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Paul and the Vocation of Israel:

**How Paul's Jewish Identity
Informs his Apostolic Ministry,**

with Special Reference to Romans

by

Lionel James Windsor

Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

*Durham University
Department of Theology and Religion*

2012

Lionel James Windsor, "Paul and the Vocation of Israel: How Paul's Jewish Identity Informs his Apostolic Ministry, with Special Reference to Romans," Thesis, Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, Durham University, Department of Theology and Religion, 2012.

Abstract

This dissertation argues that Paul's apostolic mission to the Gentiles was the definitive expression of his divine vocation as an Israelite, and thus of his Jewish identity. For many of Paul's Jewish contemporaries, Israel's divine vocation was to keep and to teach the precepts of the Law of Moses as an exemplary witness to God's power and wisdom. For Paul, however, Jewish identity was expressed primarily by preaching the gospel of Christ, as the *fulfilment* of the Law of Moses, to the Gentiles. This is seen most clearly in Paul's letter to the Romans.

In chapter 1, we summarize our methodology: we are seeking to examine Paul's Jewish identity by reading Paul's letters (especially Romans), in light of other second-temple Jewish texts, using certain insights from social identity theory. We show that the concept of *vocation* is an important dimension of Jewish identity, especially in Paul's letters. We also discuss some prior approaches to the question of Paul's Jewishness, demonstrating both their value and also their limitations for our purposes.

In chapter 2, we survey three key aspects of Paul's explicit language of Jewish identity in his letters: Jewish distinctiveness, divine revelation and divine vocation.

In chapter 3, we demonstrate that Paul deliberately frames his letter to the Romans (Rom 1:1–15, 15:14–33) by presenting his apostolic ministry as the fulfilment of positive scripturally-based eschatological expectations concerning Israel's divine vocation with respect to the nations. We also compare Paul's self-presentation in the outer frame of Romans with other first-century expressions of Jewish vocation.

In chapter 4, we concentrate on Rom 2:17–29. Contrary to most interpretations which read this passage as a discussion about the nature of (Jewish or Christian) *salvation*, we argue that Paul deliberately sets this passage in the context of the mainstream Jewish synagogue, in order to contest the nature of Jewish *vocation*.

In chapter 5, we examine Rom 9–11 from the perspective of Jewish vocation. We demonstrate that in Rom 9–11, Paul presents his own apostolic vocation, in various ways, as a contrast to, a fulfilment of, and a means of hope for Israel's place and role in God's worldwide purposes.

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Abbreviations

All abbreviations follow the forms indicated in Alexander, Patrick H., et al., eds., *The SBL Handbook of Style: For Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1999), with the exception of:

Ep. Arist. = *Letter of Aristeas*

Acknowledgements

The challenge of writing a PhD thesis lies not only in writing the thesis itself, but also in organizing all the rest of life to create the time and space to write. I cannot express enough my gratitude for Leonie Bronwyn, my wife and true companion of 14 years, who has supported and loved me all the way through the trials and joys of the last three years, as we have uprooted our family and moved halfway round the world from Sydney to Durham. This endeavour is very much a joint effort, and Bronwyn deserves as much credit as I. Our children, Adelaide, Harry and Ellie, committed members of the Australian Diaspora, have been a joy and a delight. Our extended family, especially our parents, have been a constant source of support and care during our time in the UK—despite our being 10,000 miles away.

Having time and space to study is, of course, a great privilege which requires tangible support. We are grateful to the trustees of the Joan Augusta Mackenzie Travelling Scholarship, which has provided just over a third of our expenses. So very many thanks for the gifts from brothers and sisters in churches in the Sydney Diocese: Kurrajong Anglican Church, Unichurch / Campus Bible Study at the University of New South Wales, St Augustine's Anglican Church at Neutral Bay, St Michael's Anglican Church at Wollongong; as well as from Christchurch Durham. So many have prayed for us and provided us with the financial support that has enabled us to live here in the UK. The saints at Christchurch Durham have been our church family, who have ministered to us and have enabled me to keep my feet on the ground of Christian ministry while my head sometimes felt like it was in the clouds.

In writing the thesis, I am of course indebted to many scholars and teachers who have gone before me. Many of the ideas and methods in this work stem from my experience at Moore College in Sydney; I greatly value the teaching and friends made during my time there. Mark Thompson and John Woodhouse, in particular, have been superb role models as pastor-theologians. I should also mention the invaluable legacy of Donald Robinson, a pioneer of evangelical biblical theology who taught the students at Moore College about the importance of the Jew-Gentile dynamic as an interpretative key to the New Testament long before it became popular in mainstream scholarship. I owe a number of the key ideas in this thesis to his remarkably fertile mind. I am also immensely grateful for the ministry of Phillip

Jensen, whose teaching and training showed me the importance of keeping in-depth scholarly theology and practical ministry firmly intertwined, despite the constant pressures to separate them. I also owe a great deal to Brian Rosner, my Masters supervisor, whose insights have inspired me, whose encouragement led me to take up PhD study, and whose help in smoothing the way (graciously letting me go as a potential PhD candidate at Moore) contributed a great deal to the ease of transition from Sydney to Durham. I would also like to thank Con Campbell, who graciously pointed me to Durham as a potential place for further study.

My decision to come to study at Durham, while costly, was made in light of its reputation as a place of superb scholarship. I have not been disappointed. The Department of Theology and Religion at Durham University has been a stimulating and challenging environment, and I have benefitted greatly from the experience. I am especially grateful for my supervisor, Francis Watson. Professor Watson not only is a deeply theological thinker, he also is an enormously insightful reader of texts. His simultaneously sympathetic and critical reading of my own text (through so many iterations) has not only played a key role in shaping the final product, it has also provided me with an outstanding model of critical scholarly engagement. I would also like to extend special thanks to Lutz Doering, my secondary supervisor, who went beyond the call of duty in providing me with many hours of personal tuition in understanding the background to ancient Jewish texts. My examiners, John Barclay and William Campbell, honoured my work with exceedingly careful reading and invaluable further insights. I also hold very fond memories of the study rooms at 37A Bailey. We've had a lot of fun, and I have benefitted enormously from the depth of spiritual and academic insight represented by my fellow students. I particularly value the special friendship of Peter Orr, whose passion and commitment to the gospel of Christ continues to inform and encourage my own teaching and ministry.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

*There are as many ways of being Jewish as there are
Jews—probably more.*

Howard Jacobson.¹

*They're Hebrews? So am I!
They're Israelites? So am I!
They're Abraham's seed? So am I!*

The Apostle Paul.²

1.1. Paul's Jewish identity

Paul's apostolic mission was his way of being Jewish. Paul was convinced that Israel had received a special divine revelation which conferred on Jews a distinct divine vocation. Paul, in other words, was committed to the view that God's global purposes in Christ included a special place—and correspondingly a special role—for Jews. Paul, through preaching Christ to the Gentiles, was in fact fulfilling Israel's distinct divine vocation. This will be our contention in this dissertation.

In making this claim, we are not seeking simply to contend for a particular position within the history of interpretation of the nature of Paul's "religion." We are not, for example, simply claiming that Paul's religious background in "Judaism" provided him with a set of convictions or a general pattern of life which, when subjected to a few more or less drastic "Christian" modifications, subsequently shaped elements of his preaching and missionary activities. Rather, our contention is that Paul's own Jewishness—not just his "Judaism," but his personal, distinct, ongoing Jewish identity—found its primary expression *in* his apostolic mission.

¹ Man Booker Prizes 2011. For a detailed bibliography, see p. 255ff.

² 2 Cor 11:22.

This understanding of Jewishness is, of course, deeply controversial. Indeed, this understanding of Jewishness was born in the midst of controversy. According to his own letters, Paul was a Jew who argued with Jews. On the one hand, Paul emphatically asserts his Jewish identity at key points.³ He describes Jews as his brothers,⁴ his family,⁵ his race,⁶ and his flesh.⁷ He grieves for Jews,⁸ prays for Jews,⁹ seeks to win Jews,¹⁰ works alongside Jews,¹¹ and shapes his ministry in service of Jews.¹² On the other hand, Paul also engages in strong disputes against various Jews.¹³ He abandons certain Jewish commitments,¹⁴ trivializes certain Jewish lifestyles,¹⁵ curses preachers of Jewish circumcision,¹⁶ “dies” to the Jewish Law,¹⁷ and at one point seemingly renounces his Jewish identity altogether.¹⁸ At first glance, Paul’s varied statements about Jewishness seem mutually incompatible.¹⁹ They certainly constitute a broad spectrum, from heartfelt identification through to bitter denunciation. We will argue that this broad spectrum of statements can be comprehended under a single, albeit multi-faceted, rubric: Paul is convinced that his own apostolic ministry is the fulfilment of Israel’s divine vocation. For Paul, preaching the gospel of Christ to the Gentiles *is* the true way to be Jewish.

³ Most notably Rom 11:1, 2 Cor 11:22.

⁴ Rom 9:3.

⁵ Rom 9:3; 16:7, 11, 21.

⁶ 2 Cor 11:26, Gal 1:14.

⁷ Rom 9:3, 11:14.

⁸ Rom 9:1–3.

⁹ Rom 10:1.

¹⁰ 1 Cor 9:20.

¹¹ Rom 16:7; see also Col 4:11. Our argument in this dissertation will be based primarily on Paul’s undisputed letters, since most of the lexemes relating unambiguously to Jewish identity within the canonical Pauline corpus occur within these letters (see p. 34 n. 153). This methodological decision is not intended to imply any judgment on the authorship of the disputed letters. In fact, throughout the course of the dissertation, we will point out numerous instances where statements in the disputed letters correspond to the view of Jewish identity which can be discerned from the undisputed letters.

¹² Rom 11:14; 15:25–28, 31; 1 Cor 16:1–4.

¹³ Rom 2:17–29; 2 Cor 11:22, 24; Gal 6:12–13; Phil 3:2–6; 1 Thess 2:14–16.

¹⁴ Gal 1:13–16.

¹⁵ Gal 2:14–15, 1 Cor 9:20.

¹⁶ Gal 1:6–9; cf. Gal 5:6, 11; 6:12–15; Phil 3:2–3; see also Tit 1:10.

¹⁷ Gal 2:19.

¹⁸ Phil 3:5–8.

¹⁹ Räisänen 2008, 319–322.

Our use of the term “vocation” here is intended to highlight an important, yet often neglected, perspective on Jewish identity. The term refers to the notion that the distinct existence and concrete practice of Jewish people stems from a *special divine intention*, an intention which often implies a particular and concrete role for Jews in relation to non-Jews.²⁰ For many of Paul’s Jewish opponents, the divine Jewish vocation consisted primarily in keeping and teaching the precepts of the Law of Moses as an exemplary witness to God’s power and wisdom. Paul, however, strongly opposed this view of the nature of Jewish vocation. For Paul, the divine Jewish vocation consisted primarily in preaching the gospel of Christ, as the *fulfilment* of the Law of Moses, to the Gentiles. This view of Jewish vocation, forged in the midst of controversy, is the lens by which we will analyse the broad spectrum of Paul’s statements about Jewish identity.

²⁰ There is no simple one-to-one correspondence between this concept of vocation and individual lexemes within Paul’s vocabulary. The concept of Israel’s vocation, rather, is evident when Paul uses expressions which imply a wider divine purpose for Israel and / or Israel’s Scriptures: for example, when he uses terms such as ἴνα (e.g. Rom 3:19, 5:20–21, 9:23, 11:31, 15:4) and ἐξ ὧν (Rom 9:4–5) to connect Israel or Israel’s Scriptures with God’s wider purposes in Christ (see pp. 193, 205). In using the concept of vocation, we are seeking to emphasize this element of a *wider divine intention* for Israel’s special place and / or role, even in cases where this divine intention is somewhat paradoxical and can only be discerned in light of the gospel of Christ. The concept, therefore, does not map directly onto any particular vocabulary. Nevertheless, it may be discerned in some instances of Paul’s use of certain lexemes. For example, while the terminology of “calling” (καλεῖν, κλήσις, κλητός) generally denotes God’s sovereign power to achieve his creative purposes through his word, at certain points, Paul claims that God’s “calling” of one individual or group is intended to achieve a wider effect for another individual or group. A number of times, Paul uses the word κλητός to introduce himself in terms of his apostolic vocation: Paul, the Servant, is “called [to be] apostle” (Rom 1:1, 1 Cor 1:1, also Gal 1:15), which implies a role within God’s wider purposes for the nations (Rom 1:5, 1 Cor 1:6, Gal 1:16). As we shall argue, the description of the representative figure of the “Servant” in Isa 40–55 is an important source for Paul’s understanding of his divine vocation (see pp. 87–100). In Isa 40–55, the “Servant” who is also the “seed of Abraham” is “called” to achieve God’s wider purposes (Isa 41:8–9; also 42:6, 49:1, 49:6). Although it may be argued that the term by itself only implies that Paul sees himself as a special figure *within* Israel, we are seeking in this dissertation to demonstrate that Paul presents himself more generally as a representative of Israel’s special place in God’s worldwide purposes (see esp. ch. 3, pp. 83–131). This representative role is not, of course, simple and straightforward; in fact, it is so complex and seemingly paradoxical that Paul takes three chapters of his letter to the Romans to deal with it (Rom 9–11; see ch. 5, pp. 190–246). The terminology of “election” (ἐκλέγεσθαι, ἐκλογή, ἐκλεκτός) is used by Paul generally to emphasize God’s free choice of people, over against human decision (Dunn 1988, 2.542–543). Exactly what the people in question have been chosen *for* needs to be determined from the context and relevant sources in each case. Nevertheless, sometimes Paul claims that God chooses people in order to achieve his wider purposes (e.g. Rom 9:11, 1 Cor 1:27–28). In the description of the “Servant” in Isa 40–55 LXX, the words ἐκλέγεσθαι and ἐκλεκτός are key terms; and at certain key points (e.g. Isa 42:1, 49:2), these terms indicate that Israel / the Servant is chosen to perform a task in relation to God’s wider purposes (Muthunayagam 2000, 2, 29, 31; Vriezen 1953, 64–72). Thus, although we are not claiming that our concept of “vocation” is derived directly from any particular Pauline lexeme, nevertheless there may be an implicit connection between certain Pauline uses of “calling” and “election” vocabulary and the concept of Israel’s divine vocation (e.g. Rom 11:28–29).

The spectrum of Paul's statements about Jewishness has, of course, been analysed using other lenses of scholarly concern. Some scholars concentrate on Paul's personal convictions and overall worldview. Jörg Frey, for example, in his article "Paul's Jewish Identity" seeks to demonstrate that various elements in Paul's conception of himself, his piety, his missionary strategy, his preaching style, his geographical framework, his exegetical methods and his eschatology are similar to those which can be found among other first-century Jewish groups. For Frey, it is Paul's Jewish *convictions* that mark him out as Jewish.²¹ Love Sechrest, on the other hand, is concerned with Paul's personal *group affiliation*: in which group did Paul feel he "belonged"? Sechrest concludes that Paul significantly weakened his kinship ties with the mainstream Jewish community and established new, strong, non-biological kinship ties with the Christian community. For Sechrest, then, Paul has become a member of a third "race"²² and can be regarded as a "former Jew."²³ Other scholars seek to understand Paul's Jewishness by examining his concrete *relationships* with his Jewish contemporaries. Mark Nanos, for example, finds that Paul is a "good Jew"²⁴ because he upheld the distinctiveness of Jews in Rome. According to Nanos, although Paul insisted that *Gentiles* did not have to become Jews, he never challenged the need for *Jews* to observe the Torah.²⁵ John Barclay, however, asks the converse question: would Paul's fellow Jews *themselves* have recognized and accepted him as a Jew? Barclay finds that although Paul believed himself to be Jewish and desired to redefine Judaism from within, his program ultimately failed. Paul would have continued to be regarded as an apostate by the Jewish community and was consistently opposed by other Jews.²⁶ Thus, by the generally accepted standards of his fellow Jews, Paul is a renegade, apostate Jew.²⁷

²¹ Frey 2007, esp. pp. 299–310.

²² Cf. 1 Cor 10:32.

²³ Sechrest 2009, 157–164. Cf. Sanders (1983, 171–179) who argues that even though Paul did not intend to make the church into a "third race," his ministry inevitably had this effect.

²⁴ Nanos 1996, 9, citing the title of Barth's (1979) article. See also Rudolph (2011), who critiques the "consensus" reading of 1 Cor 9:19–23 and argues that Paul's statements do not necessarily imply that he abandoned a Torah-observant lifestyle or that he believed that other Jews should do so. See also Eisenbaum 2009; Rudolph 2010.

²⁵ See esp. Nanos 1996, 183–187.

²⁶ E.g. 2 Cor 11:24, 26; 1 Thess 2:15–16.

²⁷ Barclay 1995, 111–119. Cf. Barclay's (1996) description of Paul as an "anomalous diaspora Jew" (381–395). See also Barclay 2011, 20–22.

Even this small selection of scholarship demonstrates that the question of Paul's Jewishness can be asked, and answered, in many different ways. This plurality is not in itself problematic. After all, each of the various aspects of Paul's Jewishness which scholars choose as a focus for study (worldview, group affiliation, praxis, group acceptance, etc.) represents a legitimate scholarly concern in its own right, and provides valuable insights. Nevertheless, the question of Paul's Jewishness is not easy to confine; it has the unsettling tendency to break through narrowly defined areas of scholarly concern. Because it is such a significant topic, individual scholarly pronouncements about Paul's Jewishness in one area—e.g. statements that Paul had Jewish convictions, or that he was a “former Jew,” or a “good Jew,” or an “apostate Jew”—often influence studies in many other areas of Paul's life and thought—his theology, Christology, soteriology, ecclesiology, hermeneutics, missiology, social views, etc.²⁸ Thus the question of Paul's Jewishness is both complex and important. Its complexity requires us to be selective, to deliberately choose lenses through which to view and make sense of it. Its importance, on the other hand, requires of us a certain degree of comprehensiveness; we need at least some lenses that can provide answers of sufficient breadth to contribute meaningfully to other key discussions in Pauline studies.

In this dissertation, we will seek to examine Paul's Jewishness through the lens of *his own Jewish identity*. In other words, we will seek to understand how Paul viewed his own Jewishness, in light of his Jewish context. We will concentrate, therefore, on Paul's own explicit statements about Jewishness. Of course, this approach, like any other, is selective. Our primary aim is to understand aspects of *Paul's* own Jewish identity, not to judge his Jewishness against an independent, external standard (past or present). Nevertheless, despite its selectivity, an approach based on identity is capable of making significant contributions to Pauline studies. This is precisely because our approach focuses on Paul's own perspective on his Jewishness. It therefore provides direct and immediate points of integration with other areas of his personal life, his thought and his influence. Most importantly, it enables us to explore the way in which Paul's Jewish identity bears directly upon another of his most cherished and fundamental identities—his identity as apostle of Christ.

²⁸ Hagner (2007) discusses the way in which Paul's Jewishness is inseparable from other key areas of his life and thought.

Our approach will be broadly informed by modern studies of *social identity*. Such studies conceive of an individual's identity as a social construct, generated through interaction with his or her social "world."²⁹ This conception will provide a general framework for us as we explore Paul's Jewish self-presentation in the light of other witnesses to first-century Jewish community life and thought. We will proceed by means of comparison and contrast between Paul's self-witness, available to us in his letters, and his Jewish context, available to us both in his letters and in other sources. In so doing, we will endeavour not only to identify similarities and differences between Paul and his Jewish context, but also to discern how these similarities and differences *generate* Paul's own Jewish identity.³⁰

We must recognize from the outset, however, that we are dealing here with a *textually mediated* identity. The evidence available to us consists of a collection of letters written by Paul to fellow Christ-believers as he discharges the duties of his apostolic ministry, some reflective accounts of Paul's interaction with his Jewish contemporaries in the course of his apostolic ministry (in Acts), and a body of Jewish Scriptures and other literature which provide general information about how other Jews in Paul's milieu viewed their own Jewishness. Our *primary* methodology, therefore, will be to read Paul's texts in light of other texts, focussing on Paul's descriptions of Jewish identity in light of other descriptions of Jewish identity. This means that the extent to which we can use modern social identity theory is subject to certain limitations.

Firstly, the texts themselves are limited in their scope. We have no access to any *direct* interaction between Paul and his wider Jewish context—e.g. indisputably genuine recorded dialogues between Paul and non-Christian Jews. At best, therefore, we can only infer how actual identity-generating dialogues between Paul and his Jewish contemporaries may have proceeded. Since, therefore, we cannot be certain of the intricate details of our object of study itself, we will generally avoid pressing the theory for detailed models or theoretical categories. We will, instead, employ a

²⁹ For summaries of the notion of social identity see Jenkins 2008; Lawler 2008. Giddens (1993, 100–135) describes the way in which social structures are generated through interaction. See also the foundational work of Berger and Luckmann (1971, esp. 194–196), discussed and critiqued by Horrell (2001).

