated Bibliography*, 144f.

[44] See Hays, *Echoes*, 51-52 (on Ps 143 in Rom 3:20), 66ff. (on Jer 18 in Rom 9:20ff.), 70 (on Ps 94 in Rom 11:2a), 158. Cf. p. 129 above.

[45] Ibid, 70.

Paul's allusion to Exodus 32:32 in Romans 9:3 and further developed in the rest of Romans 9-11, including the theme of God's faithfulness to his promises which is then taken up in Romans 9:6ff. It is also evident in a number of themes evoked by Paul's citations from Genesis 18-21 in Rom 9:7, 9 that are subsequently developed in the rest of Romans 9-11, including the theme of theodicy and the justice of God taken up in the next major segment of the argument (9:14ff.). This pattern of Paul's scriptural usage substantiates our view of the contextual character of his *Schriftgebrauch* to be argued below. Indeed, all that we have seen in Paul's hermeneutic activity holds more significance than merely identifying a feature of his rhetorical strategy or underscoring the growing appreciation of narrative in his interpretation of Scripture. It supports the contention that Paul does not tend to use the OT out of context and/or atomistically and confirms our method of investigating Paul's allusions as possible pointers to their original broader contexts.

Intertextual Quotation/Allusion,[46] *the Legitimacy of Paul's Hermeneutic, and Pauline Scholarship*

With each of the allusions we have examined, we have found that Paul argues on the basis of the broader context of the OT text alluded to. He appears to pay close attention to the contexts of his OT allusions and to develop his argument based on their content. Without fail, he draws upon these texts for main themes contained in the broader contexts which were relevant to his argument.[47] A good example of this,

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[46] On an intertextual approach to quotation and allusion, see ch. 1 above, esp. pp. 10ff., 22-27. Practically, this refers to approaching Paul's scriptural allusions as pointers to their broad OT contexts.

[47] Paul's regard for context argues against "the common assumption that by identifying a catchword connection one has thereby explained the *hermeneutical logic* behind" Paul's use of the OT (Wagner, *Heralds*, 347 n. 17, emphasis his); cf. Ellis, *Paul's Use*, 50. On the other hand, Berkley, *Broken Covenant*, 57, rightly insists that Paul's use of hook-words is not merely unconscious. But he goes too far in maintaining that it is hook-words rather than thematic interests that provide the link between the narrative and prophetic material Paul uses. A more accurate picture of Paul's use of key-words would consider thematic concerns to be primary, but catchwords as a typically intentional (though not always), secondary means of linking passages. Ellis, ibid, strikes a better balance when he upholds semantic content as basic for Paul, and comments, "The recurrence of the *Stichwort* is perhaps a designed mnemonic, but at times it is only a natural coincidence in the subject matter," and notes, "In a secondary sense the presence of the key-word may be the cause for the selection of a particular verse from the relevant passage." I would add that a key-word might be the cause for Paul's choice of one passage among others that might contain the appropriate thematic material. But we can dispense with

common to each allusion analyzed, is the theme of God's faithfulness to his word, the main theme of Romans 9:1-9 and of all of Romans 9-11.

This is not to say that Paul operates as a modern historical biblical critic. He had no interest in rigidly isolating what the OT text meant in its original historical and literary setting from what it meant in his own time, for his own life and ministry, and for his readers. Yet it is not that he could not distinguish between these differing contexts. Rather, he would find no need to.

The question of Paul's contextual/non-contextual use of the OT depends on our definition of contextual interpretation.[48] If we mean interpretation that speaks only of a passage's strict original intention, then we must say that Paul's use of the OT in Romans 9:1-9 is non-contextual. But that is surely a shortsighted and far too restrictive definition that is inappropriate for assessing Paul's or anyone else's use of the OT. What we have found is that Paul does use the OT passages he alludes to in Romans 9:1-9 in accordance with their original intentions and that he appears to have reflected carefully and thoughtfully on these OT texts in their contexts.[49] As G. K. Beale has observed, "One reason why many see the New Testament typically interpreting the Old Testament non-contextually is often because the New Testament applies the Old Testament to new situations, problems, and people which were not in the minds of the Old Testament authors."[50] Many scholars mistakenly contest the contextuality of Paul's interpretation of the OT when the underlying issue is often rather one of application. That is, as we have seen in this investigation, and as many scholars have come to conclude,[51] Paul frequently argues in concert with themes,

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the notion that a mere hook-word forms enough of a link between passages for Paul's exegetical practice.