³⁰ Cf. Jenkins 2008, 16–27.

“pragmatic eclecticism” in our use of social-scientific material,³¹ and will restrict our use of technical social-scientific terminology to general concepts such as ethnicity and identity redefinition.

A second limitation arises from the fact that the concerns of modern social-scientific researchers do not always map directly onto the issues of identity which were important to authors from a different time and place such as Paul. This phenomenon is, of course, recognized by social-scientific writers themselves.³² If we allow our approach to be driven too strongly by modern questions, we risk missing or distorting the contours of Paul’s own description of his Jewish identity.³³ In particular, as we shall see, Paul’s perspective on Jewish identity cannot be separated from the notion of *divine vocation*. Indeed, Paul’s discussion of the relationship between his own apostolic vocation and Israel’s vocation is so fundamental, so complex and so multifaceted that it requires us to engage directly, and in depth, with Paul’s own theology of divine revelation and divine vocation. In our detailed investigations, therefore, we will provide a largely “emic” account, favouring those terms and categories which arise from Paul’s own self-description.

As we have already noted, in order to understand the complex nature of Paul’s Jewish identity, we must engage with Paul’s Jewish context. This Jewish context, however, is itself a complex phenomenon. Indeed, there are a number of competing scholarly options for comprehending the breadth of first-century Jewish life and thought. Some emphasize the existence of different “Judaisms,” each with its distinctive worldview and way of life.³⁴ Others perceive a “common Judaism,” a shared first-century conception of what it meant to be Jewish, centred on the

³¹ Cf. Barclay 2011, 7.

³² E.g. Barth 1969, 14–15. Niehoff (2001), in introducing issues relating to Philo’s Jewish identity, summarizes Barth’s viewpoint: “Scholars truly wishing to understand identity therefore have to acknowledge the standards set by the group itself [...] Apparently negligible differences may thus reveal themselves to be major dividing lines between groups. Seemingly substantial differences, on the other hand, may prove irrelevant to the group’s self-awareness.” (3)

³³ On the dangers of reliance on social-scientific “models” in New Testament interpretation, see Horrell 2000 (84–94).

³⁴ Neusner 1987, xi–xii. This idea was first forcefully proposed by Smith (1956). For a brief history of the concept, see Goodblatt 1989 (12–15). The existence of contentions about Jewish identity amongst Paul’s Jewish contemporaries is well-attested (e.g. Josephus, *AJ*. 13.297–298; Acts 23:6–8; 1QS V 1–6, VIII 13–16). See further Campbell 2006, 6; Rudolph 2011, 116–125; Steudel 2010, 114; Stone 2011, 1–30; Watson 2007b, 92–93.

priesthood and temple cult.³⁵ Still others argue that Jewishness was defined in large part by the Pharisees;³⁶ thus Pharisaism was “normative for Judaism to the extent that the Jewish majority recognized in the Pharisaic ideals the authentic expression of Jewishness.”³⁷ Our own approach is not bound to choose any one of these conceptions of “Judaism” as a starting-point. Rather, we will find that each of the conceptions furnishes valuable insights into aspects of Paul’s Jewish context. For example, observations about the existence of differing “Judaisms” provide a historical context for understanding how Paul can assert his own particular version of Jewish identity and Jewish vocation in the face of rival views. On the other hand, the concept of a “common Judaism” helps us to understand Paul’s awareness of a generally accepted, “mainstream” Jewish identity to which his own conception of Jewishness was a radical alternative.³⁸ Nevertheless, since Paul himself had a Pharisaic past³⁹ and would almost certainly have viewed mainstream Jewish identity in the terms of “Pharisaic normativity,”⁴⁰ sources with a Pharisaic background (e.g. Josephus)⁴¹ will be especially significant for our study.

As we shall see, the notion of identity is particularly valuable for examining the striking elements of conflict and dissonance in Paul’s statements about Jewish identity. Theorists frequently describe identity formation as an evolutionary process, a constant interaction between individuals and their social “world” which inevitably changes both the individuals and the world.⁴² Indeed, identity definition often takes place through processes of argumentation, negotiation and persuasion, which at times can lead to schismatic separation.⁴³ Furthermore, leaders—of whom Paul is, of course, a clear example—often play particularly significant roles in these

³⁵ Most notably Sanders (1992, 47–303).

³⁶ Deines 2001; Hengel 1991, 44. This is a nuanced version of the consensus that existed prior to the publication of Smith’s article (see n. 34).

³⁷ Deines 2001, 504. Cf. Josephus, *AJ*. 18.15, 17.

³⁸ E.g. Paul names his interlocutor as a “publicly recognized” Jew (Rom 2:17) (p. 140).

³⁹ Phil 3:5; cf. Acts 23:6, 26:5.

⁴⁰ Watson 2007b, 22–24, quotation from p. 23. There are clearly some ongoing Pharisaic elements in Paul’s subsequent teaching (Frey 2007, 298–299), even though a number of his other post-conversion theological convictions are more akin to Jewish apocalyptic thought (Frey 2007, 306–310; cf. Barclay 1996, 390; Donfried 2004; Segal 1990, 34–71).

⁴¹ See e.g. *Vita* 1.12.

⁴² E.g. Giddens 1993, 134.

⁴³ Esler 2003, 27–29; Jenkins 2008, 118–131.

identity-forming processes.⁴⁴ We can examine Paul in these terms, as an agent of identity, who by his speech-actions is both reproducing older conceptions of Jewish identity and simultaneously creating newer conceptions. Scholars recognize the value of viewing Paul in these terms. Dunn, for example, describes Paul's identity in terms of "transformation", "flux" and "transition."⁴⁵ Miller describes Paul as "one voice in the *ongoing process* of identity formation".⁴⁶ Indeed, Paul's status as a "marginal-but-legitimate Jew" resonates with a number of modern Jewish authors who view him as a symbol, an exemplar or a fellow traveller in their own quest to redefine Jewish identity.⁴⁷

1.2. Paul's gospel and his Jewish identity

Paul's identity-shaping activities, however, are more drastic and disruptive than might be inferred from such terms as "transition" or "evolution." Paul is convinced that something *revolutionary* has occurred in the life, death and resurrection of Christ, an event in which he himself is intimately involved as he fulfils his apostolic mission, proclaiming the "gospel" of Christ to the Gentiles. This radical Christ-event pervades Paul's letters, undergirding both his own identity as apostle and also his conception of his readers' identities.⁴⁸ It creates new communities with new social realities.⁴⁹ It even challenges, at a deep level, Jewish identity itself.⁵⁰ Paul's Jewish identity, therefore, cannot be understood without reference to his even more fundamental Christ-identity.⁵¹ This relationship between Jewish identity and "Christ-believing"⁵² identity in Paul has been the subject of a number of prior studies, which we will now examine briefly.

⁴⁴ Esler 2003, 36–39.

⁴⁵ Dunn 1999, 175–176, 193.

⁴⁶ Miller 2011, 50, emphasis original.

⁴⁷ Langton 2005, quotation from p. 234. See e.g. Boyarin 1994; Nanos 1996; Segal 1990. Cf. Roetzel (2003), who sees Paul as a case-study in the concept of marginality.

⁴⁸ E.g. Rom 1:1–7; 1 Cor 15:1–11; Gal 1:1–5; 1 Thess 1:4–10; etc.

⁴⁹ E.g. Rom 14:1–15:7; 1 Cor 1:2; 2 Cor 1:1; Phil 2:1–11; etc.

⁵⁰ E.g. Rom 3:29–30, 10:12; 1 Cor 12:13; Gal 3:28; cf. Col 3:11. See further Barclay 2010.

⁵¹ For the feasibility of the idea that Paul had multiple, nested identities, see Hodge 2005.

⁵² The term "Christ-believing," although less convenient than the term "Christian," has two advantages for our purposes. Firstly, it is closer to Paul's own usage. Secondly, it is less likely to be

According to Mark Nanos, Paul’s view of Christ-believing identity provides little direct challenge to Jewish identity at all.⁵³ The Roman Christ-believing communities were tied to the synagogue, and met either in the synagogue or in homes under the authority of the synagogue.⁵⁴ The “Christians” to whom Paul is writing are thus to be understood as non-Torah-observant synagogue-attending “righteous” Gentiles. In Rom 14:1–15:6, Paul is urging these Christ-believers to regard the “weak,” i.e. non-Christian Jews, as brothers and sisters “in faith”; thus the Christ-believers should respect the Jewish identity of their brothers and sisters while seeking to win them for Christ. There are, however, a number of significant flaws with Nanos’s proposal, most seriously in aspects of his exegesis of Rom 14:1–15:6.⁵⁵ For example, Paul describes the “weak” people in Rom 14:1–15:6 as being in a state of “faith” (τῆ πίστει; Rom 14:1), whereas he describes Jews who do not believe in Christ as being in a state of “non-faith” (τῆ ἀπιστίᾳ; Rom 11:20, 23).

Daniel Boyarin,⁵⁶ on the other hand, following an older line of interpretation advocated by F. C. Baur,⁵⁷ argues that Paul’s gospel is a universalistic “system” which effectively supersedes and eradicates Jewish identity by rendering any concept of Jewish distinctiveness utterly meaningless. Boyarin claims that “Paul has simply allegorized our [Jewish] difference quite out of existence.”⁵⁸ It is important to note, however, that in Boyarin’s post-modern approach, he has self-consciously limited himself to reading Paul through the lens of one text—Gal 3:28–29—which affirms the relative unimportance of Jewish distinctiveness.⁵⁹ Boyarin does not, therefore, explore the significance of Paul’s closely argued affirmations of ongoing Jewish advantage, which are particularly prominent in Romans. In Romans, Paul describes ethnic Jews as the primary recipients of the gospel (Rom 1:16), entrusted with the

read as a term which inherently stands in opposition to Jewish identity (Zetterholm 2010; cf. Barclay 2011, 3 n. 1).

⁵³ Nanos 1996; see also Nanos 2010.

⁵⁴ Nanos 1996, 159–165.

⁵⁵ Das 2003, 69–74; 2007, 115–148; cf. Esler 2003, 120; Fisk 2008, 176; Gagnon 2000; Hvalvik 2007a, 193–196.

⁵⁶ Boyarin 1994.

⁵⁷ E.g. Baur 1878, 1.47. For Boyarin’s indebtedness to Baur, see Boyarin 1994 (11).

⁵⁸ Boyarin 1994, 152, cf. 7–8.

⁵⁹ Boyarin 1994, 4–6.

words of God (Rom 3:1–2), given immense divine privileges (Rom 9:4–5), and the “natural” branches of the olive tree (Rom 11:17–24). Paul's version of universalism includes an account of Israel's special privilege;⁶⁰ Boyarin's own universalistic interpretation of Paul's gospel does not.⁶¹ Boyarin thus does not comprehend the breadth of Paul's statements concerning Jewish identity, and so his understanding of Paul's “universalism” is too selective for our purposes.

A number of scholars have emphasized the *multi-ethnic* character of Paul's theological vision. Such scholars insist that Paul's affirmation of the unity of Jew and Gentile in Christ cannot be pressed so far that it precludes the existence of an ongoing, distinct, Jewish identity. William Campbell, for example, demonstrates the way in which Paul promotes differing ethnic identities within an overarching Christian identity.⁶² Faith in Christ for Paul does not imply an eradication of all ethnic difference, but is rather a trans-ethnic reality that is to be appropriated in different concrete circumstances by different ethnic groups. “For Paul, Jews remain Jews in Christ.”⁶³ Paul did not insist on sameness within the Christian community, but rather promoted a variegated “transformation” of identity which issued in tolerance and peaceful co-existence between Jews and Gentiles.⁶⁴ Campbell is representative of a growing number of scholars who are seeking to examine Paul's letters from the perspective of ethnicity and who, although differing from one another in emphasis, all affirm that Paul believes in and promotes an ongoing ethnic distinction between Jews and Gentiles, a distinction which is transformed but is not eradicated by a person's identity in Christ.⁶⁵

⁶⁰ Hodge 2007, 137–148; cf. Das 2003, 114–128, 140; Stowers 1994, 129–134.

⁶¹ E.g. on Rom 2:28–29, Boyarin (1994) writes: “‘True Jewishness’ ends up having nothing to do with family connection (descent from Abraham according to the flesh), history (having the Law), or maintaining the cultural/religious practices of the historical Jewish community (circumcision), but paradoxically consists of participating in a universalism, an allegory that dissolves those essences and meanings entirely.” (94–95)

⁶² Campbell 2006, 104–120; cf. Campbell 1991, esp. 98–116; 2004.

⁶³ Campbell 2006, 7, 166.

⁶⁴ Campbell 2006, 6–8, 165–171.

⁶⁵ E.g. Ehrensperger 2010; Esler 2003; Hansen 2010; Hodge 2007; Zetterholm 2010. Cf. Thiessen (2011, 111–141) who demonstrates convincingly that this view is also shared by the author of Luke-Acts.

The aforementioned studies are all thorough and insightful attempts to account for Paul's affirmations of a distinct place for Jewish identity within the Christ-believing community. Our own work will build on many of their insights. However, as we shall see, more needs to be said concerning one very significant aspect of Paul's view of Jewish identity: the Law of Moses.⁶⁶ For Paul, Jewish identity is bound up closely with "the Law"; so closely, in fact, that any attempt to account for Paul's view of Jewish identity must also grapple directly with his widely varied statements concerning the Law. We must deal, not only with Paul's positive, harmonizing statements about Law-observance,⁶⁷ but also with his negative, polemical statements concerning the Law's nature and purpose.⁶⁸ This means that concepts such as mutual tolerance, social harmony and conflict avoidance cannot by themselves account for all of Paul's statements concerning Jewish identity. Given Paul's background as a "Pharisee" and "zealot,"⁶⁹ he must have been intimately aware that his negative statements about the Law would immediately threaten the core of Jewish ethnic identity and thus risk intense social *disharmony*, even in the short term.⁷⁰ Paul's statements concerning Jewish identity, therefore, cannot be explained simply as part of a well-intentioned ethnic conflict-reduction strategy which only later caused unintended problems for Jewish distinctiveness in Paul's communities.⁷¹ In fact, as we have already noted, conflict and contention were central, conscious elements of Paul's identity-generating discourse.

Francis Watson's approach provides us with a useful social model for grounding some of the dynamics of this polemical redefinition of Jewish identity.⁷² Watson

⁶⁶ Campbell (2006, 109–111) and Das (2003, 141) note the close connection between distinct Jewish identity and the Law of Moses but do not develop the nature of this connection in sufficient depth for our purposes. See further pp. 55–60.

⁶⁷ E.g. Rom 14:6.

⁶⁸ E.g. Rom 3:19–20.

⁶⁹ Gal 1:13–14, Phil 3:5; see pp. 75–79.

⁷⁰ Cf. Acts 6:13–14, 13:38–47, 18:13–15, which, as Hvalvik (2007a, 182) notes, imply that even before Paul wrote to the Romans, the gospel had been "preached in a form that implied an 'unorthodox' view of the Law" which induced heated conflict, and may well have contributed significantly to the disturbances which led to the expulsion of the Jews under Claudius "at the instigation of Chrestus" (Suetonius, *Claud.* 25.4).

⁷¹ *Pace* Campbell 2006, 8, 116; Esler 2003, 354–356.

⁷² Watson 2007b. Esler (2003) misrepresents Watson's view, claiming that Watson is arguing that Paul is "trying to persuade his Judean readers to drop their Judean identity" (132). Rather, Watson is

argues that the Pauline Christ-believing communities were formed through “sectarian”⁷³ separation from the mainstream (synagogue-attending) Jewish community,⁷⁴ and that Paul’s “*theological reflection legitimates the separation of church from synagogue.*”⁷⁵ Paul’s theological reflection, therefore, involves a dual aspect. On the one hand, he employs strong denunciations and antitheses which distinguish the Christian community from the synagogue. On the other hand, he *reinterprets* synagogue traditions to ensure that the Christ-believing community is the proper heir to these traditions.⁷⁶ Although Watson himself does not apply this model directly to the issue of a distinct Jewish identity,⁷⁷ such an application can be made. Paul, on such an understanding, is neither accepting the conception of Jewish identity prevalent in the synagogue, nor rejecting the value of Jewish identity altogether. Rather, Paul is *contesting* the mainstream, synagogue-based view of Jewish identity, and *redefining* Jewish identity in light of the gospel of Christ.

For many of Paul’s Jewish opponents, the divine Jewish vocation consisted primarily in keeping and teaching the precepts of the Law of Moses as an exemplary witness to God’s power and wisdom. Paul, however, strongly opposed this view of the nature of Jewish vocation. For Paul, the divine Jewish vocation consisted primarily in preaching the gospel of Christ, as the *fulfilment* of the Law of Moses, to the Gentiles.

This process implies a *bifurcation* in Paul’s discourse concerning Jewish identity. On the one hand, Paul acknowledges the existence of a mainstream understanding of

arguing that Paul is trying to persuade his Jewish readers to find their Jewish identity elsewhere than in the synagogue (202–205).

⁷³ This term “sectarian” can be misleading. A sect is commonly understood as “a religious group that rejects the social environment in which it exists” (Stark and Bainbridge 1979, 123); however, “the social environment” must be defined precisely in each case to avoid confusion. In this case, Watson is using the term “sectarian” to describe the Christian community’s relationship to the *synagogue*, not to the wider Greco-Roman world.

⁷⁴ This view has strong affinities with Luke’s description of a Pauline separation from the synagogue in Acts 13:46, 18:4–8, 19:9–10, etc. and the Jewish denunciation of Paul’s communities as a “sect” (αἵρεσις) in Acts 24:5, 14; 28:22.

⁷⁵ Watson 2007b, 51, emphasis original.

⁷⁶ Watson 2007b, 51–52, 96–99. Cf. Hagner (2007) who speaks of Christianity as a “dramatic shift” in the hope of the Jewish Scriptures (118) and describes Paul’s Christianity as “intimately and inseparably related to Judaism as its fulfilment and consummation” (119).

⁷⁷ Watson (2007b, 136) calls Paul’s communities “Jewish” in the sense that all the members engage with the Jewish Scriptures. Although we are not disputing this observation, in this study we are interested in the *particular* identity of Jews as a distinct ethnic group *within* Paul’s communities (cf. Campbell 2004, 77, 81–82).

Jewish identity: a view which he once held, which he still sees as predominant in the synagogue, and with which he still seeks to engage. On the other hand, Paul seeks to redefine Jewish identity in such a way that it retains a distinct, pre-eminent and theologically significant place *outside* the synagogue, within his own Christian communities. It is the precise nature of these two understandings of Jewishness, along with their implications, which form the subject of our investigation in this dissertation. As we shall see, Paul's consistent focus in his letters is on the *vocational* aspect of these two views of Jewish identity. In other words, Paul is concerned with how the synagogue's view of Jewish identity—which was focused on keeping and teaching the precepts of the Law of Moses as an exemplary witness to God's power and wisdom—and his own view of Jewish identity—which was focused on preaching the gospel of Christ as the fulfilment of the Law—relate to God's purposes for the wider Gentile world.

1.3. The vocational dimension of Jewish identity

Pauline scholars sometimes assume that Jewish identity is simply another way of speaking about the boundaries of salvation. Being Jewish, in this view, is seen as equivalent to being “saved.”⁷⁸ However, the value which Paul ascribes to Jewishness is clearly not soteriological in any straightforward sense. Jews, along with Gentiles, belong to the category ἄνθρωπος / πᾶσα σὰρξ;⁷⁹ hence they are equally subject to God's sovereignty,⁸⁰ equally morally responsible before God,⁸¹ equally subject to sin,⁸² equally subject to judgment for sin,⁸³ and equally needing the gospel for salvation.⁸⁴ Paul claims that Christ-believing Jews are equal with Christ-believing Gentiles in respect of being justified by faith in Christ rather than works of Law,⁸⁵

⁷⁸ See the classic expression of “covenantal nomism” in Sanders 1977 (422–423): “All those who are maintained in the covenant [with Israel ...] belong to the group that will be saved.”

⁷⁹ Rom 2:9, 16; 3:19–20, 28–29; 5:12–19; 1 Cor 1:25, 29 (cf. 1:22–24); Gal 2:16; cf. Eph 2:15.

⁸⁰ Rom 3:29. Paul nowhere explicitly identifies God as the God of Israel, Abraham or any other Israelite figure; rather, he speaks of God's sovereignty in universal terms (Gaventa 2010, 256).

⁸¹ Rom 2:10–15.

⁸² Rom 3:9–18, 23; 11:32; Gal 2:17 (cf. 2:15); 1 Cor 10:1–5.

⁸³ Rom 2:9, 12, 16; 3:19; 5:14.

⁸⁴ Rom 1:16, Gal 2:7–9; cf. Eph 3:6.