[48] For a discussion of the notion of context in relation to study of the use of Scripture in ancient Judaism/Christianity, see Shum, *Paul's Use of Isaiah*, 17-21.

[49] Some of my language here reflects that of Silva, "Old Testament," 639. To say that Paul uses OT texts in accordance with their original intentions at least means that his application of them is a logical extension or development of those intentions.

[50] G. K. Beale, "Did Jesus and His Followers Preach the Right Doctrine from the Wrong Texts?" 395. Beale's article is an excellent treatment of this topic with respect to the NT authors in general that is fully applicable to Paul.

[51] See e.g., a number of the scholars included in G. K. Beale, ed., *The Right Doctrine from the Wrong Texts?: Essays on the Use of the Old Testament in the New*; various scholars referred to by Beale, "Right Doctrine"; Shum, *Paul's Use of Isaiah*; Berkley, *Broken Covenant*; Douglas A. Oss, "Paul's

structures, and details deriving from the wider original contexts of his citations and allusions. This can scarcely be considered anything else but contextual interpretation. But in his application of Scripture to the present, Paul (usually) obviously and necessarily advances a meaning that differs from the exact original intention of his intertext, albeit typically based upon that intention. So the real question becomes one of Paul's presuppositions by which he interprets/applies the OT.

Romans 9:6-9 happens to provide us with an example of Paul arguing explicitly and scripturally for one of his hermeneutical presuppositions—that the Church of Christ is the true Israel who is the heir of the promises of God.[52] This conviction is itself founded upon scriptural interpretation that can be scrutinized. Such scrutiny need not detain us here since it is well beyond the scope of the present discussion. More to the point is Beale's significant observation that many allegations of Paul's misuse of the OT involve "passages where what was intended for Israel (or leaders or righteous individuals in Israel) in the Old Testament is now applied often by a typological method to either Christ or the church."[53] Once we recognize this presupposition in Paul's approach to Scripture, then we should not be surprised to find him applying OT passages regarding Israel to Gentile Christians or to the administration of the New Covenant. The case is much the same with other presuppositions that formed part of Paul's interpretive framework.[54]

While it is certainly an appropriate question for NT scholarship, it is beyond the concern of pure exegesis to evaluate the legitimacy of Paul's scriptural interpretation or hermeneutical presuppositions. The goal of Pauline exegesis is to determine his original intention in what he has written. Once we have regard for his hermeneutical presuppositions and realize that he respects the contexts and intentions of his OT allusions, then much of his biblical interpretation becomes comprehensible

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Use of Isaiah and Its Place in His Theology, with Special Reference to Romans 9-11"; Wagner, *Heralds*, and those he has listed on p. 11 n. 40.

[52] Cf. Ellis, *Paul's Use*, 122. Ellis claims that this presupposition underlies the whole argument of Rom 9-11, "and indeed the whole of Paul's OT exegesis." His comments not only support our detection of this presupposition in Paul's hermeneutic, but also confirms our findings that the identity of the true people of God is central to Rom 9 and 9-11.

[53] Beale, "Right Doctrine," 395.

[54] For such presuppositions, see again ch. 1 note 54 above.

and we can see that it proceeds along predictable lines in relation to the content of the broad OT contexts to which he refers.[55]

I mention the distinct concerns of exegesis and evaluation of the legitimacy of Paul's use of Scripture for two reasons. First, to point out that the exegetical focus of this investigation precludes appraisal of the validity of the interpretive framework that underlies Paul's use of the OT. Second, to urge thorough investigation of the original contexts of Paul's allusions on the working assumption that they are pointers to these broad contexts. For there is a danger of ignoring what may be the most important background for interpreting a host of Pauline texts due to an unjustified assumption of its irrelevancy to Paul, an assumption that has plagued Pauline scholarship for far too long.[56] Regardless of whether one approves of Paul's first century Jewish-Christian hermeneutical presuppositions, there is a great treasure trove of exegetical insights to be mined from the original contexts of his allusions to the OT that he loved so much.

This study has shown that in Romans 9:1-9 at least, Paul's OT allusions function as pointers to their broad original contexts. This is born out even by the way Paul quotes and alludes to the OT. For in no case does he clearly and explicitly indicate that he refers to Scripture. Rather, he assumes his audience is familiar with

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[55] Contra Hays, *Echoes*, 160f., who contends that Paul had no exegetical procedures, and in support of Stockhausen, "Principles of Pauline Exegesis," and her student Berkley, *Broken Covenant*, esp. 50-52, 203f. Steve Moyise, "Intertextuality and the Study of the Old Testament in the New Testament," 32f., takes issue with G. K. Beale, *John's Use of the Old Testament in Revelation*, 45, for suggesting that John's interpretation of the OT respected OT contexts, granted the legitimacy of his presuppositions. Moyise prefers to speak of " 'awareness' of Old testament contexts" and charges, "If 'respect for context' simply means 'understandable given the author's presuppositions', then it surely becomes a truism. Even the most bizarre allegorical use of Scripture could be said to 'respect the context' if we accept the legitimacy of the author's presuppositions (such as substituting like-sounding words)." G. K. Beale, "Questions of Authorial Intent, Epistemology, and Presuppositions and Their Bearing on the Study of the Old Testament in the New: a Rejoinder to Steve Moyise," 167-72, responds to Moyise on this point compellingly and at length (though as it was made in Steve Moyise, "The Old Testament in the New: a Reply to Greg Beale," 56f.). In addition to Beale's response (and perhaps making it unnecessary), I would point out that "respect for context" does not simply mean "understandable given the author's presuppositions." An interpretation could be understandable in light of an author's presuppositions without respecting original context. Moyise's own example is a good case in point. Substituting a like-sounding word does not logically develop an aspect from a given context. Therefore that would be non-contextual interpretation even though granting the author's presuppositions would make his interpretation understandable. In Paul's case at least, it is important to see that he applies and/or logically develops themes and concerns deriving from the wider original contexts of his OT allusions.

[56] We should note, however, that it is an assumption that has been steadily receding over the past decade and more. Nevertheless, as Wagner, *Heralds*, 11 n. 40, observes, it is an assumption that continues unabated in many quarters.

the Scriptures to which he alludes and will recognize his intertextual activity.[57] Together with the mass of growing literature on Paul's use of the OT effectively sharing the same conclusion for Paul generally, this study has demonstrated the value of carefully investigating the original contexts of Paul's allusions. Indeed, I would suggest that assuming Paul's allusions to be pointers to their original contexts will help give interpreters eyes to see what Paul saw and make for a more empathetic, and therefore accurate, reading of his epistles. It will also aid us in identifying more accurately those places where Paul may not be pointing to the OT.

One could argue that such a method could lead to all sorts of ingenious suggestions that are nevertheless far from Paul's intention and thus hinder the cause of exegesis. Maybe so. But there is risk in any imaginative enterprise that moves the state of scholarship forward. There will undoubtedly be a mixture of more and less convincing intertextual readings of Paul.[58] But let there be no mistake about it, it is indeed creative and imaginative exegesis that is necessary to truly understand a man of such genius and of such different time, culture, and conviction.