⁸⁵ Rom 3:22–30; Gal 2:16–17.

receiving salvific benefits,⁸⁶ belonging to the new creation,⁸⁷ being baptized into Christ,⁸⁸ belonging to Christ's body,⁸⁹ having an exalted status before God,⁹⁰ possessing the Spirit,⁹¹ glorifying God⁹² and participating in eschatological suffering.⁹³ In addition to these explicit affirmations of Jew-Gentile equality are the many other places where Paul implies the equality of Gentile and Jewish Christ-believers by applying the Jewish Scriptures or traditional Jewish categories to Gentiles.⁹⁴ What, then, is the value of being Jewish for Paul?

We are contending that the concept of a divine *vocation* for Israel undergirds many of Paul's discussions of Jewish identity.⁹⁵ As we have already indicated, the term "vocation" is meant to refer to any kind of conviction that Israel's existence and activity has a special role to play within God's wider purposes. The concept is at least hinted at by Paul's frequent discussions of Israel and/or Jews as (perhaps unwitting) instruments in God's wider plan of salvation for the "Gentiles" (ἔθνη) or for "all" (πάντες) people.⁹⁶ It is more explicit in passages where Paul evokes Jewish identity while discussing ministry to Gentiles.⁹⁷ The concept of Israel's distinct vocation is referred to and developed by a number of scholars, especially by those who are particularly conscious of a Jewish perspective in their biblical interpretation. Boyarin, for example, speaks of exclusive Jewish cultural practice as a "task and

⁸⁶ I.e. salvation itself (Rom 1:16, 10:11–13), mercy (Rom 11:32), the blood of Christ (Rom 3:25; cf. Eph 2:13), inheritance (Rom 4:13–16; cf. Eph 3:6), power and wisdom (Rom 1:14–16, 1 Cor 1:24); the "promise" (Rom 4:14–16; cf. Eph 3:6); cf. "peace" (Eph 2:14, 15, 17).

⁸⁷ Gal 6:15, cf. Col 3:10–11.

⁸⁸ Gal 3:26–28; 1 Cor 12:13; cf. Col 2:12; Eph 4:5.

⁸⁹ 1 Cor 12:13; cf. Eph 2:14–16; 3:6.

⁹⁰ I.e. called by God (1 Cor 1:24, 7:18), having Abraham as father (Rom 4:11–18), being sons of God (Gal 3:26); cf. even more exalted language in Eph 2:13–22.

⁹¹ 1 Cor 12:13, cf. Eph 2:18, 22.

⁹² Rom 15:10–12.

⁹³ 1 Thess 2:14.

⁹⁴ Barclay 1996, 389; Dunn 1999; Watson 2007b, 136.

⁹⁵ In terms of social identity theory, the idea of vocation may be seen as a "positive bond" which gives rise to an "interdependence" between complementary ethnic groups (Barth 1969, 18).

⁹⁶ E.g. Rom 3:2–5, 3:19–20, 9:4–5, 9:22–24, 11:11–12, 11:28–32; Gal 3:8.

⁹⁷ We will many of these key passages in the course of this dissertation (e.g. 2 Cor 11:22–23, Rom 2:17–29, Rom 11:1).

calling in the world”.⁹⁸ Nanos contends that “[t]he purpose of Israel’s special call was in the service of universal salvation, not triumphant exclusivism.”⁹⁹ Rudolph speaks of Jewishness as a distinct “calling” or “vocation” within the Christ-believing community, a calling that is not coterminous with God’s “call to salvation.”¹⁰⁰

A sense of Israel’s vocation is often closely related to the conviction that the Law of Moses is a divine gift of revelation to Israel. Since God has uniquely revealed himself to Israel in the Law, Israel has a unique task to perform in response to that Law. As we will see, the exact nature of Israel’s response was conceived in different ways by Paul’s Jewish contemporaries: e.g. obedience to the Law, enforcing purity, mediating divine wisdom to Gentiles, etc. Paul, we will argue, affirms that the revelation of the Law to Israel provides them with a unique gift and thus a significant divine vocation. However, in light of the gospel of Christ, Paul strongly contests and redefines the significance of the Law,¹⁰¹ and thus also strongly contests and redefines the nature of Israel’s distinct vocation. For Paul, the Law’s primary purpose is to bear witness to the gospel of Christ, which is a message of universal significance. Hence Paul’s primary expression of Jewish identity was to preach the gospel of Christ, as the fulfilment of the Law, to the Gentiles.

1.3.1. *Scripture and Jewish vocation within Paul’s communities*

This approach to Jewish identity—focusing primarily on a sense of divine vocation grounded in God’s revelation to Israel—corresponds well to the likely social context into which Paul wrote his letters.

Deep knowledge of the written Scriptures was a widespread, defining aspect of first-century Jewish identity, in contrast to its pagan environment.¹⁰² Josephus, for example, boasts that Jewish children are given intensive and extensive instruction in

⁹⁸ Boyarin 1994, 32.

⁹⁹ Nanos 1996, 9.

¹⁰⁰ Rudolph 2011, 75–89. See also Kaminsky (2007; 2011; 2006) and Levenson (1996, 154–156). For Catholic perspectives on a distinct Jewish vocation in the church, see Garrigues (2011, 125–128) and Breuer (2004, 42–45).

¹⁰¹ Cf. Watson 2004, 16–17.

¹⁰² Although the evidence for widespread Jewish *literacy* is “questionable” (Stanley 2008a, 139, cf. Hezser 2001), nevertheless there is strong evidence for a widespread *familiarity with the written Scriptures* amongst Jews. See also below, pp. 58–59.

the Scriptures.¹⁰³ Philo speaks of a sense of vocation for Jews—since Jews know the Scriptures from infancy, they can also provide the benefits of this divine revelation to interested non-Jews:

[F]or all men are eager to preserve their own customs and laws, and the Jewish nation above all others; for looking upon their laws as oracles directly given to them by God himself, and having been instructed in this doctrine from their very earliest infancy they bear in their souls the images of the commandments contained in these laws as sacred; [...] and they admit such foreigners as are disposed to honour and worship them, to do so no less than their own native fellow citizens. (Philo, *Legat.* 210–211 [Yonge])

While these descriptions do not necessarily imply that every individual Jewish child was thoroughly educated in the Scriptures, they do indicate a sense of pride in Jewish identity which must have had at least some grounding in reality. Jews were, “as a rule,” people who grew up reading the Scriptures and so learning God’s will.¹⁰⁴

Paul’s addressees, on the other hand, were predominantly non-Jews.¹⁰⁵ They were relatively recent converts, and would not, as a rule, have been exposed to the Scriptures from their childhood. Furthermore, there was a range of literacy in the ancient world,¹⁰⁶ and the Scriptures may have been relatively difficult for individual Gentiles to obtain.¹⁰⁷ Nevertheless, Jewish Scripture plays a rich and foundational role in many of Paul’s discussions.¹⁰⁸ This situation demands an explanation. Christopher Stanley argues that the majority of Paul’s addressees would have been quite unfamiliar with the Scriptures, at most considering them to be authoritative but ineffable divine utterances. According to Stanley, Paul’s frequent references to Scripture would have served merely to bolster his own authority as a dispenser of “sacred mysteries” to the “illiterate masses”.¹⁰⁹ However, Stanley’s conclusion does not take proper account of the possibilities inherent in early *communal engagement*

¹⁰³ E.g. *C. Ap.* 2.204, *A.J.* 4.211.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. 2 Tim 3:15, “from infancy you have known the holy writings.”

¹⁰⁵ Even Romans, which assumes a significant Jewish minority among the addressees, is explicitly directed at Gentile Christians (Watson 2007b, 178–179; cf. Longenecker 2011, 76–78).

¹⁰⁶ General “literacy” rates in the Roman Empire are often estimated at around 10–20% (Gamble 1995, 4–7; Stanley 2004, 43–46; 2008a, 136–140); although this does not necessarily imply infrequent access to texts (see below).

¹⁰⁷ Gamble 1995, 214; Stanley 2004, 41–42; 2008a, 140–142.

¹⁰⁸ For in-depth studies of Paul’s interactions with Scripture, see e.g. Hays 1989; Wagner 2002; Watson 2004; Wilk 1998. For a summary of the issues, see Stanley 2008b.

¹⁰⁹ Stanley 2004, 38–61, 176–178, quotation from p. 58. Cf. Stanley 2006, 360–361; 2008a.

with the text of Scripture in Christ-believing communities.¹¹⁰ In a society where reading texts aloud was a common community activity, an individual's personal "literacy" was not a particularly significant factor.¹¹¹ It is quite reasonable to suppose that new converts, who believed in the authority of the Scriptures, would *want* to become more familiar with them,¹¹² and that they *could* become more familiar with them by hearing them read and discussed by others in the Christ-believing community with the means to access them and the education to interpret them.¹¹³

Nevertheless, as we have seen, it is *Jews* who were most intimately connected with the ownership and reading of the Scriptures. The mode of communal engagement with Scripture, therefore, would quite probably have implied a significant social status for Jews within the community. Since access to the authoritative *text* must have come predominantly through engagement with certain *people* who publicly read and interpreted this authoritative text, the authoritative status of the text would have been concretely associated with these people.¹¹⁴ Those Jews who were a regular part of the Christ-believing community¹¹⁵ or who visited the Christ-believing community from elsewhere¹¹⁶ would most likely, to varying degrees, have assumed and received a special status as bearers and interpreters of the divine scriptural revelation centred on the Law of Moses.

Of course, the early Christ-believers may also have accessed the Scriptures through non-Christian Jews. For example, the Roman congregations probably included a significant number of former synagogue adherents who had heard substantial amounts of Scripture from Jews before their conversion.¹¹⁷ It is also possible that the

¹¹⁰ Abasciano 2007.

¹¹¹ Abasciano 2007, 164–167; Gamble 1995, 203–211.

¹¹² Wagner 2002, 36–37.

¹¹³ There are a number of possible ways in which communal copies of scriptural texts could have been obtained, e.g. by the purchase (or copying) of some of the private scriptural manuscripts which were circulating amongst Jews in antiquity (4 *Macc.* 18.10–19, Acts 8:27–28, 2 Tim 4:13) (Abasciano 2007, 156–161).

¹¹⁴ So Gamble 1995, 9–10; cf. Abasciano 2007, 172.

¹¹⁵ E.g. Rom 16:3–4, 7 (Esler 2003, 118–119).

¹¹⁶ E.g. 2 Cor 11, esp. v. 22; Gal 6:12–13.

¹¹⁷ Hvalvik 2007a, 192–193; Lampe 2003, 69; cf. Rom 7:1 (Dunn 1988, 1.359).

congregations maintained an ongoing contact with the synagogues.¹¹⁸ If this were the case, it would have further reinforced the sense that non-Jews' access to authoritative divine revelation came through Jews. It may also have provided former (or even current) Gentile synagogue adherents with a kind of derived social status, as people associated and familiar with divine revelation in the Law.¹¹⁹

1.3.2. The relationship between Jewish vocation and Jewish salvation

We are contending that Paul did not conceive of the distinct value of Jewishness principally in terms of salvation, but rather in terms of a special vocation arising from their possession of a unique divine revelation (i.e. the Law, or the Scriptures more generally). For many other Jews in Paul's context, a careful distinction between vocation and salvation would have been largely irrelevant, since Israel's response to divine revelation (particularly the Law-revelation) was often thought to lead to salvation in a fairly straightforward manner.¹²⁰ For our purposes, however, it is important to *distinguish* soteriological and vocational elements in Paul's discussions of Jewish identity. This is because Paul views the relationship between salvation and the Law as contentious and problematic. For Paul, the possibility that Jews, by virtue of receiving and responding to the Law, may achieve God's purposes in the world but may *not* thereby receive God's salvation is a topic of intense discussion, especially in his letter to the Romans.¹²¹

(a) Limitations of conventional approaches

Historically, the concept of Jewish vocation has been underdeveloped in scholarly discussions of Paul and Jewishness. The most influential discussions have tended to treat "Judaism" (or sometimes "Jewish Christianity"),¹²² as a "religion," with certain principles and patterns, that can be compared and / or contrasted with an alternative "religion", i.e. "Christianity" (or sometimes "Pauline / Gentile

¹¹⁸ Fisk 2008; Watson 2007b, 180–182.

¹¹⁹ Cf. the significance of the Gentile synagogue adherent in Rom 2:25–29 (pp. 165–186).

¹²⁰ Gathercole 2002b, 197–215.

¹²¹ See esp. ch. 5 where we discuss Rom 9–11 (pp. 190–246).

¹²² For the history of the term "Jewish Christian[ity]," see Carleton Paget (2007).

Christianity”).¹²³ F. C. Baur, for example, conceived of Judaism as a religious principle of particularism and exclusivism, in opposition to the Christian / Hellenistic principle of universalism.¹²⁴ Schweitzer, on the other hand, viewed Jewish religion as an eschatological transcendentalism which could be compared with Paul’s own Christ-mysticism.¹²⁵ For Bultmann, the Jewish religion was a symbol of that form of human fallenness and alienation from God which arises through moral and religious striving, and which is merely a precondition for faith in Christ.¹²⁶ Sanders conceived of Judaism as a religion of “covenantal nomism,” and his book entitled *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* inspired a fresh wave of comparisons and contrasts between Pauline soteriology and “Judaism.”¹²⁷ Thus, although the terms of the discussion have shifted substantially over the last century and a half,¹²⁸ this general framework for the discussion—a comparison of different principles or patterns of “religion”—remains highly influential.

It cannot be denied, of course, that this approach has some value for understanding Paul’s *soteriology* in its historical context. However, for our own purposes, the “comparison of religions” approach is subject to severe limitations—in fact, the assumptions of the approach itself make it difficult even to pose our questions.¹²⁹ The approach, as we have seen, conceives of Jewishness primarily as an *alternative religion* (or set of religions) to which Christianity can be compared and contrasted. It focuses, moreover, on those religious patterns or principles that are deemed to be *common* for every individual member of a religion. We, however, are attempting to

¹²³ The general framework we are describing here is intended to be quite broadly applicable and not to be restricted to a single approach (e.g. the Religionsgeschichtliche Schule of Göttingen).

¹²⁴ Baur 1878, 1.47; 2003, 1.41, 2.182. See also Wrede 2001, 167–68.

¹²⁵ Schweitzer 1953.

¹²⁶ E.g. Bultmann 2007, 239–46. Cf. Martin Hengel (1991, 86), who views Judaism as a “negative foil” for Paul’s theology. For Hengel, individual elements of Paul’s theology should be understood precisely as reversals of elements of his former Jewish theology. For other modern approaches to the significance of “Judaism” see Martin (2001).

¹²⁷ Sanders 1977. Examples of contributions to the debate provoked by Sanders’s work include Dunn 1990; 2005; Kim 2002; Martyn 1991; O’Brien 2004; Sanders 1983; Watson 2007b; Wright 1991; cf. Smith 2007.

¹²⁸ See e.g. Hengel’s (1974) demonstration that the traditional distinction between “Jewish” and “Hellenistic” modes of thought is itself ill-conceived; and other studies showing numerous parallels between Paul’s convictions and diverse Jewish sources (e.g. Frey 2007, 299–310; Hengel 1991, 46–51).

¹²⁹ Zetterholm 2010; see also Hodge 2005, 270–271.

examine Paul's view of the *distinct* value of Jewish identity *within* his conception of Christ-believing identity. We are not focusing on Jewishness as an alternative religion, but rather on how the Christian gospel, according to Paul, contests and reinterprets the nature of Jewishness itself. Moreover, we are not focusing on those religious elements which Paul deems to be *common* for all Christ-believers, but on those aspects of Jewish identity which are particularly *distinctive*, especially within the Christ-believing community. In the "comparison of religions" approach, the differences between Jewish identity and Christ-believing identity are conceived primarily in terms of separation, distance or conflict. Our focus on vocation, however, is intended to account also for *positive* interaction between Jews and non-Jews within (and even beyond) "Christianity." Throughout this study, therefore, we need to be aware that our focus on the vocational dimension of Jewish identity within Christ-believing identity may initially appear tangential to those debates predicated on a view of "Judaism" and "Christianity" as alternative religions.

Nevertheless, vocational concerns in relation to Paul's view of Jewish identity have been highlighted and discussed by a number of scholars. We shall briefly examine here two particularly significant treatments.

(b) Stanley Stowers

Stanley Stowers's "rereading" of Romans represents a general line of interpretation often referred to as the *Sonderweg*, i.e. the "special path" of salvation for Jews.¹³⁰ Stowers maintains that Paul is confident about Israel's salvation: God will save all Israel irrespective of faith in Christ.¹³¹ For Stowers, Paul's discussion is generated *only* by his concerns about Israel's divine *vocation*. Paul views Israel primarily as God's "chosen instrument" for achieving universal blessing.¹³² But the Jewish people, either by their disobedience to the Law itself or by their insistence that the Gentiles must keep the Law, have failed to be a proper "light to the Gentiles" (cf. Rom 2:17–

¹³⁰ Stowers 1994. The term *Sonderweg* was coined by Mussner (ET 1984, 34). Stendahl (1976, 4) at one point expounded a *Sonderweg* briefly. Other proponents of the *Sonderweg* include Gaston (1987, 135–150) and Gager (2000, 128–143).

¹³¹ Stowers (1994, 189–191) claims, for example, that the "all flesh" which is "under sin" (Rom 3:20) is merely the Gentiles; besides, Paul is ultimately a universalist who believes that every individual will be saved in the end (299–300, 306–312). Other *Sonderweg* interpreters argue along similar lines; e.g. Christ will save all Jews at the *parousia* without a conversion (Mussner 1984, 28–36), or God will graciously save all Israel by making them more faithful to the Torah (Gaston 1987, 148).

¹³² Stowers 1994, 300; cf. Mussner 1984, 42–44.

29) and have thereby failed to extend God's blessings to the world.¹³³ Nevertheless, Paul sees Israel's apparent failure as the surprising means by which God brings many Gentiles to faith in Christ—which in turn leads to Israel being spurred on to complete her task.¹³⁴

Stowers's focus on Israel's vocation produces a number of valuable insights into aspects of Paul's thought which other interpreters miss—insights which we will draw upon in the course of this dissertation. However, there are serious exegetical weaknesses with Stowers's claim that Paul is not ultimately concerned for Israel's salvation.¹³⁵ Most significantly, Stowers does not deal adequately with Paul's strong statements about the soteriological nature of Israel's problem¹³⁶ and his clear concerns about Israel's salvation.¹³⁷ Our approach, by contrast, maintains that Paul believes that the gospel of Christ has radical implications for both Jewish vocation *and* Jewish salvation.¹³⁸

(c) *N. T. Wright*

N. T. Wright provides a more explicitly Christological interpretation of Israel's vocation.¹³⁹ For Wright, Israel's vocation is multifaceted, corresponding to the multifaceted nature of the narrative of God's purposes in human history from primal humanity (Adam), through Christ and the church, to the new creation. Paul was strongly influenced by Jewish speculation about Adam which posited that Israel's "vocation" was to become "God's true humanity":

God's purposes for the human race in general have devolved on to, and will be fulfilled in, Israel in particular. Israel is, or will become, God's true humanity. What God intended for Adam will be given to the seed of Abraham.¹⁴⁰

¹³³ Stowers 1994, 286–287, 304; cf. Gaston 1987, 138–139.

¹³⁴ Stowers 1994, 312–316.

¹³⁵ Longenecker 2007, 27–31; Ware 2011, 522–523. For other critiques of the *Sonderweg* approach see Räisänen (1988, 180); Hvalvik (1990); Donaldson (2006, 39–44); Wright (1991, 14–15).

¹³⁶ E.g. Rom 3:20; 10:21; 11:20, 23.

¹³⁷ E.g. Rom 10:1. For further discussion of Stowers' treatment of Rom 9–11, see ch. 5, p. 194.

¹³⁸ Cf. Rom 1:16.

¹³⁹ See esp. Wright 1991; also Wright 2002; 2005.

¹⁴⁰ Wright 1991, 20–21. Cf. "Israel's vocation to be the true humanity" (113).

Wright maintains that Paul's discussion of Israel's vocation is most fully developed in Romans, and reaches its climax in Rom 9–11.¹⁴¹ Initially, ethnic Israel had a vital, albeit temporary, negative role in God's purposes by way of her failure. Israel disobeys the Torah, thereby fulfilling her "vocation to be the people in whom sin was to be concentrated in order that it be dealt with."¹⁴² Israel also commits the "meta-sin" of failing to include Gentiles within the people of God.¹⁴³ But both of these sins achieve God's worldwide purposes for all humanity. The concentration of sin in one place focuses it even more sharply onto one person, the Messiah, who takes Israel's sin on himself.¹⁴⁴ The Messiah then deals with Israel's sin (and thus the sin of all humanity) on the cross.¹⁴⁵

Once sin has been dealt with, however, "Israel" is redefined and thus is to be understood in an entirely new way. There is now a "worldwide family" defined by a new Torah, an entire people in whom salvation can be found because sin has been condemned.¹⁴⁶ Thus Israel must abandon her "ancestral privilege" and allow others to join the worldwide family.¹⁴⁷ Since Paul has "systematically transferred the privileges and attributes of 'Israel' to the Messiah and his people," "Israel" in Rom 11:26 must be understood in terms of this worldwide family, i.e. the "church."¹⁴⁸ This quest for unity and the abandonment of any kind of ethnically based privilege, in fact, forms the basis for the mission of the church itself.¹⁴⁹

Thus Wright conceives of Israel's divine vocation primarily in terms of its *concentration of sin* in one place—the Messiah—and its *incorporation* of the Gentiles into the Messiah and thus into a new "Israel." As an ethnic entity, Israel's greatest failure (which nevertheless achieved God's purposes) was its exclusion of

¹⁴¹ Wright 1991, 231–257.

¹⁴² Wright 1991, 242. Cf. Rom 5:20, 9:22.

¹⁴³ Wright 1991, 240.

¹⁴⁴ Cf. Wright 1991, 25–26.

¹⁴⁵ Wright 1991, 39, 239–244.

¹⁴⁶ Wright 1991, 244.

¹⁴⁷ Wright 1991, 246.

¹⁴⁸ Wright 1991, 250.

¹⁴⁹ Wright 1991, 247–249, 251.

Gentiles.¹⁵⁰ As the new “worldwide family,” however, Israel’s new vocation is bound up with its quest for unity and its abandonment of all ethnic claims.¹⁵¹

Although Wright’s focus on Israel’s vocation will provide us with many useful insights into sections of Paul’s letters, his particular conception of Israel’s vocation stands diametrically opposed to our own. For Wright, Israel’s ethnic distinctiveness merely gave her a temporary, negative role in God’s ultimate plan. Indeed, after Jesus’ death and resurrection, Israel’s most urgent task is to *abandon* her ethnic distinctiveness. Wright sees little or no significance in the possibility that, in Paul’s view, Israel’s receipt of divine revelation may have given ethnic Jews an ongoing, distinct, positive role in God’s purposes in Christ.¹⁵² Our own conception of Israel’s vocation, by contrast, affirms—indeed, emphasizes—the significance of a distinct, ethnic Jewish identity within Paul’s conception of Christ-believing identity. We will argue that Paul does *not* conceive of Israel as a “new humanity” or as “the church” but rather as an ethnic group with a distinct divine role *within* humanity. Paul’s problem with his Jewish contemporaries was not their “ethnocentrism.” Rather, it was their failure to understand the *purpose* of their ethnicity and thus their failure to discharge their distinct divine vocation. The mainstream Jewish community believed that their distinct divine vocation was to keep and to teach the Law of Moses as an exemplary witness to God’s power and wisdom. For Paul, however, the Jews’ distinct divine role was something else entirely: to preach the gospel of Christ to the Gentiles as the fulfilment of the Law of Moses and the power of God for salvation to all who believe.

1.3.3. Paul’s vocation and his Jewish identity

There is, in fact, a significant reason why the vocational dimension of Jewish identity in Paul’s letters merits serious attention: Paul himself frequently discusses Jewish

¹⁵⁰ I.e. its “attempt to confine grace to one race” (Wright 1991, 240).

¹⁵¹ Wright 1991, 252–253.

¹⁵² When commenting on Rom 3:2–3, Wright does mention a distinct vocation for Israel to be God’s “messenger” to the world (e.g. 2002, 453; 2005, 47, 119). However, Wright radicalizes Paul’s statement about Jewish failure: while Paul only says that “some” were unfaithful (Rom 3:3), Wright takes this to mean that Israel *as a whole* had been unfaithful. Thus the distinct speaking vocation for Israel to the nations which Wright envisages is not fulfilled in fleshly Israel at all. Israel as an ethnic entity fails utterly in her role as divine messenger, so God brings light and life to the Gentile world in an entirely different way—through the faithfulness of Christ, and the subsequent incorporation of Gentiles into Christ.

identity in the context of his own apostolic vocation. Of the approximately 28 discrete places (23 in the undisputed letters) where Paul uses terms explicitly related to Jewish identity,¹⁵³ at least 13 (11 in the undisputed letters) involve discussions of Paul’s own vocation as apostle to the Gentiles and / or warnings about potential rivals or opponents to his apostolic vocation. It is while contrasting his own cruciform ministry with the ministry of Jewish rivals that he speaks positively of the “Israel of God” (Gal 6:12–16). It is while commending his co-workers and denouncing Jewish opponents that he declares, “we are the circumcision” (Phil 2:19–3:3). It is while defending his own “ministry” (διακονία) that he employs the figures of “Moses,” the “covenants” and the “Israelites” (2 Cor 3:7–16). It is while denouncing rival “super-apostles” and supporting his claim to be “minister [διδάκων] of Christ” that he declares himself to be a “Hebrew,” “Israelite” and “seed of Abraham” (2 Cor 11:22–23). Not only do these examples (among others)¹⁵⁴ suggest that Paul himself saw a strong connection between Jewish identity and apostolic vocation; they also suggest that other Jewish teachers and the Gentiles they were seeking to influence saw a similar connection between Jewish identity and ministry to Gentiles. In fact, as we shall see, a number of Paul’s discussions are generated directly by conflicts over the legitimacy of various conceptions of Jewish vocation and its outworking in ministry among Gentiles.¹⁵⁵

A number of scholars have examined the significance of Paul’s vocation in light of his Jewish identity. We shall briefly consider two particularly significant works.

(a) Johannes Munck

Johannes Munck’s provocative approach has been unjustly neglected in recent scholarship.¹⁵⁶ Munck, having rejected approaches which seek to describe Paul

¹⁵³ The relevant terms are Ἰουδαῖος, Ἰουδαϊσμός, Ἰουδαῖζω, Ἰουδαϊκός, Ἰουδαϊκῶς, περιτέμνειν, περιτομή, Ἰσραήλ, Ἰσραηλίτης, Ἀβραάμ, Ἑβραῖος. The discrete places where Paul discusses these terms (grouping verses together wherever they form an unambiguously connected discussion) are: Rom 1:15–16, 2:9–3:9, 3:29–30, 4:1–16, chs. 9–11, 15:7–33; 1 Cor 1:22–24, 7:18–19, 9:20–23, 10:18, 10:32–33, 12:13; 2 Cor 3:7–16, 11:22–24; Gal 1:13–14, 2:1–15, 3:6–29, 4:21–31, 5:2–6, 5:11–12, 6:12–16; Phil 3:2–6; 1 Thess 2:14–16 and cf. Eph 2:11–3:8; Col 2:11, 3:11, 4:11; Tit 1:10–14.

¹⁵⁴ See also Rom 1:15–16, chs. 9–11, 15:7–33; 1 Cor 9:20–23; Gal 1:13–14, 4:21–31 (cf. vv. 17–19); 1 Thess 2:14–16 and cf. Eph 2:11–3:8; Col 4:11. Tit 1:10–14 also mentions a “Jewish” form of teaching which is opposed to Paul’s preaching vocation (1:3).

¹⁵⁵ See esp. Rom 2:17–29 (see ch. 4, pp. 132–189).

¹⁵⁶ Munck 1959; 1967. Cf. Hurtado 2011.

simply as an exemplar of a kind of religious principle in opposition to Judaism or Jewish Christianity, focuses directly on Paul's apostolic vocation.¹⁵⁷ He highlights Paul's unique role as the Jewish eschatological herald *par excellence*. For Munck, Paul stood at the pivotal, climactic position in the line of key Old Testament figures in God's plan of salvation.¹⁵⁸ The completion of Paul's Gentile ministry is therefore "the decisive turning-point in redemptive history" which "begins the salvation of Israel and the coming of Antichrist, and through it the coming of Christ for judgment and salvation, and so the end of the world."¹⁵⁹ Indeed, Paul believed that his personal role was absolutely critical for God's plans for Israel and the world, because the other apostles (e.g. Peter) had failed in their task to win Israel to Christ.¹⁶⁰

Although Munck sees Paul as a thoroughly Jewish figure, nevertheless, he describes him as a radically *unique* Jewish figure, unlike any other Jew before or contemporary with him. Munck's intense concentration on Paul's uniqueness prevents him from taking proper account of the *commonalities* Paul sees between himself and other Jews and other apostles.¹⁶¹ Although we will not deny that Paul saw himself as unique in certain respects, in this dissertation we will seek to integrate Paul's own vocation more thoroughly with a broader sense of vocation for Israel as a whole.

(b) *Karl-Wilhelm Niebuhr*

Karl-Wilhelm Niebuhr has conducted a careful exegesis of the four most prominent and explicit texts in which Paul connects his Jewish identity with his apostolic ministry (Gal 1:13ff., Phil 3:5ff., 2 Cor 11:22ff., Rom 11:1).¹⁶² Niebuhr is explicitly interested in the question of "whether, and to what extent, Paul's Jewish ancestry and identity is a constitutive element of his self-understanding as apostle of Christ to

¹⁵⁷ See esp. Munck's critique of the Tübingen school (Munck 1959, 66–67, 69–86).

¹⁵⁸ Munck 1959, 36–68. Cf. Munck 1967.

¹⁵⁹ Munck 1959, 49.

¹⁶⁰ Munck 1959, 43–44; 1967, 89–99.

¹⁶¹ See, e.g., Paul's use of the first-person *plural* in reference to apostolic ministry (Rom 1:5; 10:8, 15). See further ch. 5, pp. 190–246.

¹⁶² Niebuhr 1992. Niebuhr's thorough approach exemplifies the methodology advocated by Egger (1996).

the Gentiles.”¹⁶³ Niebuhr’s study will frequently inform our own examination of many of Paul’s key terms and texts.

However, Niebuhr’s study does not deal directly with the vocational dimension of Jewish identity in the precise sense we have described it. Niebuhr presents *Paul* as a uniquely commissioned eschatological prophet, but does not explore the broader concept of *Israel’s* vocation.¹⁶⁴ When examining Romans, Niebuhr describes Israelite identity almost exclusively in terms of Israel’s salvific relationship with God rather than in terms of Israel’s direct role toward the nations.¹⁶⁵ Thus he sees Paul’s apostolic ministry primarily as a bridge between two otherwise separate groups—Israel and the nations.¹⁶⁶ We, on the other hand, are seeking to discern a deeper connection between Paul’s ministry and Jewish identity itself. Thus we will pay more detailed attention to a number of other passages which are significant for understanding the relationship between Paul’s ministry and the vocational dimension of Jewish identity but which are not the focus of Niebuhr’s study (e.g. Rom 1:1–5, 2:17–29, 10:14–18).¹⁶⁷

1.4. Romans: An exercise in Jewish vocation

We have seen that Paul discusses Jewish identity explicitly in a number of places in his letters, and that he frequently links his discussions of Jewish identity with discussions of his own apostolic vocation.¹⁶⁸ Our overall approach in this dissertation must be sufficiently comprehensive of the variety of Paul’s discussions of Jewish identity. Hence, in chapter 2, we will conduct a broad overview of Paul’s understanding of Jewish identity in his letters, especially in relation to the concept of Jewish vocation.¹⁶⁹ However, our approach must also be sufficiently focused on the most significant and sustained discussions. The remainder of our investigation,

¹⁶³ Original: „ob und inwiefern für Paulus die jüdische Herkunft und Identität konstitutiver Bestandteil seines Selbstverständnisses als Christusapostel für die Heiden ist“ (Niebuhr 1992, 2).

¹⁶⁴ Niebuhr 1992, 110, 182–183.

¹⁶⁵ Niebuhr 1992, 142–158.

¹⁶⁶ Niebuhr 1992, 184.

¹⁶⁷ See chs. 3, 4 and 5 respectively.

¹⁶⁸ See p. 34.

¹⁶⁹ Pp. 43–82.

therefore, will be devoted to the single letter in which these discussions occur—Romans.

Among Paul's letters, it is Romans which is most explicitly and directly concerned with issues of Jewish identity—even more so than Galatians. It is of course true that both Romans and Galatians contain a high concentration of lexemes explicitly associated with Jewish identity.¹⁷⁰ However, Galatians is not concerned directly with Jewish identity; rather, Galatians is written in response to a situation in which Jewish identity is being illegitimately imposed on non-Jews.¹⁷¹ Romans, on the other hand, discusses directly the significance of Jewish identity itself. Indeed, as we shall now argue, the occasion and purpose of the letter to the Romans is bound up with the relationship between Paul's apostolic ministry and his Jewish identity. Romans, in other words, is an exercise in Jewish vocation.

Most commentators admit the difficulty of discerning a single purpose for Romans. Many settle for the delineation of several related goals.¹⁷² Three of these goals, in particular, are most significant: Paul wants to *present and commend his gospel* in detail (e.g. Rom 1:16–17); to *unite Jews and Gentiles* in Rome around his gospel (e.g. Rom 15:7);¹⁷³ and to *secure support for a projected Spanish mission* in order to further propagate this gospel (e.g. Rom 1:10–13; 15:24, 28).¹⁷⁴ Some scholars lay particular stress on the issue of Jew-Gentile unity amongst the Roman congregations.¹⁷⁵ Other scholars see such Jew-Gentile unity as a means for Paul to achieve his further goal of securing the Spanish mission. According to Jewett, for example, Paul's ultimate goal is to obtain financial, personal, social and linguistic

¹⁷⁰ Together, the terms Ἰουδαῖος, Ἰουδαϊσμός, Ἰουδαῖζω, Ἰουδαϊκός, Ἰουδαϊκῶς, περιτέμνειν, περιτομή, Ἰσραήλ, Ἰσραηλίτης, Ἀβραάμ, Ἐβραῖος occur 55 times in Romans and 35 times in Galatians. This is a total of 90 times: 64% of all the occurrences in the undisputed Pauline corpus and 58% of all the occurrences in the canonical Pauline corpus.

¹⁷¹ See, e.g., Gal 6:12–15. Cf. Augustine's correspondence with Jerome on Galatians (Fredriksen 2008, 235–237).

¹⁷² E.g. Cranfield 1975, 2.814–823; Fitzmyer 1993, 79–80; Longenecker 2011, 147–149; Moo 1996, 20; Wedderburn 1988.

¹⁷³ Although Paul speaks of his addressees as being “among the nations” (Rom 1:6), the Roman Christian communities also included a Jewish presence (Rom 16:7, 11) (Esler 2003, 115; Watson 2007b, 182–188). Das's (2003, 65–66) argument for an (apparently unique) metaphorical use of συγγενής in Romans is unconvincing.

¹⁷⁴ E.g. Dunn 1988, 1.liv–lviii; Schreiner 1998, 19–23.

¹⁷⁵ E.g. Watson 2007b, 189.

support from the Roman congregations for his future mission.¹⁷⁶ To secure the effectiveness of the Romans' assistance in his mission, Paul must address the disunity between Roman Christ-believing Jews and Gentiles, because such disunity would perpetuate a perverse imperialistic system of honour which was exploiting the barbarians and, if unchecked, would lead to an unwelcome reception of the gospel amongst the Spanish barbarians.¹⁷⁷ The attempt to find a logical connection between Paul's missionary activity and the issue of Jew-Gentile relationships is understandable, given that both of these themes are prominent in the letter. Nevertheless, Jewett's particular proposal for the nature of the connection relies principally on a mirror-reading of Rom 1:13–16 and 15:24, 28.¹⁷⁸ This logic is nowhere spelt out explicitly by Paul and thus is not sufficiently convincing. The connection between Paul's missionary activity and the issue of Jew-Gentile relationships becomes more explicable, however, when we take into account Paul's own self-presentation. It is not only the case that Paul is a preacher of a gospel with implications for Jew-Gentile relationships. Neither is it only the case that harmonious Jew-Gentile relationships have implications for Paul's ability to preach the gospel. Rather, *Paul's own gospel ministry is itself an exercise in Jew-Gentile relationships*.¹⁷⁹ Paul proclaims a gospel that was promised in the Jewish Scriptures¹⁸⁰ about a Jewish Messiah¹⁸¹ who has sent him to the Gentiles.¹⁸² Paul is both an Israelite¹⁸³ and apostle to the Gentiles.¹⁸⁴ Paul presents himself as an Israelite priest, administering the offering of the Gentiles.¹⁸⁵ Paul's gospel ministry

¹⁷⁶ Jewett 2007, 87–88.

¹⁷⁷ Jewett 2007, 87–88. Esler (2003, 129) has a similar view of the connection between Paul's mission and Jew-Gentile unity. Hultgren (2011, 15–17) presents an alternative thesis, arguing that the Roman Christians themselves were generally peaceable, and that Paul is securing their support by assuring them that he also wishes to promote unity rather than strife.

¹⁷⁸ Jewett 2007, 127–141. Jewett follows a suggestion by Pedersen (1985, 47) that Rom 1:14 is the key to Romans.

¹⁷⁹ Cf. Toney (2008, 91–125), who explains this dynamic in terms of Jew-Gentile *unity*. We will argue that there is also a corresponding dynamic of Jew-Gentile *distinction*.

¹⁸⁰ Rom 1:2.

¹⁸¹ Rom 1:3, cf. 9:5.

¹⁸² Rom 1:5.

¹⁸³ Rom 11:1.

¹⁸⁴ Rom 11:13.

¹⁸⁵ Rom 15:16.

proceeds from the Jewish capital Jerusalem into the rest of the world.¹⁸⁶ Paul's mission itself is thus a Jew-Gentile dynamic. It is not surprising, therefore, in a letter where Paul calls his addressees to be partners in his gospel-preaching, to find him frequently addressing issues pertaining to Jew-Gentile interaction.¹⁸⁷

A further link between apostolic ministry and Jew-Gentile relationships is suggested by the significance Paul assigns to Jews in the Roman Christ-believing community itself. Paul's four most prominent addressees are Jews—Prisca and Aquila, Andronicus and Junia.¹⁸⁸ Although they are Jews, they are greeted primarily in terms of their status with respect to the Gentile mission. Prisca and Aquila are well-known Jews whom Paul describes as his “co-workers” (συνεργοί, Rom 16:3),¹⁸⁹ and people to whom “all the assemblies of the Gentiles” owe thanks (Rom 16:4).¹⁹⁰ Andronicus and Junia are both Paul's “kinsfolk” (συγγενεῖς, cf. Rom 9:3) and are also “prominent among the apostles” (ἐπίσημοι ἐν τοῖς ἀποστόλοις, Rom 16:7). Although Paul does not specify further the precise nature of their role, he is at least implying that these Jews in particular are worthy of mention among the first-person plural group, “we,” who have received “apostleship” (ἀποστολή) to bring about the obedience of faith among the nations (Rom 1:5).¹⁹¹

That Paul sees the Jew-Gentile dynamic as an important factor in his gospel presentation is clear from his thematic statement in 1:16–17.¹⁹² Paul is not ashamed of the gospel because it is the power of God for salvation “for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek” (παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι, Ἰουδαίῳ τε πρῶτον καὶ Ἑλληνι). The verb πιστεύειν, along with its cognates, signifies the key defining feature of Christ-believing identity, which Paul describes variously as “faith of Jesus

¹⁸⁶ Rom 15:19.

¹⁸⁷ See esp. Rom 2–4, 9–11 and 14–15.

¹⁸⁸ Rom 16:3, 7; see Esler 2003, 118–119. For the authenticity of chapter 16, see Donfried (1991).

¹⁸⁹ Cf. Acts 18:2–3, 18, 26.

¹⁹⁰ Indeed, according to our sources, Prisca and Aquila were “among the most important missionaries in the middle of the first century” (Hvalvik 2007b, 160); see also 1 Cor 16:19; 2 Tim 4:19.

¹⁹¹ Cf. the plural in 10:8, 15. Since Paul implies that they had also shared a prison-experience with him, it seems best to assume that they had been prominent members of Paul's own missionary team.

¹⁹² Rom 1:16–17 is the thematic statement of Romans (Cranfield 1975, 1.87–102; Dunn 1988, 1.37; Fitzmyer 1993, 98; Jewett 2007, vii; Moo 1996, 63–79; Schreiner 1998, 58–76).