It may well be that the most significant contribution of the present investigation lies in its exegesis of the specific text under consideration (Rom 9:1-9) based upon an analysis of Paul's use of the OT in its socio-historical milieu. The time of unfounded assumptions and rash statements about Paul's disregard of the original contexts of his OT allusions is past. It is now time for standard exegetical procedure to include substantial attention to intertextuality and for the current stream of intertextual research to continue unabated. Indeed, it remains for a study of the sort

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[57] Shum, *Paul's Use of Isaiah*, 274, argues that an unmarked allusion could equally mean that an author alluded unconsciously or did not expect his readers to attend to the intertext, necessitating additional data such as "direct information about the first audience" to discern the author's intention. However, in Rom 9:6-9, it is the context that indicates Paul's expectation of his audience's familiarity with the biblical material. This then makes it more likely, though by no means certain, that Paul has similar expectations in 9:3 and elsewhere in his epistles. The general question in relation to Paul depends on a host of historical and literary judgments that we have treated in the introductory chapter of this investigation. Berkley, *Broken Covenant*, 207, argues that familiar themes and language from Scripture which echo in Paul's argument enhance its rhetorical effectiveness without making his case dependent on his audience's apprehension of his exegesis underlying his rhetoric.

[58] On controls for intertextual exegesis, see the discussion of methodology in chapter 1 above, esp. the section on criteria for detecting and interpreting scriptural allusions.

we have conducted to be done in the rest of Romans 9,[59] and then beyond that, for Romans 9-11 as a whole and the Pauline corpus. While a number of studies have been done on this or that theme in relation to OT background or on a certain OT book in Paul's argument in Romans 9-11,[60] there have been relatively few, if any, to simply and straightforwardly move through the text in an intertextual exegesis which is governed by attention to Paul's use of Scripture as well as an appreciation of the history of its interpretation in Judaism and Christianity prior to and roughly contemporaneous with Paul. It is our conviction that such study will confirm our view of the contextual character of his *Schriftgebrauch* and the profound influence of Scripture upon his theology and proclamation in general and his argument in Romans 9-11 in particular.

Indeed, we have found that the famous judgment of Barnabas Lindars with respect to the role of the OT in NT theology is wide of the mark in relation to Paul: "The place of the Old Testament in the formation of New Testament theology is that of a servant, ready to run to the aid of the gospel whenever it is required, bolstering up arguments, and filling out meaning through evocative allusions, but never acting as the master or leading the way, nor even guiding the process of thought behind the scenes."[61] Quite to the contrary, we have found that the OT is both master and servant in Paul's theology and argumentation—much like Paul's Lord! Paul interprets the OT through the lens of Christ and the gospel even as he interprets Christ and the gospel through the lens of the OT. Very often the gospel provides the presuppositions by which to interpret the OT, and in addition to argumentative proof or illustration, the

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[59] I am particularly eager to explore the implications of the groundwork already laid in ch. 3 above for an intertextual analysis of Rom 9:15, and even more so the OT background behind Paul's potter/clay metaphor in 9:19-21. Interpreters have missed the richness of Paul's allusions to potter/clay passages such as Isa 29:16; 45:9; 64:8, and Jer 18. Although the theme of repentance has been spotted in some of these texts, it has not received the attention it deserves. Moreover, the fact that Isa 45:9 has to do with Israel's rebellion against the Lord's use of a Gentile (Cyrus) has gone undetected in the history of NT scholarship (Wagner, *Heralds*, 65-68, recognizes that both Isa 29:16 and 45:9 "set the clay's challenge to the potter in the context of Israel's confrontation with God over his chosen means of redemption" [p. 68], but he surprisingly fails to notice the ethnic issue involved). And above all, scholars have missed just how closely the context of Jer 18 fits Paul's argument in 9:19-21; it is almost as if it serves as a direct answer to the objection Paul deals with, even down to the protestation of inability to act otherwise than in hardness of heart.

[60] Isaiah is the favorite in the literature.

[61] Barnabas Lindars, "The Place of the Old Testament in the Formation of New Testament Theology: Prolegomena," 145.

OT provides much of the content and direction of Paul's teaching within the metanarrative of the gospel and redemptive history.

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