[Christ]”¹⁹³ and as faith in God who justifies the ungodly and raises the dead.¹⁹⁴ Yet “believers” consist of two distinct groups, “Jew” and “Greek.”¹⁹⁵ These believing Jews and Greeks are united in salvation through the gospel (τε ... καὶ). Nevertheless, within this fundamental unity, Jews have a certain pre-eminence (πρῶτον).¹⁹⁶

These two seemingly incongruous aspects of the relationship between Jews and non-Jews together form the subject of a frequent dialectic throughout the rest of the letter. On the one hand, Jews stand in an *equal* position with non-Jews with respect to sin, judgment and salvation through the gospel. On the other hand, Jews have a certain privilege and *pre-eminence* with respect to the gospel. Although, in very rough terms, Romans 1–8 tends to emphasize Jewish equality¹⁹⁷ and Romans 9–16 tends to emphasize Jewish pre-eminence,¹⁹⁸ this distinction is not at all absolute. In fact, the two aspects of Jewish identity interact with one another throughout the letter. In the earlier stages of his argument, Paul twice recalls his initial affirmation of Jewish pre-eminence using the keyword πρῶτον.¹⁹⁹ In particular, he discusses the significance of Jewish identity and “value” (ὠφέλεια) of Jewishness in Rom 2:17–3:18. Conversely, his argument about Jewish pre-eminence in 9–11 frequently refers back to the fundamental equality he has established in chapters 1–8.²⁰⁰

Thus there are two topics of discussion in Romans which are particularly worthy of our attention as we seek to discern the relationship between Paul’s apostolic ministry and his Jewish identity. Firstly, there are those passages where Paul presents his own ministry in terms of a Jew-Gentile dynamic (e.g. Rom 1:1–5, chs. 9–11, 15:14–33). Secondly, there are those passages where Jewish distinctiveness is a particularly prominent theme (e.g. Rom 2:17–29, 3:1–2, also chs. 9–11). These passages will form the bulk of our investigation in chapters 3, 4 and 5.

¹⁹³ Rom 3:22, 26.

¹⁹⁴ E.g. Rom 4:3, 5, 17, 24; 10:9–11; see Jewett 2007, 139.

¹⁹⁵ See pp. 52–54 for a discussion of the word “Greek” as a designation for non-Jews in Rome.

¹⁹⁶ Stenschke 2010, 202–203.

¹⁹⁷ E.g. Rom 2:9–10, 3:9, 3:29–30.

¹⁹⁸ E.g. Rom 9:4, 11:2, 11:26, 15:27.

¹⁹⁹ Rom 2:10, 3:1–2, cf. 1:16.

²⁰⁰ Cf. Rom 10:12 with 3:29–30.

1.5. Preview of the argument

In this dissertation, we are seeking to examine Paul's Jewish identity using the concept of *divine vocation*. In particular, we are seeking to demonstrate that Paul viewed his own apostolic vocation as the fulfilment of Israel's divine vocation. For many of Paul's Jewish contemporaries, Jewish identity was bound up closely with the Law of Moses, which was seen as a special gift of divine revelation to Israel. The Jews' distinct divine vocation, in this view, consisted primarily in keeping and teaching the Law of Moses as an exemplary witness to God's power and wisdom in the world. Paul, as a Jew, agreed with his Jewish contemporaries that the Law of Moses was a special gift of divine revelation and thus a defining feature of Jewish identity. He disagreed, however, about the place of the Law in God's purposes. Paul read the Jewish Law principally in light of the gospel of Christ. Indeed, for Paul, the Law of Moses was primarily a witness to the gospel. Thus the divine Jewish vocation consisted, not in keeping the Law of Moses *per se*, but in embodying and communicating a way of life which was focussed on the gospel of Christ as the *fulfilment* of the Law of Moses; a way of life which issued naturally in the preaching of the gospel to non-Jews.

In chapter 2, we will lay the groundwork for Paul's general understanding of Jewish identity by examining how Paul uses language relating explicitly to Jewish identity in his letters as a whole. We will demonstrate that when Paul speaks about Jewish identity, he is usually assuming or asserting one or more of the following three key elements:

1. *Jewish distinctiveness*. In light of the gospel, Paul sees an ongoing, distinct and positive value for Jewish identity, even within the Christian communities.
2. *Divine revelation*. For Paul, the value of Jewish identity arises primarily from the conviction that the Scriptures in general, and the Law of Moses in particular, are a special gift of divine revelation to Israel.
3. *Divine vocation*. Paul is convinced that God's revelation to Israel provides Israel with a special role or task within God's wider purposes—a divine vocation.

In chapter 3, we will examine the outer frame of Romans (Rom 1:1–15, 15:14–16:24), and show that Paul here deliberately links his own apostolic ministry with his Jewish identity. In particular, Paul presents his apostolic ministry as the fulfilment of positive eschatological expectations concerning Israel’s divine vocation with respect to the nations.

In chapter 4, we will examine a key passage in which Paul contests and begins to redefine the nature and significance of Jewish identity (Rom 2:17–29). Contrary to many interpreters, we will argue that Paul is not seeking here to eradicate Jewish distinctiveness or to show that all Christians are in fact “true Jews.” Rather, by locating the entire pericope (including vv. 28–29) in the mainstream Jewish synagogue, Paul seeks to contest and redefine the significance of Jewish identity and Jewish vocation itself. This contest over Jewish identity and Jewish vocation, of course, inevitably involves disputes about the nature and significance of the Law of Moses.

In chapter 5, we will investigate the complex dialectic in Rom 9–11 between Paul’s apostolic vocation and the vocation of Israel as a whole, as represented by the mainstream Jewish community. Paul identifies strongly with Israel because Israel is central to God’s worldwide purposes in Christ, as declared in his gospel (Rom 9:1–5). At present, however, Paul’s vocation as apostle stands in direct antithesis to Israel’s persistent reading of the Law in terms of “works,” as well as her failure to keep that Law (Rom 10). Yet Paul ultimately moves his readers beyond this antithesis by demonstrating that Israel’s “failure”—especially her failure with respect to the Law—and his own vocation—preaching the gospel as the fulfilment of the Law—respectively achieve complementary aspects of God’s purposes in Christ (Rom 11). Indeed, Paul is confident that his own vocation and Israel’s vocation will ultimately converge. Paul’s identity as “Israelite” (Rom 11:1) and his identity as “apostle to the nations” (Rom 11:13) are thus seen to be two sides of the same coin. Paul thereby demonstrates that his own apostolic mission is, indeed, the true way to be Jewish.

Chapter 2: Paul's Language of Jewish Identity

*We can never be just Dutch, or just English, or
whatever, we will always be Jews as well.
And we'll have to keep on being Jews,
but then, we'll want to be.*

Anne Frank.¹

*For I am not ashamed of the gospel,
for it is the power of God for salvation
for everyone who believes:
for the Jew first, and also for the Greek.*

The Apostle Paul.²

Our overall thesis is that Paul's Jewish identity is intimately connected to his own apostolic vocation. Paul, as a Jew, agreed with his Jewish contemporaries that Israel had a distinct place in God's purposes, and that this distinct place was directly bound up with their possession of the Law of Moses as a gift of divine revelation. Paul, however, read the Jewish Law principally in light of the gospel of Christ. For Paul, then, the divine Jewish vocation consisted, not in keeping the Law of Moses *per se*, but in embodying and communicating a way of life which was focussed on the gospel of Christ as the *fulfilment* of the Law of Moses; a way of life which issued naturally in the preaching of the gospel to non-Jews.

In this chapter, we will lay a linguistic and conceptual foundation for this claim by demonstrating that Paul's language of Jewish identity, as exhibited in his letters as a whole,³ reflects his view of a distinct Jewish vocation stemming from the possession of divine revelation. We will focus on terms that relate unambiguously to Jewish

¹ Frank 1997, 260. For a detailed bibliography, see p. 255ff.

² Rom 1:16.

³ Most of our attention will be directed towards the undisputed letters (see p. 11 n. 11)

identity, examining similarities and differences between the way in which Paul uses these terms and the way in which his Jewish contemporaries use them. We will see that when Paul speaks about Jewish identity, he is usually assuming or asserting one or more of the following three key elements:

1. *Jewish distinctiveness*. In light of the gospel, Paul sees an ongoing, distinct and positive value for Jewish identity. This claim is in direct opposition to the view argued by Daniel Boyarin and others that Paul's gospel is a universalistic theological system which effectively eradicates Jewish identity altogether.⁴ Indeed, for Paul, Jewish distinctiveness is itself an important theological concept with a significant bearing on his gospel.
2. *Divine revelation*. For Paul, the value of Jewish identity arises primarily from the conviction that Israel's Scriptures, and the Law of Moses in particular, are a special gift of divine revelation to the nation of Israel.
3. *Divine vocation*. In light of the gospel, the value of Jewish identity is *not* directly soteriological. Rather, the value of Jewish identity arises from a sense of divine vocation—i.e. a conviction that God's revelation to Israel provides Israel with a special role or task within God's wider purposes. Paul, however, profoundly disagrees with most of his contemporaries about the nature and significance of this vocation. For Paul, the divine Jewish vocation was not primarily a matter of keeping the Law and preserving the holiness of Israel as a nation; rather, it was primarily a matter of communicating the gospel of Christ, as the fulfilment of the Law, to non-Jews.

2.1. Jewish distinctiveness

Against Boyarin,⁵ we have claimed that Paul believes in an ongoing distinction between Jews and Gentiles, a distinction which the gospel of Christ transforms but does not destroy. In the following discussion, we will seek both to demonstrate the *existence* of this distinction in Paul's letters, and also to discern how Paul understands the *nature* of the distinction. Our primary field of enquiry will be Paul's

⁴ Cf. p. 19.

⁵ Cf. p. 19.

use of terms “Jew” (Ἰουδαῖος) and its metonym “circumcision” (noun περιτομή / verb περιτέμνειν).⁶ We will proceed by examining Paul’s own use of these terms, in light of his Jewish context. We will find that Jewish distinctiveness is *both* “ethnic,” in the sense that Jews constitute an identifiable ethnic group, and *also* “theological,” in the sense that Paul attaches a certain divine significance to this particular ethnic group.

2.1.1. “Jew” and “circumcision”: Terms of Jewish distinctiveness

When Paul uses the terms “Jew” (Ἰουδαῖος) and “circumcision” (περιτομή / περιτέμνειν), he is often assuming, implying or asserting some kind of distinctiveness in relation to Jewish identity. The distinction between Jew and non-Jew is significant both outside and within the sphere of salvation.

On the one hand, Paul sometimes uses the terms Ἰουδαῖος and περιτομή / περιτέμνειν to imply a distinction between certain people who are presently *outside* the sphere of salvation. In Romans, Jews are singled out as the “first” recipients of God’s retributive justice alongside others (Rom 2:9–10).⁷ In 1 Corinthians, Ἰουδαῖοι are one of the two distinct groups of people who are not members of the “assembly of God” (1 Cor 10:32), who have distinct reasons for rejecting the gospel of Christ crucified (1 Cor 1:22–23) and who might be “won” through a distinct strategy (1 Cor 9:20). In 2 Cor 11:24 and 1 Thess 2:14–16, the Ἰουδαῖοι are a distinct group of people who are especially opposed to Paul and his apostolic mission.⁸

Although Paul makes a number of statements which imply that Jewish distinction from Gentiles must be qualified and, to some extent, relativized in light of the gospel (e.g. Rom 3:9, 3:29–30, 10:12; 1 Cor 1:24, 7:19, 12:13; Gal 3:28, 5:6, 6:15; Phil 3:4–7), these assertions cannot be taken as evidence that Paul’s gospel eradicates Jewish distinctiveness altogether. In various places, Paul speaks of an ongoing distinction between Jew and Gentile *within* the sphere of salvation. Paul sometimes assumes this distinction for the sake of argument (e.g. Rom 9:24), sometimes affirms the

⁶ For the close association of circumcision with Jewish identity see e.g. Est 8:17 LXX; Philo, *Spec.* 1.1–2; Josephus, *AJ.* 20.38, *BJ.* 2.454; Rom 2:28–3:1.

⁷ For the global world-setting of Rom 2:1–16, see p. 138.

⁸ See Das (2003, 128–139) for the authenticity of 1 Thess 2:13–16.

distinction directly (e.g. 1 Cor 7:18; Gal 2:3, 2:7–9), and sometimes even uses it to imply that Jews and Gentiles can be ranked according to a “priority of peoples.”⁹ The most significant example of this last category occurs in the thesis statement of Romans itself, where Paul connects Jewish priority directly with his universal gospel:

For I am not ashamed of the gospel,
for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes,
for the Jew first, and also for the Greek. (Rom 1:16)

Οὐ γὰρ ἐπαισχύνομαι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον,
δύναμις γὰρ θεοῦ ἐστὶν εἰς σωτηρίαν παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι,
Ἰουδαίῳ τε πρῶτον καὶ Ἑλληνι.

Paul claims two things in Rom 1:16: firstly, that the Jew-Gentile distinction is not straightforwardly soteriological, and secondly, that it is theologically significant. Although the Jew-Gentile distinction is *related* to the “gospel” and to “salvation,” it does not correspond directly to the distinction between “saved” and “unsaved.” Indeed, Paul never uses the terms “Jew” or “circumcision” to delineate soteriological boundaries. In almost every instance where Paul uses these terms to refer to people whom he regards as existing within the sphere of salvation, he also refers to another group who stand alongside them. The beneficiaries of salvation consist of *both* Jews and Greeks (Rom 1:16, 2:10, 10:12; 1 Cor 1:24, 12:13; Gal 3:28; cf. Col 3:11), *both* Jews and Gentiles (Rom 3:29, 9:24), *both* circumcised and uncircumcised (Rom 3:30, 4:9–12; Gal 2:7–9, 5:6, 6:15; cf. Col 3:11, Eph 2:11–13). Furthermore, it can be shown that even the few apparent exceptions to this rule (Rom 2:29, Phil 3:3, cf. Col 2:11), do not in fact constitute a rejection of the distinctive nature of Jewish identity or of circumcision.¹⁰

Indeed, Paul’s letter to the Galatians may be understood as a passionate attempt to *resist* those who, in his view, are confusing the legitimate but secondary Jew-Gentile distinction with the fundamental and primary saved-unsaved distinction. Paul not only denies the need for *Gentiles* to be circumcised (Gal 5:2–3, 6:12–13) because this

⁹ Hodge 2007, 137–153, quotation from 141. Hodge describes Paul’s statements as an “interaction between oppositional and aggregative strategies” in which “polar opposites are connected yet not merged” (138). See also Fredriksen 2010, 249–250.

¹⁰ For Rom 2:29, see pp. 176–186. For Phil 3:3, see p. 178 n. 171. For Col 2:11, see p. 179 n. 172.

would imply being severed from Christ, justified by Law and falling from grace (Gal 5:4); he also affirms the legitimacy of a distinct “gospel of circumcision” (τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ... τῆς περιτομῆς) and a corresponding “apostolate of circumcision” (εἰς ἀποστολὴν τῆς περιτομῆς; Gal 2:7–9).¹¹ Similarly, Paul not only rebukes Peter for acting in a way that implies that Gentiles must become Jews (Gal 2:14), because this would imply justification by works of Law rather than by faith in Christ (Gal 2:16); he also affirms that he and Cephas are “Jews by nature” (φύσει¹² Ἰουδαῖοι, Gal 2:15).¹³

Some commentators regard Paul’s switch from the term “Jew” to the term “Israel[ite]” in Rom 9–11¹⁴ as an indication that he wishes to break down the Jew-Gentile distinction and thus to “include” the Gentiles within the sphere of a redefined Jewish identity. According to Dunn, for example, the term “Israel” emphasizes a kind of divine covenantal purpose and destiny which transcends or absorbs all other ethno-religious distinctions. Thus for Dunn, Paul’s discussion of “Israel” is ultimately a discussion about *all* those who are beneficiaries of God’s covenantal purposes in Christ.¹⁵ There is little evidence, however, that “Israel” is a term that is more open to Gentile inclusion than the term “Jew.” The Scriptures themselves contain no examples of non-Israelites becoming “Israelites” simply by worshipping the God of Israel.¹⁶ Furthermore, Paul himself never unambiguously includes Gentiles under the designation “Israel” in Rom 9–11.¹⁷ A few commentators claim that “all Israel” in

¹¹ Although Paul is of course speaking here of an “ethnic” division of missionary labour (Martyn 1997, 211–216), this observation does not at all rule out theological concerns. As we shall see, Paul believes that Jewish ethnicity itself has a theological significance.

¹² The term φύσις in relation to Jewish identity is not inherently disparaging; indeed, in Rom 11:21, 24 it implies a special relationship to God’s blessings.

¹³ Pace Boyarin (1994, 106–135), who claims that Paul nullifies the significance of physical circumcision entirely in Galatians.

¹⁴ Ἰουδαῖος is used 9x in Rom 1–3 but only 2x in Rom 9–11; Ἰσραήλ / Ἰσραηλίτης is not used at all in Rom 1–8 and is used 13x in Rom 9–11.

¹⁵ Dunn 1998b, 504–509; 1999, 187–188. For Dunn (1998b), the church is “defined [...] by inclusion *in* Israel” (507, emphasis original).

¹⁶ Cohen 1999, 131.

¹⁷ This point is argued extensively by Gadenz (2009); cf. Das 2003, 106–107; Watson 2007b, 335. Reinbold (2010, 405–407) believes that Rom 10:19a is an exception; however Reinbold’s argument assumes that Rom 10:18 refers to Israel—an assumption which we shall critique below (pp. 217–226).

Rom 11:26 is referring to the church of Christ-believing Jews and Gentiles.¹⁸ However, this position has a number of flaws, and is ultimately unsatisfactory.¹⁹ In the next section, we will offer an alternative explanation for Paul's use of the term "Israel[ite]" in Rom 9–11 and elsewhere.²⁰

The Jew-Gentile distinction, then, is significant for Paul, even within the sphere of salvation. Nevertheless, its significance is not directly soteriological. What, then, *is* the significance of the Jew-Gentile distinction in Paul's understanding?

2.1.2. An ethnic distinctiveness

The terms "Jew" and "circumcision" in Paul's Jewish context are fundamentally *ethnic* designations.²¹ There was, in other words, a widespread belief in the Jewish Diaspora that Jews comprised a special ethnic group with certain features that distinguished it from other ethnic groups.

This observation by itself, of course, does not at all rule out "theological" or "religious" considerations with respect to Jewish identity. There is no reason whatsoever why an understanding of ethnicity cannot include "religious" elements. In the constructivist concept of ethnicity favoured by social-scientific writers, the identity of an "ethnic" group must be understood according to its *own* dynamic identity-generating activities.²² An ethnic group defines itself by continual expression and validation of one or more criteria. Examples of such criteria include: a common proper name, a belief in common ancestry, a shared history of a common past, common customs, a common language, occupation of or a symbolic link with a

¹⁸ Calvin (c. 1849, 437) represents an earlier influential advocate of this position. Wright (1991, 249–250; 2002, 690) understands the phrase "all Israel" in Rom 11:26a as a "polemical redefinition" of the meaning of Israel to mean "the church." This position is a minority in contemporary scholarship (Zoccali 2008, 290–293); it was also a minority position in Calvin's time (Shute 2004).

¹⁹ Zoccali (2008, 293–295) has shown that Wright's theory of a "redefinition" of Israel is inconsistent with Paul's other uses of the term "Israel" in Rom 9–11 and with Paul's rhetorical purpose in this section of the letter to undercut Gentile pride (Rom 11:25); cf. Campbell 2006, 123–125.

²⁰ In ch. 5 (pp. 190–246), we will defend at length a reading of Rom 9–11 which presupposes that the terms "Israel" and "Jew" are referring to ethnic Jews throughout. Cf. our discussion of Gal 6:16 on p. 62 n. 90.

²¹ Barclay 1996, 402–413; Cohen 1999, 133. By contrast, Christ-believing identity is *not* ethnic (Barclay 2011, 12–15).

²² See, e.g., Barth 1969; Esler 2003, 40–53.

geographical homeland, and a common religion.²³ No single criterion is absolutely determinative or necessary for a given ethnic group. What matters is the criterion or criteria that the members of the group itself deem to be important in their identity-generating activities, particularly in their interactions with others. This may, of course, include “religious” criteria.

There is, in fact, a long-standing scholarly disagreement over the particular criteria which were significant in defining first-century Jewish ethnicity—a debate which is connected closely with the meaning of the term Ἰουδαῖος.²⁴ Some scholars highlight the significance of “geographical” elements in Jewish ethnicity.²⁵ In this view, Ἰουδαῖοι understood themselves primarily in terms of their (real or imagined) Jewish homeland, Ἰουδαία.²⁶ The Jewish ethnic group is thus compared with other ethnic groups in the ancient world with “geographical” origins, such as Egyptians, Chaldeans and Phoenicians.²⁷ Thus the term should be translated “Jud[a]ean.” Other scholars, however, highlight the irreducibly “religious” dimension of Jewish ethnicity at this time, and so prefer to retain the traditional English translation “Jew.”²⁸ In this understanding, Jews must be understood (at least in part) in terms of their religious practices and views.

It has been rightly pointed out, however, that the “geographical” and “religious” criteria for understanding Jewish ethnicity are not polar opposites; indeed, they were often closely connected in Jewish writings.²⁹ The strong emotional attachment which authors of Jewish Diaspora literature exhibit towards their homeland stems from the view that it is God’s own “holy” territory.³⁰ This is consistent with the scriptural focus on the land of Israel as the location of God’s special presence and blessings (e.g. Deut 26:15, Ps 78:54–55 [LXX 77:54–55]). Judea’s capital city,

²³ Esler 2003, 43–44.

²⁴ For summaries of the debate, see Miller 2010 (98–101) and Hodge 2007 (11–15).

²⁵ E.g. Esler 2003, 63–74; Mason 2007. Mason (2007) uses the term “ethnic-geographic[al]” (494, 496, 506).

²⁶ For the link between Ἰουδαία and Ἰουδαῖος, see Josephus, *C. Ap.* 1.179.

²⁷ Cf. Josephus, *C. Ap.* 1.1, 8 (Mason 2007, 492).

²⁸ E.g. Cohen 1999, 14, 69–139; Schwartz 2007.

²⁹ Cf. Hodge 2007, 11–15. For *non*-Jewish authors, on the other hand, religious criteria are far less important in defining ethnicity (Sechrest 2009, 106–109).

³⁰ E.g. Wis 12:3, 7; Philo, *Her.* 293; *Legat.* 202, 205, 330 (Barclay 1996, 422; Esler 2003, 64–65).

Jerusalem, is even more significant in this regard. Jerusalem, by virtue of its temple, was the “mother-city” (μητρόπολις) of the Jewish Diaspora and the symbolic centre of its religious devotion.³¹ The concrete links between Diaspora Jewish communities and Judea were maintained by regular pilgrimages to the temple and by the conveyance of collections of money to the temple to pay for its religious service.³²

For Paul, too, the geographical designations “Judea” and “Jerusalem” have a “religious” significance. When he speaks of travelling to Jerusalem, Paul uses the terminology of “ascent” (verbs ἀναβαίνειν / ἀνέρχεται; Gal 1:17–18, 2:1), adopting a Jewish expression of pilgrimage that assumes Jerusalem’s exalted and holy status within the land of Israel³³ and among the nations of the earth.³⁴ Paul also designates Jerusalem as the symbolic centre of his international gospel ministry, which he describes as a “priestly” ministry (Rom 15:16) that proceeds from Jerusalem (Rom 15:19) and continues to be oriented towards Jerusalem (Rom 15:25, 31).³⁵ Paul recognizes Judea both as the location of exemplary Christ-believing assemblies and also as the homeland of those Jews who opposed his ministry (1 Thess 2:14–15, cf. Gal 1:22–24, Rom 15:31).

Thus the “geographical” and “religious” dimensions of Jewish ethnicity are not incompatible, but are rather mutually informing. Jews (including Paul) often connected their homeland with a sense of their unique place in God’s purposes—thus their “geography” is often inherently “religious.”³⁶ Nevertheless, this does not mean that such Jews saw themselves as belonging to a “religion” in the modern

³¹ E.g. Philo, *Flacc.* 45–46; Josephus, *A.J.* 3.245; cf. Isa 1:26 LXX (Barclay 1996, 422; Leonhardt-Balzer 2007, 49–50; Mason 2007, 480–488; Niehoff 2001, 33–44).

³² Barclay 1996, 419–421.

³³ The word ἀναβαίνειν is used in this sense in 2 Kgs [LXX 4 Kgdms] 23:2 // 2 Chr 34:30; Ps 24:3 (LXX 23:3), 122:3–4 (LXX 121:3–4); cf., e.g., Josephus, *A.J.* 11.67, 72, 122; 12.316.

³⁴ Zech 14:16–17; Isa 2:3.

³⁵ See p. 106. Cf. Frey 2007, 303–304; Hengel 1991, 24–25.

³⁶ Hence we will continue to use the term “Jew” rather than “Judean” in this dissertation. This choice has been made, not in order to deny the “ethnic” nature Jewish identity, but because the modern term “Jew” is pregnant of a wider range of possibilities than “Jud[a]ean.” We agree with Schwartz (2007, 5–8, 21–22) that the English term “Judean” implies an unnecessarily restricted geographical reference. Mason (2007, 504) insists that such a geographical restriction only exists “*in our minds*” because of our own modern circumstances. However, it is precisely those modern circumstances and patterns of thought that *ought* to determine modern translation choices!

sense of a transcultural belief system.³⁷ Thus the term “religion” may be confusing in this discussion. Hence we will speak of a special “theological” view of Jewish ethnicity: Israel was a special nation with a distinct place in the purposes of the universal God. In the following discussion, we will explore further this “theological” dimension of Jewish identity as it was expressed by Paul and his Jewish contemporaries.

2.1.3. A theological distinctiveness

The theological distinction between Jews and others is emphasized to different extents by different ancient authors. Josephus and Philo, for example, although occasionally speaking of Jewish pre-eminence in relation to God,³⁸ also commonly refer to the Jewish people as one “ethnic group” (ἔθνος) among others.³⁹ Paul, on the other hand, never uses the term ἔθνος to refer to Jews. In fact, the majority of Paul’s uses of ἔθνος occur in *contrastive* juxtapositions with terms such as Ἰουδαῖος, Ἰσραήλ, and other clear Jewish designations.⁴⁰ Paul’s usage⁴¹ reflects the preference of the LXX to refer to Israel using the more ancient and exalted term λαός rather than ἔθνος.⁴² Paul’s usage also reflects a bipartite division of humanity into two distinct groups—Jews and others—which is a highly conservative Jewish stance.⁴³ As we

³⁷ Cohen 1999, 69, 129–131, 156–158. Conversions were possible (e.g. Jdt 14:10), but as a rule, most Jews were Jews by birth. To use the terminology of Berger and Luckmann (1971, 150): being a Jew was typically a matter of “primary socialization,” rather than “secondary socialization” (cf. Campbell 2004, 81).

³⁸ E.g. Josephus, *C. Ap.* 2.180, 188; Philo, *Legat.* 210, 278. Philo can also speak of “two kinds of inhabitants” in his city and in the whole of Egypt whom he designates “us and them” (ἡμᾶς τε καὶ τούτους, *Flacc.* 1.43) (Cohen 1999, 1).

³⁹ E.g. Josephus, *C. Ap.* 1.68, 137, 166; 2.220–235, 281–286; Philo, *Decal.* 96; *Spec.* 4.179, 224; *Virt.* 212, 226; *Prob.* 75 (Mason 2007, 490–493; Umemoto 1994, 23).

⁴⁰ Rom 2:14 (in apposition to τὰ μὴ νόμον ἔχοντα; in contrast to οἱ ἀκροαταὶ νόμου, 2:13), 2:24 (cf. 2:17), 3:29, 4:17–18 (in contrast to τῷ ἐκ τοῦ νόμου, 4:16), 9:24, 9:30–31, 10:19, 11:11–13, 11:25, 15:9–18 (in contrast with περιτομή, 15:8), 15:27 (in contrast to τῶν ἁγίων τῶν ἐν Ἱερουσαλήμ); 1 Cor 1:23; 2 Cor 11:26 (in contrast with Paul’s γένος); Gal 2:8–15; 1 Thess 2:14–16; cf. Eph 2:11, 3:1, 3:6, 3:8. The remaining uses of ἔθνος are references to the extra-Jewish scope of Paul’s gospel and mission (Rom 1:5, 1:13, 16:4, 16:26; Gal 1:16, 3:8, 3:14; cf. Col 1:27; 1 Tim 2:7, 3:16; 2 Tim 4:17), and (occasionally) to “heathens” who are neither Jews nor Christians (1 Cor 5:1, 12:2; 1 Thess 4:5; cf. Eph 2:11, 4:17).

⁴¹ Rom 10:21, 11:1–2, 15:10; 1 Cor 10:7, 14:21.

⁴² Strathmann and Meyer 1967, 35; Umemoto 1994, 22. We do occasionally find the LXX referring to Israel as an ἔθνος (e.g. Gen 12:2), but this is rare.

⁴³ Barclay 1996, 387–389; Frey 2007, 299–300.

have already seen, in the programmatic statement in Rom 1:16, Paul invests this distinction with a great deal of theological significance. Jews and Greeks are united in believing in the “gospel” for “salvation”; yet within this unity, Jews have a certain pre-eminence.

The fact that Paul in Rom 1:16 uses the term Ἕλληνα rather than ἔθνος might at first glance seem to undermine our contention that Paul is thinking primarily in terms of a theologically-oriented bipartite division of the world into “Jews” and “Gentiles.” In the first century, the term Ἕλληνα was not a synonym for “Gentile,” but rather was used to refer to a particular, albeit widespread and influential, ethnic group: “Greek.”⁴⁴ Josephus, for example, uses the term Ἕλληνα only to speak of ethnic Greeks, e.g. the politically active members of certain cities founded by Greeks.⁴⁵ There was, in fact, a longstanding ethnic conflict between Jews and Greeks throughout the ancient Mediterranean world, especially in Asia Minor.⁴⁶ Esler argues on this basis that Paul’s use of the term “Greek” in Rom 1:16 is aligned to a particular rhetorical strategy related to this ethnic conflict.⁴⁷ In Rom 1:14, Paul describes this conflict from the “Greek” perspective, referring to the distinction between “Greeks” who are “wise”—i.e. the educated, sophisticated elite⁴⁸—and “barbarians” who are “foolish”—i.e. the naturally unsophisticated ethnic groups, which included (Hebrew-speaking) Jews.⁴⁹ In Rom 1:16, however, Paul cleverly uses the term “Greek” in a way that undermines this traditional distinction: the gospel is

⁴⁴ Esler 2003, 54–61. In the Greek cities of Asia Minor, the Ἕλληνες belonged to a particular group who usually claimed some kind of Greek heritage, wielded considerable political power and generally despised the native “barbarians” (Stanley 1996, 109–110, 114).

⁴⁵ *B.J.* 2.266–270, 284 mentions Syrians in Caesarea who are also called “Greeks”; this probably means people from the former (Greek) Seleucid Empire; *A.J.* 16.58ff speaks of ethnically Greek Ionians (cf. 16.27); *A.J.* 16.160ff refers to Cyrene, an ancient Greek capital; *A.J.* 18.257 mentions “Greeks” in Alexandria, another ancient Greek capital; *A.J.* 18.374 speaks of Greeks and Syrians as two different groups; cf. *C. Ap.* 1.63. Pace Schwartz 2007, 15.

⁴⁶ Stanley 1996, 115–123.

⁴⁷ Esler 2003, 74–76, 108; cf. Jewett 2007, 140–141.

⁴⁸ For the tendency to equate Greek ethnicity with wisdom see 1 Cor 1:22–24; and cf. Josephus, *C. Ap.* 1.161. See also Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*Ant. Rom.* 1.89.1–2), who flatters his upper-class *Roman* audience by suggesting that, against the views of those who make Rome a retreat “of barbarians and fugitives and vagabonds” (βαρβάρων καὶ δραπετῶν καὶ ἀνεστίων ἀνθρώπων), it should be affirmed as a *Greek* city (τις ἀποφαινέσθω ... Ἑλλάδα πόλιν αὐτήν) (Bowersock 1965, 131–132).

⁴⁹ Cf. Philo, *Mos.* 2.27. When used by Jews themselves, the Greek-Barbarian division did not necessarily imply a value judgment (see e.g. Philo, *Legat.* 8, 83, 145, 162; *Spec.* 1.211; Josephus, *A.J.* 1.107, 4.12; *C. Ap.* 1.201).

the power of salvation “for the Jew first, and also for the Greek.” Not only would this formulation have cut across the aforementioned deep-seated Jewish antagonism towards Greeks (because the gospel is for *all* who believe), it would also have undermined any possible Greek assumption of cultural superiority (because the gospel is for the Jew *first*). Esler concludes that Paul’s juxtaposition of “Jew” with “Greek” is designed to highlight a particular instance of a more general problem which he is aiming to solve: ethnic conflict.

We may accept that *one* effect of Rom 1:14–16 is to undermine the Greek assumption of cultural superiority. However, this explanation alone is not sufficient to understand Paul’s rhetorical strategy at this point. Both here and elsewhere, Paul uses the “Jew”-“Greek” distinction to recall the conservative *Jewish* assumption of a bipartite division of *all* humanity into Jews and others. Many times, Paul speaks of “Jews” and “Greeks” as together comprising “all” (πᾶς) humanity: “all” who believe (Rom 1:16), “all” do evil (Rom 2:9), “all” who do good (Rom 2:10), “all” who are under sin (Rom 3:9), “all” who are saved by calling on the Lord (Rom 10:12), “all” who are baptized into the one body (1 Cor 12:13), and “all” who are in Christ Jesus (Gal 3:28; also Col 3:11). Furthermore, in 1 Cor 1:22–24, Ἑλληνας is used synonymously with ἔθνος.⁵⁰ Paul, then, does not customarily use the term “Greek” simply to identify a particular ethnic group with an elitist attitude, but rather he uses it to refer to a more theologically significant ethnic category: “Gentile.”

Paul’s usage of “Greek” as a synonym for “Gentile” can be explained by Paul’s particular historical situation. Many of the natives of the Eastern Roman Empire became “Hellenised” through education and culture.⁵¹ Paul’s own mission moved mainly among these “Ἕλληνας in Asia Minor, Macedonia, Illyria, and ancient Hellas”,⁵² so it would have been quite natural for Paul to speak in terms of the two most common recipients of his gospel: Jew and Greek. Furthermore, as Peter Lampe’s study suggests, the early Roman Christ-believing community itself

⁵⁰ Acts also uses a formula that assumes a bipartite division of humanity into “Jews” and “Greeks” amongst the people of Iconium (14:1), Corinth (18:4), Asia (19:10) and Ephesus (19:17, cf. 20:21).

⁵¹ Stanley 1996, 114.

⁵² Windisch 1964, 513.

consisted primarily of Greek-speaking immigrants, with few indigenous Romans.⁵³ Paul never addresses his readers as “Romans” (Ῥωμαῖοι) but rather refers to them as people “in Rome” (ἐν Ῥώμῃ; Rom 1:7, 15).⁵⁴ Paul, with good reason, envisages that his addressees will comprise mainly ethnic Jews and ethnic Greeks, and so he continues with his normal use of the term “Greek” to mean “non-Jew.” Hence Paul’s use of the term “Greek” alongside “Jew” is not primarily referring to a particular ethnic conflict, but is reflecting a conservative Jewish bipartite division of humanity into Jews and non-Jews. As we have already seen, Paul’s understanding of the world to which his gospel comes is one in which there are two fundamentally distinct categories of people: ethnic Jews, and others. Sometimes he designates these “others” as ἔθνη; at other times, for reasons explicable by the situational and rhetorical context, he calls them Ἕλληνες.

Like many of his Jewish contemporaries, then, Paul views Jews as members of a special and distinct ethnic group. For Paul, Jewish ethnicity is not simply one kind of ethnicity among others, but an ethnicity distinct from all others. We have seen that in Rom 1:16, Paul asserts that this distinctiveness has an ongoing theological significance in light of the gospel. We now turn to explore the precise nature of that theological significance.

2.2. Jewish identity and divine revelation

In the previous section, we established that Paul believes Jewish identity to be theologically significant. This significance, however, is not directly *soteriological*, since the distinction exists both outside and within the sphere of salvation. As we will now argue, for Paul, the theological significance of Jewish identity arises from the conviction that Israel’s Scriptures, and the Law of Moses in particular, are a special gift of divine *revelation* to Israel.

⁵³ Lampe 2003, 143–146. Frank (1916) had earlier demonstrated the predominance of non-indigenous people among the general population in Rome.

⁵⁴ This is unlike any of Paul’s other letters addressed to people personally known to him: i.e. he refers to Γαλάται (Gal 3:1), Κορίνθιοι (2 Cor 6:11), Θεσσαλονικεῖς (1 Thess 1:1, 2 Thess 1:1) and Φιλιππησίοι (Phil 4:15), but never to Ῥωμαῖοι.

2.2.1. Jewish identity and the Law of Moses

For Paul, Jewish identity is connected strongly with—indeed, it is generated by—a particular text: the Law of Moses. Jews, for Paul, are people who engage in the communal practice of reading and hearing the Law of Moses. In 2 Cor 3:15, Paul speaks of “Moses” being “read” (verb ἀναγινώσκειν) among the Jewish community. Moses was commonly understood to be the Law’s human author, its chief human character, and the prime exemplar of a life lived according to its virtues. He was also, consequently, a paradigm of Jewish identity.⁵⁵ The word ἀναγινώσκειν in 2 Cor 3:15 carries with it a significant communal dimension, since it refers to the public reading of the Law in the synagogue.⁵⁶ For Paul, the Law is not simply a disembodied religious principle, but is rather a text which is “read” and which “speaks” in a communal context (cf. Rom 3:19, 10:19).⁵⁷ Thus Jews can be described as “hearers of the Law” (ἀκροατὰὶ νόμου; Rom 2:13) and as those who “have” (verb ἔχω) God’s truth in the Law (Rom 2:20; cf. 2:27), as opposed to Gentiles (ἔθνη) outside the Jewish community, “those who by nature do not have the Law” (τὰ μὴ νόμον ἔχοντα φύσει; Rom 2:14),⁵⁸ and are thus “without Law” (ἄνομος / ἀνόμως; Rom 2:12, 1 Cor 9:21).⁵⁹

Paul, moreover, regards the Law not simply as a human text which is frequently read *in* the Jewish community, but as a divine revelation given *to* the Jewish community. Although Paul believes that this divine revelation is available to Gentiles through his own ministry (e.g. 1 Cor 9:8–9), he believes that God gave it initially and primarily to Israel (Rom 2:17–18, 3:1–2, 9:4) in order to achieve his purposes through Israel (Gal

⁵⁵ E.g. Josephus, *A.J.* 1.18; Philo, *Mos.* 1.1, 2.292; *Spec.* 1.345 (Barclay 1996, 426–428). See, for example, the frequent references to Moses as the key Jewish figure in Philo, *De vita Mosis*.

⁵⁶ Cf. Acts 15:21, which specifies the synagogue as the location for Moses being “read” (verb ἀναγινώσκειν). For other places where the communal dimension of the word ἀναγινώσκειν is at the fore, see, e.g., Exod 24:7; Deut 31:11; Neh 13:1; cf. Josephus, *A.J.* 11.154.

⁵⁷ Cf. Watson 2004, 2.

⁵⁸ The word φύσει qualifies the identity, rather than the behaviour, of the Gentiles (Gathercole 2002a, 36); cf. the use of the word φύσει in Galatians 2:15; Rom. 2.27; 11.21, 24; Gal. 4.8 and Eph. 2.3.

⁵⁹ For a similar usage of the word ἀνόμως, see Josephus, *C. Ap.* 2.151. Josephus claims that those who desire order and common laws tend to be more cultured and virtuous than those who live ἀνόμως—i.e., without possessing the Law. Although Josephus believes that a state of being ἀνόμως *implies* a degree of wickedness, he does not believe that the word ἀνόμως itself *means* “wicked”—for if it did, his claim would be bizarrely tautological. *Pace* Stowers (1994, 137), who claims that the word ἀνόμως *always* means “lawless,” i.e. “wicked,” but does not refer to Josephus.

3:19–24, 4:4–5). Jewish identity, therefore, is closely associated with the divine *revelation* of the Law.⁶⁰ As we will see in chapter 4, Paul continues to insist on the divine origin of Israel’s Law,⁶¹ even though he denies the assumption that Israel’s possession of this divine revelation will lead to her salvation in any straightforward manner.⁶²

The fundamental importance of the Law for Paul’s understanding of Jewish identity is particularly apparent in one of his characteristic idioms: the use of the term νόμος in social formulations. A number of times, Paul employs a construction consisting of the masculine article or equivalent, a modifier or modifiers (often including a preposition), and the word νόμος.⁶³ In each of these instances, Paul is highlighting Jewish identity in its relationship to the Law. Jews, for Paul, are “Law-people.”

At times, especially in Romans, Paul uses this kind of social formula in a way that may be described as soteriologically neutral. In Rom 2:12, Paul speaks of two types of sinners: “those who sin without Law” (ὅσοι ... ἀνόμως ἥμαρτον), and “those who sin in Law” (ὅσοι ἐν νόμῳ ἥμαρτον); both types will be judged fairly, according to the different circumstances in which they sin. In the next verse, Paul maintains that “the hearers of the Law” (οἱ ἀκροαταὶ νόμου) are not righteous before God (Rom 2:13). Paul is not, of course, claiming here that hearing the Law automatically *disqualifies* a person from being righteous; rather, he is claiming that the set of Law-hearers (i.e. Jews, cf. 2:9–10) is not strictly coterminous with the set of righteous people. The same applies to Paul’s formulation in Rom 4:14: “those from Law” (οἱ ἐκ νόμου). Paul argues here that if “those from Law” are “heirs,” then “faith” and the “promise” would be invalid. Paul cannot be arguing that *no* member of the group of people ἐκ νόμου can inherit the promise, since shortly afterwards he claims that the “promise” is valid “for the one from the Law” (τῷ ἐκ τοῦ νόμου), among others (Rom 4:16).⁶⁴ The point Paul is making in Rom 4:14, then, must be similar to the one he has already made in Rom 2:13. Paul is claiming that the Jew-Gentile distinction does

⁶⁰ Cf. van Unnik (1993): “Der Juden Vorzug war ihr Gesetz.” (159)

⁶¹ Ch. 4, pp. 147–149.

⁶² E.g. Rom 2:12–13, 7:9–10.

⁶³ For other Pauline uses of the article + ἐκ + modifier as a social designator see Rom 9:6; 16:10, 11.

⁶⁴ So “Law” here is used in a “neutral rather than a pejorative sense” (Campbell 2006, 127).

not correspond to the saved-unsaved distinction; i.e. that the group of people ἐκ (τοῦ) νόμου—i.e. Jews—is not strictly coterminous with the group of people who are saved—i.e. heirs of the promise.⁶⁵ A similar social formula is found in Rom 3:19. Paul states here that the Law “speaks” (λαλεῖ) specifically “to those in the Law” (τοῖς ἐν τῷ νόμῳ), but that the purpose of this particular speech is that *every* mouth should be closed and the whole world held accountable to God. Hence those social formulations which occur in Romans, and which employ the prepositions ἐν or ἐκ with νόμος, are in themselves soteriologically neutral. That is, for Paul, being ἐν νόμῳ or ἐκ νόμου has some significance, but does not in itself determine a person’s standing in relation to divine judgment or salvation.

However, in Galatians and 1 Corinthians, Paul uses another preposition with νόμος: “under” (ὑπό). This preposition, in contrast to ἐν and ἐκ, *does* imply a negative soteriological evaluation, because it is used to refer to a group of people who are in need of a salvation which they do not currently possess. In Gal 4:5, οἱ ὑπὸ νόμον are a group of people in need of redemption by Christ. In Gal 4:21, the Galatians are “those who wish to be under Law” (οἱ ὑπὸ νόμον θέλοντες εἶναι), but Paul claims that this will result in slavery rather than freedom. In 1 Cor 9:20, οἱ ὑπὸ νόμον are a particular group of people who need to be “won” through Paul’s strategy.⁶⁶

Furthermore, when Paul includes the words “doing” (ποιεῖν), “works” (ἔργα) or “righteousness” / “justification” (δικαι-) when speaking of the “Law,” both in Romans and in Galatians, he is also making a negative soteriological evaluation. Although a person “from the Law” (ἐκ τοῦ νόμου) can receive the blessing of Abraham through faith (Rom 4:16), those who are “from works of Law” (ἐξ ἔργων νόμου) are under a curse (Gal 3:10). Paul’s overarching antithesis, then, is not between faith and Law, but between faith and works of Law / *doing* the Law. The Law itself—i.e. the text—if read correctly, is commensurate with faith (e.g. Rom

⁶⁵ Our understanding of the phrase eliminates the apparent inconsistencies in Paul’s argument which arise from regarding Rom 4:14 as a reference to “unbelieving Jews” (so Jewett 2007, 330–331).

⁶⁶ Rudolph (2011, 153–159, 194–202) argues that the phrase “under the Law” in 1 Cor 9:20 refers only to those Jews who live “according to Pharisaic or particularly strict standards of Torah observance as a consistent lifestyle” (159). This may well be true; nevertheless, we must bear in mind that Paul himself seems to regard this “Pharisaic” view as mainstream and consistently opposes it (e.g. Phil 3:5).

3:27, 31; Gal 3:21–24). In fact, the Law itself is holy, righteous and good (Rom 7:12).⁶⁷ It is only when the *practice* of the Law’s prescriptions is foregrounded, especially in relationship to *righteousness* or *justification*, that condemnation is in view (e.g. Rom 3:20, 9:31 [cf. 9:22], 10:5 [cf. 10:1]; Gal 2:16, 21; 3:10, 12; 5:3; Phil 3:6, 9).⁶⁸

Paul, in other words, does not believe that being Jewish—and thus having one’s identity defined by νόμος—*necessarily* implies either a positive or a negative soteriological status. Paul *does*, however, believe that those who are “under” (ὑπό) the Law, or who read the Law as a text that primarily requires “works” relating to “righteousness” or “justification” are soteriologically imperilled.

Although Paul’s argumentation concerning the Law and Jewish identity is in many ways quite radical, his basic stance—that Jewish identity is defined through communal engagement with Israel’s divinely-given Scriptures, and pre-eminently with the Law of Moses⁶⁹—is quite consistent with his Jewish context.⁷⁰ The Torah was widely regarded as a unique divine revelation which was a special possession of Jews.⁷¹ One of the most important defining features of Jewish identity across the entire Diaspora was the weekly gathering at the synagogue on the Sabbath to hear the Law. The synagogue was a centre for Jewish communal identity, playing host to a range of activities such as communal meals, forensic discipline, hospitality for travellers, distribution of welfare, and education of children in basic literacy.⁷² The most significant identity-generating activity in the synagogue, however, was the Torah-reading ceremony, which was usually accompanied by a didactic activity such

⁶⁷ For Paul’s reading of the Law in Rom 7 see ch. 4, p. 188.

⁶⁸ Watson 2007b, 17.

⁶⁹ Chapman (2000, 248–276) claims that “evidence for the historical and theological *pre-eminence* of the Torah (*qua* Pentateuch) in the pre-rabbinic period” is “lacking” (276). Although Chapman demonstrates convincingly that the Prophets often had *some* form of authoritative status alongside the Torah in the Pre-Rabbinic period, many of the examples he cites (e.g. from Philo) do in fact demonstrate a relatively strong hermeneutical pre-eminence for the Torah among the other authoritative Scriptures (cf. Kamesar 2009, 72). Indeed, Paul himself refers to (and qualifies) such a view of the Torah’s pre-eminence in his dialectical presentation of the role of the “Law” and the “Law and the Prophets” in Rom 3:19–21. For Paul, “the Law” is authoritative, but it must be read through the Prophets as a witness to the gospel (Watson 2004, 71–77).

⁷⁰ Cf. Watson 2004, 5.

⁷¹ E.g. Philo, *Mos.* 2.12; *Legat.* 115; Josephus, *A.J.* 17.159; *Sir* 24:23; *Bar* 4:1–5; *1 Es* 8:3; *Ep. Arist.* 313.

⁷² Levine 1999, 124–159.

as a sermon or word of exhortation or a time of communal study.⁷³ Philo, for example, sees the weekly synagogue gathering as the place where Jews publicly “are instructed [verb παιδεύειν] in their hereditary philosophy” (*Legat.* 156, cf. 157, 312–13). He describes the Jewish habit of sitting down in the synagogues and devoting much time to reading (verb ἀναγινώσκειν) the sacred books, unfolding what is not clear, and discussing this hereditary philosophy (*Somn.* 2.127).⁷⁴ Josephus claims that the frequency and regularity of instruction in the Law is far greater than that of other nations:

He [i.e. Moses] left no pretext for ignorance, but instituted the law as the finest and most essential teaching-material; so that it would be heard not just once or twice or a number of times, he ordered that every seven days they should abandon their other activities and gather to hear the law, and to learn it thoroughly and in detail. That is something that all [other] legislators seem to have neglected. (Josephus, *C. Ap.* 2.175 [Barclay, 2007])⁷⁵

Although the portrait Josephus paints is clearly idealistic, it is nevertheless a significant expression of the importance of communal engagement with the Law for Jewish identity. These references, along with other descriptions of Sabbath instruction in the New Testament,⁷⁶ reinforce “the ubiquity of this custom and its importance in Jewish social life.”⁷⁷ Thus, although there was a large variety of views on the theological *meaning* and *significance* of the Law, the *activity* of reading and interpreting the Law (and the Scriptures more generally) as a divine revelation was a widespread identity-generating activity for Diaspora Jews.

Paul, then, is both Jewish and radical in his view of the relationship between the Law and Jewish identity. On the one hand, Paul agrees with the mainstream Jewish community’s view that the Law is constitutive for Jewish identity. He describes Jews

⁷³ Levine 1999, 354, cf. 134–142; Schiffman 1999b, 46–48. Levine believes that the Torah-reading ceremony was the sole liturgical activity during the second-temple period.

⁷⁴ Cf. also *Hypoth.* 7.11–14, *Mos* 2.216, *Spec.* 2.62–63, *Prob.* 81–82. For more on the nature and significance of scriptural interpretation for Philo’s Jewish identity, see Niehoff 2001, 187–209.

⁷⁵ Cf. *A.J.* 16.43.

⁷⁶ E.g. Acts 13:13–15, 13:42, 15:21, 17:2, 18:4; cf. Mark 1:21–22, Luke 4:16–27.

⁷⁷ Barclay 1996, 417; cf. van Unnik (1993), who concludes that Philo, Josephus, and indeed all the Hellenistic Jewish literature at our disposal are “getragen von dem Gedanken, daß die jüdischen Gesetze, wie sie durch Moses gegeben sind, die besten und allein wahren seien” (159). See further Barclay 1996, 416–417, 424–426; Fisk 2008, 178; Gamble 1995, 191–192, 209; Neusner 1987, xi–xii; Sanders 1992, 236. Lim (1997, 113–114) and Lange (2006, 191) discuss the centrality of scriptural reading and interpretation at Qumran (e.g. 1QS VI 6–13; text in Parry and Tov 2004–2005, 1.24–27) and among other groups. See also Juvenal (*Sat.* 14.96–106) who implies that the detailed study of the Jewish Law is linked with Sabbath observance (Stern 1974–1984, 2.102–103).

as “in Law” (ἐν νόμῳ) or “from Law” (ἐκ νόμου). On the other hand, Paul strongly disagrees with the mainstream Jewish community over the *manner* in which the Law is constitutive for Jewish identity.⁷⁸ The mainstream Jewish community, according to Paul, treats the Law as a master whom they are placed “under” (ὑπό; cf. the verb κυριεύειν in Rom 7:1), or as a definition of a certain kind of praxis relating to “righteousness” and “justification.” Paul is adamant that this view of the Law leads to condemnation rather than blessing.

In light of these observations, Paul’s own self-description in 1 Cor 9:20–21 is also interesting. Paul claims that he is neither ὑπὸ νόμον (1 Cor 9:20)—i.e. reading the Law in terms of his understanding of mainstream Jewish identity—nor ἄνομος θεοῦ (1 Cor 9:21, cf. Rom 2:12)—i.e. Gentile—but rather ἔννομος Χριστοῦ (1 Cor 9:21). Paul, in describing his own missionary strategy, seems here to be claiming a kind of Jewish identity defined by Christ, an identity which is not the same as that of the mainstream Jewish community. This is suggestive of our overall thesis—that Paul believes his apostolic ministry to be informed by a contested and redefined view of Jewish identity.

2.2.2. “Israelites” and divine revelation

The importance of divine revelation for Paul’s understanding of Jewish identity can also be seen in his use of the term “Israel[ites].”⁷⁹ For Paul, the terms “Jew” and “Israel[ite]” both refer to the same group of people.⁸⁰ The term “Jew,” however, was a contemporary designation for the Jewish ethnic group, whereas “Israel[ite]” was a fundamentally scriptural term.⁸¹ Hence, as we shall argue here, whenever Paul uses the terms “Israel” or “Israelite,” he is signalling to his readers that his discussion of

⁷⁸ “Paul’s question about his kindred according to the flesh is not whether they should keep Torah [...] Rather, it is the question of *what they hope to receive* by hearing and keeping it” (Harink 2007, 378, emphasis original).

⁷⁹ The term Ἰσραηλίτης simply means “member of Israel” (e.g. Lev 24:10; Num 25:8, 14; cf. approx. 200 times in Josephus).

⁸⁰ Pace Roetzel (2006), who proposes that Paul understands “Jews” as a *subset* of “Israel,” following a suggestion made by Boyarin (2002) in relation to John’s Gospel. Roetzel’s schema cannot explain Paul’s use of the term “Jew” to refer to the bipartite division of “all” humanity into two groups—Jew and Gentile/Greek (see p. 51, and cf. Gadenz 2009, 75).

⁸¹ In the Pentateuch, Ἰουδαῖος does not appear at all, but Ἰσραήλ / Ἰσραηλίτης together occur 599 times.

Jewish ethnic identity at that point should be understood in terms of the *scriptural* witness to Israel's special place in God's purposes. Moreover, we shall see that in a number of places in Paul's letters, the term "Israelite" is intended to evoke a special connection with divine revelation.

A common explanation for the difference between these two designations is that in Paul's Jewish context, "Jew" is an "outsider" designation (i.e. used by non-Jews to refer to Jews, or by Jews when speaking to non-Jews about themselves), whereas "Israel" is an "insider" designation (i.e. used by Jews to refer to themselves when communicating with fellow Jews).⁸² This schema does indeed fit much of the evidence.⁸³ Nevertheless, there are exceptions which continue to puzzle proponents of the "insider" / "outsider" schema.⁸⁴ Attempts have been made to account for some of these exceptions,⁸⁵ but other exceptions remain unexplained.⁸⁶ Thus, although the "insider" / "outsider" schema has some explanatory power, it does not by itself account for all of the evidence.⁸⁷ This suggests that the "insider" / "outsider" schema is not the most basic explanation for the difference between the usage of the terms "Jew" and "Israel." Our own, alternative, proposal is this: the term "Jew" is the general, default term for the Jewish ethnic group, whereas "Israel" is a more specialized term, used when an author wishes particularly to highlight the Jewish Scriptures as the conceptual field for a discussion of Jewish identity. The use of "Jew" or "Israel" in any given context, then, is not ultimately a matter of who is talking to

⁸² Kuhn 1965, 359–360.

⁸³ Tomson 1986.

⁸⁴ The Hasmonean state, for example, referred to *itself* as the "nation of the Jews," even though the later revolutionary Jewish states (probably the state of 66–70, and certainly the state of 132–135) chose to name themselves "Israel" (Goodblatt 1998).

⁸⁵ E.g. Tomson (1986) argues that the Hasmoneans calling themselves "Jews" can be explained by the fact that "the Hasmonean leadership saw itself from a non-Jewish perspective even in official internal communications" (130). Conversely, Tomson (1986) explains Paul's use of "Israel" (e.g. Rom 11:25) when addressing non-Jews (cf. Rom 11:13) by positing that the non-Jews "should see themselves from the inner-Jewish perspective" (285).

⁸⁶ E.g. Williams (1997, 254) cites a number of inscriptions where people are described as both "Jews" and "Israelites"; and other funerary inscriptions where people are lauded as "good Jews".

⁸⁷ See further Miller 2010, 101–109.

whom; rather it is a matter of how much the author wishes to highlight the Scriptures in his or her discussion of Jewish identity at that point in the discussion.⁸⁸

This schema not only can account for the fact that the “Israel” / “Jew” distinction corresponds roughly with an “insider” / “outsider” distinction; it can also explain why the correspondence is not absolute. On the one hand, the widely-understood ethnic designation “Jew” is a natural expression for “outsiders” to use; and the more specific scripturally-loaded term “Israel” is a natural expression for “insiders” to use, especially in inner-Jewish discussions based on the Scriptures (e.g. prayers, biblical and liturgical phrases).⁸⁹ On the other hand, there is no reason to assume that Jewish “insiders” could not use “Jew” as a default term to refer to themselves; conversely there are sometimes good reasons for Jews to use the term “Israel” when communicating with non-Jewish “outsiders,” especially when they are seeking to explain the content and significance of their Scriptures to these outsiders. Josephus, for example, uses Ἰσραηλίτης about 200 times in the *Antiquities* even though he is writing for the benefit of “Greeks” (*A.J.* 1.5, 8), since he is deliberately recounting the scripturally-based history of the Jews. Josephus does not, however, use “Israel” at all in the *War*, since here he is describing the recent history and present experience of Jews.

Paul’s own usage also reflects this schema. Paul sometimes uses the term “Israel” because it occurs in a scriptural text he is in the process of interpreting (e.g. 1 Cor 10:18; 2 Cor 3:7, 13). He also uses “Israel” to recall the special divine privileges which the Scriptures assign to the Jewish nation in particular (Phil 3:5, Gal 6:16; cf. Eph 2:12).⁹⁰ In other places, moreover, Paul uses the term “Israelite” to imply a

⁸⁸ Philo, for example, uses Ἰουδαῖος frequently (e.g. *Legat.* 1.115ff), but tends to reserve Ἰσραήλ for direct scriptural quotations (e.g. *Ebr.* 1.77), or when referring to the ideal of “seeing God,” which he derives from the meaning of the term in the Hebrew Scriptures (e.g. *Abr.* 1.57; *Legat.* 1.4; *Praem.* 1.44; *Somn.* 2.173) (Harvey 2001, 223; Umemoto 1994, 36–37).

⁸⁹ Tomson 1986, 126.

⁹⁰ The phrase “Israel of God” in Gal 6:16 is often held to be a reference to the church as a whole (e.g. Martyn 1997, 574–577; Sanders 1983, 173–176; Zoccali 2010, 71–89). However, the phrase may be read quite coherently as a reference to Jewish people. Susan Eastman (2010), for example, argues that in Gal 6:15–16 Paul is pronouncing two distinct blessings on two different groups: he extends “peace” to all Christ-believers who live according to his “new creation” standard, and also prays for “mercy” on those presently unbelieving Jews for whom he holds out some future hope (cf. Gal 2:9, Rom 11:31–32).

Robinson (2008, 145–147), on the other hand, suggests that Gal 6:15–16 is a single unit in which Paul is providing his Gentile congregations with a concise formula by which they may evaluate the

special and ongoing theological significance for the Jewish ethnic group. “Israelites,” for Paul, are privileged recipients of divine revelation (2 Cor 11:22; Rom 9:4, 11:1).

In 2 Cor 11:22, both Paul and his opponents claim the title “Israelite” as part of their strategy to bolster their apostolic credentials. The key issue at this point in Paul’s argument is *access to divine revelation*. Paul is claiming, against his opponents, the right to be regarded as an authorized divine spokesperson to the Corinthian church (cf. e.g. 2 Cor 11:4). Like his opponents, Paul uses the term *διάκονος* (2 Cor 11:23) to portray himself as a “divine emissary” to the Gentile Corinthians.⁹¹ A parallel to this use of *διάκονος* may be found in Josephus, who uses the word to describe his own role as a Jewish “priest” with access to the “sacred books,” conveying solemn divine revelation (the “voice of God”) to the Roman emperor (*B.J.* 3.352–354, 4.626).⁹² Paul’s opponents in 2 Corinthians were presumably using the term *διάκονος* in this exalted sense to portray themselves as divine Jewish emissaries to the Gentile Corinthians (cf. 2 Cor 11:15).⁹³ Although Paul, by using the genitive modifier *Χριστοῦ*, ironically introduces notions of suffering and weakness into the concept of

legitimacy of Jewish teachers: Jewish teachers who do not demand circumcision as essential to salvation are “genuine” Israelites and should be welcomed. The advantage of this interpretation is that it proceeds from the concerns of the letter itself; indeed, it deals directly with the issues that are in the foreground of the immediate context, where Paul is deliberately contrasting his own vocation with that of rival Jewish teachers (Gal 6:11–18).

To this we may add our own, further, observation: the term *κανών* (Gal 6:16) is used by Josephus to refer to a Jewish rule of association (*C. Ap.* 2.174). Since it is likely that there was a variety of Torah-informed rules of association amongst different groups of Jews in Paul’s time (Rudolph 2011, 115–147; cf. Zetterholm 2010, 251), the *κανών* of Gal 6:16 may be understood as a particular rule of association to which any purported Jewish teachers must conform if they wish to have a hearing amongst the Galatians. Paul is thus suggesting that the Galatians should evaluate the present agitators, as well as any future Jewish teachers who happen to arrive, by their practices in table-fellowship. Those Jewish preachers who, like Paul, recognize the eschatological nature of the cross of Christ, and consequently do not withdraw from Gentiles or require Gentiles to be circumcised in order to have table-fellowship with them (Gal 6:12–13), should be welcomed and greeted with blessings of “peace” and “mercy” (cf. e.g. Sir 50:20–24) and treated as the “Israel of God.” Conversely, those Jewish preachers who, like Paul’s opponents, withdraw from table-fellowship with Gentiles (cf. Gal 2:12), and insist on Gentile circumcision as a condition for such fellowship (Gal 6:12–13) should be rejected by the Galatians, and even “cursed” (Gal 1:8–9).

⁹¹ The general meaning of term *διάκονος* is “go-between” (Collins 1990, 77–95). Although the term is sometimes used of table-waiters—and thus may be used metaphorically to imply menial service (e.g. Matt 20:25–28, cf. Luke 22:27)—it can also be used of messengers, particularly of exalted divine emissaries (for numerous examples see Collins 1990, 96–132). In this case, the sense of “divine emissary” is clearly intended.

⁹² Collins 1990, 111–115.

⁹³ *Pace* Niebuhr 1992, 120.

the divine emissary (2 Cor 11:23–31),⁹⁴ he is still clearly portraying himself as an agent of divine revelation. Paul’s use of the term Ἰσραηλίτης (2 Cor 11:22) in parallel with the term διάκονος (2 Cor 11:23), then, is part of this strategy. Both Paul and his opponents wish to be known by the Corinthians as “Israelites”—i.e. people with special access to divine revelation, who deserve the attention and allegiance of the Gentile Corinthian church.

While Paul’s use of the term “Israelite” in 2 Cor 11:22 is to some extent a reaction to the usage of others, his twofold use of the term in Rom 9–11 (Rom 9:4, 11:1) is central to his own argument, as we shall see in chapter 5.⁹⁵ There, Paul speaks of his fellow Jews as “Israelites” because they have been given the Law by God (Rom 9:4). He also speaks of himself as an “Israelite” (Rom 11:1), in a context in which he is particularly concerned with his own seemingly paradoxical apostolic διακονία to Gentiles (Rom 11:13).

Thus Paul’s use of the term “Israel” and “Israelite” shows that he believes that a key element of Jewish identity is access to divine revelation. By using the term “Israel,” Paul evokes the scriptural witness to Israel’s special place in God’s purposes. By using the term “Israelite” to refer to himself, he claims the right to dispense divine revelation to his Gentile recipients.

2.2.3. “Hebrews” and divine revelation

The term “Hebrew” (Ἑβραῖος), which Paul and his opponents both use alongside “Israelite” (Ἰσραηλίτης) to bolster their apostolic credentials (2 Cor 11:22), also suggests proximity to divine revelation.⁹⁶ The word is a “studied archaism”⁹⁷ which indicates a conservative stance and implies a close connection with the divinely given traditions associated with the Jewish homeland.⁹⁸ Paul’s self-description as a

⁹⁴ Paul derives these notions, not from the term διάκονος, but from the term Χριστός—i.e. Paul’s message itself concerns the humility and sufferings of Christ (cf. 2 Cor 4:11–12, 10:1, 12:9–10). Thus Paul’s own humility and sufferings make him a *better* emissary of Christ than his rivals.

⁹⁵ For Rom 9:4, see pp. 203–205. For Rom 11:1, see pp. 229–237.

⁹⁶ Cf. Phil 3:5, although there Paul’s overall purpose is different (Dunn 1999, 186).

⁹⁷ Dunn 1999, 186.

⁹⁸ E.g. Jdt 10:12, 2 Macc 7:30–31; Josephus, *B.J.* 1.3 (textually uncertain) (Gadenz 2009, 71; Harvey 2001, 104–147; Tomson 1986, 128). The connection of “Hebrew” with “Abraham” is especially prominent in Josephus (e.g. *A.J.* 1.148, 2.229, 2.269, 5.97, 14.255).

“Hebrew,” then, is consistent with Luke’s account of Paul’s education in the “Law” in Jerusalem itself (Acts 22:3, 26:4, 23:6).⁹⁹

The term “Hebrew” probably also suggests at least a basic knowledge of the Hebrew language.¹⁰⁰ For some Jewish authors, linguistic competence was a definite aid to divine knowledge. Although the Scriptures were available to the Greek-speaking world through the Septuagint, there was still a strong consciousness of the significance of their Hebrew origin (e.g. *Ep. Arist.* 3, 30, 38). The author of the Prologue to Ben Sira believes that knowledge of the Hebrew language was an advantage for his grandfather’s ability to teach the divine wisdom which is contained in “the Law, the Prophets and the other books,” since the Greek translation alone cannot convey all its nuances (Sir. Prol. 1:22–26, cf. Sir 1:1).¹⁰¹ Josephus, too, describes how Izates, after his conversion, sent five of his sons to Jerusalem to learn accurately both the “language” (γλῶσσα) and “instruction” (παιδεία) of the Jewish nation (*A.J.* 20.71).¹⁰² Given Paul’s own witness to his pharisaic background (Phil 3:5), it is likely that Paul could read biblical texts in Hebrew.¹⁰³ The apostolic claim to be a “Hebrew” probably also implies a connection with Jesus himself, whose own origins were in Palestine and whom Luke describes as revealing himself to Paul in the “Hebrew” (probably Aramaic) dialect (Acts 26:14).¹⁰⁴

Paul’s use of the term “Law” in social formulations, his reference to “Israel” and “Israelites” as scripturally significant terms, and his self-description as a “Hebrew,” therefore, all demonstrate that he understood access to divine revelation to be a significant element of Jewish identity.

⁹⁹ Hengel 1991, 18–39; cf. Niebuhr 1992, 105–108, 130.

¹⁰⁰ Hengel 1991, 25, 117–118 n. 146; cf. Niebuhr 1992, 107.

¹⁰¹ See Lim 1997, 163–164. This is in contrast to Philo’s insistence that the LXX translation was miraculously and literally accurate (*Mos.* 2.38–40). Even this insistence, however, presupposes to some extent the primacy of the original revelation to Moses.

¹⁰² Hengel 1991, 29–30.

¹⁰³ Lim 1997, 162–163.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Papias, who sees a special significance in the Gospel of Matthew sayings having been written in “Hebrew” (Maier 1999, 114).

2.3. Jewish identity and divine vocation

We have seen that Paul views Jews as a distinct ethnic group whose special theological significance arises from their access to divine revelation. We will now see that Paul also expresses a strong conviction that the possession of divine revelation provides Jews with a divine vocation—i.e. a special role or task within God’s wider purposes. We will see that a sense of divine vocation may also be seen amongst Paul’s Jewish contemporaries. Thus, although Paul’s particular understanding of Israel’s vocation takes a radical form, the sense of a divine vocation is nevertheless a recognizably Jewish concept.¹⁰⁵

In modern discussions, the idea that a certain ethnic group has a special distinctiveness from others and/or a special task in relation to the world is often loaded with negative value-judgments and assigned overwhelmingly negative designations such as “nationalism” and “ethnocentrism.”¹⁰⁶ Wright, for example, argues that Paul viewed Israel’s ethnic ideology as the primary “sin” or “idolatry” of his people since it was an “attempt to confine grace to one race.”¹⁰⁷ These negative value-judgments can make it difficult to assess Paul’s own view of Jewish distinctiveness and Jewish advantage from anything other than a disapproving stance. However, by using the term “vocation,” we are seeking to frame our discussion in such a way that we do not automatically imply a negative evaluation of Jewish distinctiveness. We are seeking to understand identity—ethnic identity in particular—not only in terms of negatively conceived “differences” from others, but also in terms of valued distinctions which lead to mutual acceptance and positive social interactions with others.¹⁰⁸

2.3.1. *The Law of Moses: A basis for Jewish vocation*

As we have already seen, Jewish identity for Paul is closely bound up with the Law of Moses, and the Scriptures more generally. Paul often speaks of the vital role of

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Cosgrove 2006, 289.

¹⁰⁶ Cosgrove (2006, 270–271) provides a brief description of this phenomenon.

¹⁰⁷ “Israel is now shown to be guilty of a kind of meta-sin, the attempt to confine grace to one race. The result of this idolatry of national privilege is that Israel clings on to the terrible destiny—of being the place where sin was concentrated” (Wright 1991, 240).

¹⁰⁸ Cf. e.g. Barth 1969, 10; Jenkins 2008, 16–27. On Jewish identity in this regard see Cohen 1999, 6. On Philo in particular see Leonhardt-Balzer 2007, 29; Umemoto 1994.

Israel's Law / Scriptures in the accomplishment of God's universal plans through Christ using the term "all" (πᾶς). The gospel of Jesus Christ, which was promised beforehand in the Scriptures (Rom 1:2; cf. 1 Cor 15:3–4), concerns the "seed" of Israel's king David (Rom 1:3) yet leads to the obedience of faith among "all the nations" (Rom 1:5; cf. 2 Tim 2:8). Christ came "from" the particular people who were given the Law but is also identified with "God over all, blessed forever" (Rom 9:4–5). Christ is the end [or goal] of Israel's Law for righteousness "to all who believe" (Rom 10:4; cf. Gal 4:4–7). Indeed, Israel's Scriptures have an ongoing significance for God's purposes in Christ, because they are for the "instruction" of the eschatological Christ-believing community (Rom 15:4; cf. 1 Cor 10:11) which includes "all" the Gentiles (Rom 15:11). Paul, then, in numerous places, contends that Israel's particular Scriptures are texts with a significant role in God's worldwide purposes through Christ. Since, as we have already seen, Paul views Jews as the "people of the Law," this suggests that Jewish identity itself has an important role in God's purposes through Christ.

In future chapters, we will demonstrate how Paul's Jewish contemporaries described their own possession and knowledge of the Scriptures as the basis for their teaching role to others, including Gentiles.¹⁰⁹ We will also see how Paul's radical redefinition of the significance of the Law in God's purposes is closely connected with his radical re-evaluation of the nature of Jewish vocation.¹¹⁰ For Paul, the vocation of Israel consisted primarily in proclaiming the gospel of Christ, as the fulfilment of the Law of Moses, to the world.

2.3.2. Abraham's fatherhood / seed: A paradigm for Jewish vocation

(a) In Paul's letters

Paul's use of the scriptural motif of Abraham's "fatherhood" and/or his "seed" (σπέρμα) is also often connected to the concept of Jewish vocation. Most interpreters tend to focus on the *soteriological* significance of this motif. The "seed of Abraham" is usually understood as a term which defines and delimits the people

¹⁰⁹ Ch. 4, pp. 149–157.

¹¹⁰ This will be a large part of our discussion in chs. 4 and 5.

who enjoy soteriological benefits.¹¹¹ While this understanding certainly fits some of Paul's uses of the motif of Abraham's fatherhood / seed,¹¹² it does not fit all of them. In a number of places, Paul uses the motif in a more exclusive, *vocational* sense.

As we will see in chapter 5, there is a strong vocational element in Paul's self-description as "seed of Abraham" in Rom 11:1.¹¹³ The vocational dimension of this motif is also evident in 2 Cor 11:22–23, where Paul uses the phrase "seed of Abraham" as the penultimate item in his list of apostolic credentials. Paul, like his opponents, claims to be a "Hebrew," "Israelite," "seed of Abraham," and, finally, an "emissary [διάκονος] of Christ." Although Paul clearly believes that his Gentile addressees are saved (e.g. 2 Cor 1:6), he does not suggest that they, too, are to understand themselves as the "seed of Abraham."

Romans 4:11b–12 is particularly interesting, since here Paul speaks explicitly of *two* different ways in which Abraham may be regarded as "Father," and uses a single, complex formulation to do so. According to this formulation, Abraham is *both* the "father of all who believe" (πατέρα πάντων τῶν πιστευόντων; Rom 4:11) and *also* the "father of circumcision" (πατέρα περιτομῆς; Rom 4:12).¹¹⁴ The former is an inclusive, universal, soteriological fatherhood: it is derived from concepts found in Gen 15,¹¹⁵ applies directly to the "uncircumcision," and leads to the "reckoning" of "righteousness" (cf. Rom 4:13, 18). The latter, however, is an exclusive, vocational fatherhood: the "circumcision" of Abraham and his physical descendants (cf. Gen 17) is not an end in itself, but has *further* benefits for those who are *not* circumcised. This connection between Abraham's circumcision and blessings for the uncircumcised is slightly obscured by many modern interpretations which delete the second dative plural article τοῖς in order to correct the grammar of the verse.¹¹⁶

¹¹¹ Even Niebuhr (1992), who is concerned directly with the Jewish dimension of Paul's apostolate, understands the phrase "seed of Abraham" in 2 Cor 11:22 (and by extension in Rom 11:1) only in terms of "die Teilhabe an den heilsgeschichtlichen Vorzügen des von Gott erwählten Volkes" and its "soteriologische Bedeutung." (131–132)

¹¹² E.g. Gal 3:29.

¹¹³ Ch. 5, p. 234.

¹¹⁴ See also Gadenz 2009, 82.

¹¹⁵ I.e. the "reckoning" (verb λογίζεσθαι) of "righteousness" (δικαιοσύνη) through "believing" (verb πιστεύειν) (Gen 15:6).

¹¹⁶ E.g. Cranfield 1975, 1.237.

However, if we preserve the τοῖς and understand it according to its common meaning as a dative of benefit / advantage,¹¹⁷ the verse becomes a coherent (albeit complex) claim that Abraham’s circumcision gives him a certain divine vocation. Abraham is:

the father of circumcision—

for the benefit of those (τοῖς),¹¹⁸ not of the circumcision only,

but also for the benefit of those (τοῖς) who walk in the footsteps of the faith of our Father Abraham that he had while uncircumcised. (Rom 4:12)

Abraham’s “fatherhood of circumcision,” then, is not a directly soteriological motif for Paul. Paul does not intend Gentile Christ-believers to emulate this particular aspect of Abraham’s identity in order to achieve soteriological blessings (cf. Rom 4:9–10). Rather, Paul believes that the circumcision of Abraham and his descendants “according to the flesh” (cf. Rom 4:1 with Gen 17:11) is a special obligation which was intended to achieve a further goal in God’s soteriological purposes. It is thus “vocational” in the broad sense we are outlining in this dissertation.

This soteriological / vocational duality in the motif of Abraham’s fatherhood / seed may also lie behind the complex argumentation of Galatians 3:6–29.¹¹⁹ Although the opening and concluding sections of this argument (Gal 3:6–9, 25–29) speak of Abraham’s fatherhood / seed in an inclusive, soteriological sense, using words and concepts from Gen 15,¹²⁰ Galatians 3:16 (cf. 3:19) speaks of Abraham’s “seed” in an exclusive, vocational sense, using words and concepts from Gen 17.¹²¹ Here, Paul

¹¹⁷ Wallace 1996, 142–144.

¹¹⁸ Admittedly, the first τοῖς precedes the οὐκ, and thus itself stands in a grammatically awkward position. This position, however, may be explained by Paul’s desire to emphasize the instrumental significance of Abraham’s circumcision by placing the dative article straight after the term “circumcision.”

¹¹⁹ Since space does not permit us to prove it in detail, the following interpretation of Gal 3:16 must remain a possibility.

¹²⁰ Genesis 15 is well suited to Paul’s purpose to promote “faith” over against “works of Law,” since it links the “seed” of Abraham (Gen 15:5, 18; cf. Gal 3:29) with “faith” (Gen 15:6; cf. Gal 3:6, 7, 8, 9, 25, 26), “inheritance” (Gen 15:3, 4, 7, 8; cf. Gal 3:29) and “righteousness” (Gen 15:6; cf. Gal 3:6, 8), but does not mention the Law or circumcision at all.

¹²¹ Although the phrase καὶ τῷ σπέρματί σου (Gal 3:16) also occurs elsewhere in the Genesis narrative (e.g. Gen 13:15), Paul is clearly thinking of Gen 17 at this point. The other key terms in Gal 3:15–17—πολλῶν and διαθήκη—as well as the idea of “circumcision” (cf. Gal 2:3, 12; 5:2–11; 6:12–15), are all prominent in Gen 17.

claims that Abraham’s “seed” should be identified only with a *single* figure—Christ—and *not* with “many” (πολλῶν). If, as seems quite likely, Paul is thinking primarily of Gen 17, then the term πολλῶν may be taken as a reference to the “multitude (πολλῶν) of nations” mentioned in Gen 17:5.¹²² Paul is, in other words, exploiting the singular / plural distinction inherent in his source text.¹²³ He is demonstrating that the particular obligations given to Abraham and the singular “seed” in Genesis 17—i.e. obedience and circumcision (e.g. Gen 17:8–10)—apply *only* to Christ, and *not* to the Gentiles.¹²⁴ Thus it is only Christ (the “son” born “under Law,” Gal 4:4) who has the divinely ordained vocation to be subject to the Law, a vocation which leads to a paradoxical blessing-producing “curse” (Gal 3:13–14, cf. 3:19).¹²⁵ While the nations *benefit* from this paradoxical vocation, they do not directly participate in it. The significance of this for Paul’s wider argument is clear: Gentiles in Galatia may receive the soteriological blessing of Abraham described in Gen 15, without directly participating in Abraham’s vocation of Law-keeping and circumcision described in Gen 17.

(b) In Paul’s Jewish context

Paul is not unique in ascribing a broadly vocational sense to the motif of Abraham’s fatherhood / seed. A vocational understanding of Abraham’s fatherhood / seed can also be seen in Israel’s Scriptures and in other Jewish writings.

The foundational Abraham narrative itself (Gen 12–22) is predicated on a fundamental duality in Abraham’s identity.¹²⁶ On the one hand, Abraham is the father of a single great nation who will receive land and blessings from God (Gen

¹²² Paul elsewhere cites Gen 17:5 explicitly (cf. Rom 4:17–18), which further increases the likelihood that he is alluding to Gen 17:5 in his use of the term πολλῶν in Gal 3:16.

¹²³ Watson (2004, 210–219) highlights this distinction, but does not use it in his discussion of Gal 3:16 (cf. 190–191).

¹²⁴ Paul, in this understanding, is not making a distinction between Christ and Israel (so Martyn 1991, 171–174), or between the “singularity” of one family of Abraham and the “plurality of families” which would result from the reading of the Torah by Paul’s opponents (so Wright 1991, 163–165; cf. Boyarin 1994, 145–147). Indeed, *pace* Wright, the Genesis narrative explicitly envisages a plurality of “families” (תַּיְהוֹדִים / φυλαί; Gen 12:3)—and Paul himself seems to be quite comfortable with a plurality of mission fields (Gal 2:7–9).

¹²⁵ For a further link between Gal 3:13–14 and the Abraham narrative (esp. the Aqedah incident), see Hahn (2005).

¹²⁶ See esp. Williamson (2000), who provides a sustained synchronic reading of Gen 12–22 which highlights the two related yet distinct covenants described in Gen 15 and 17.

12:1–2, 15:5, 15:18–21). On the other hand, Abraham, along with his “seed,” is to be the mediator of divine blessings to “all the families / nations of the earth” (Gen 12:3, 22:18)¹²⁷ and is the “father of a multitude of nations” (Gen 17:4). Abraham’s international “fatherhood” in this latter sense is not to be understood “in the sense of being their progenitor, but rather through his special status and the particular responsibilities that he will discharge on their behalf.”¹²⁸

There are a number of other scriptural texts which evoke Abraham’s “seed” in describing Israel’s role in God’s international purposes.¹²⁹ A particularly significant example is Isa 41:8, which names Israel as both “seed of Abraham” and God’s “Servant.”¹³⁰ This is the first time Israel is called God’s “Servant” in Isaiah 40–55.¹³¹ The “Servant” motif as developed throughout Isaiah 40–55 describes Israel or a representative Israelite as possessors of a divinely-given vocation oriented toward the nations (e.g. Isa 42:1).¹³² This motif is, as we shall see, very important for Paul’s own understanding of his apostolic ministry.¹³³ Indeed, it is likely that this Isaianic parallel between the “seed of Abraham” and the “Servant” informs Paul’s self-description as “seed of Abraham” in Rom 11:1.¹³⁴

In second-temple Jewish texts, the figure of Abraham has a wide-ranging significance. A common factor is the depiction of Abraham as a paradigm of monotheism, thus making him a prototype for Jewish identity.¹³⁵ In some texts, the

¹²⁷ Although terms נְבִרְכֵי / הַתְּבָרְכֵי in the MT of Gen 12:3 and 22:18 may be reflexive and so may not necessarily imply a divine intention to bless (Moberly 2009, 148–156; but cf. Lee 2012), Paul infers such an intention both from the parallel in Gen 17:5 (Rom 4:17) and also from the LXX’s passive ἐνευλογηθήσονται (Gal 3:8, cf. Sir 44:21) (Watson 2004, 184–185).

¹²⁸ Williamson 2000, 157–166 (here 166).

¹²⁹ E.g. Exod 32:12–13; Ps 105:6 (LXX 104:6), which names Israel as “seed of Abraham” while instructing Israel to proclaim God’s salvific deeds to all the nations (v. 1); 1 Chr 16:13–22 in light of 16:23–24, 28–34; Ps 72:17 (LXX 71:17) which describes the Messiah’s international role in Abrahamic terms; Isa 51:2–5; Isa 61:9, which describes priestly Israel as “seed blessed by God” (σπέρμα ηὐλογημένον ὑπὸ θεοῦ).

¹³⁰ Cf. Peter’s speech to Israel in Acts 3:25–26 which also links the ministry of the “Servant” with the pre-eminence of Israel and the vocational significance of the “seed of Abraham.”

¹³¹ The LXX reads παῖς; the other manuscripts including Aquila and Symmachus read δουλε (Ziegler 1939, 272).

¹³² Cf. Muthunayagam 2000, 41.

¹³³ See ch. 3, pp. 87–100.

¹³⁴ See p. 234.

¹³⁵ Calvert-Koyzis 2004.

“seed” motif does not imply any positive outcome for the nations. In *Jubilees*, for example, Abraham is seen as a model of *conversion* from idolatry to monotheism.¹³⁶ Consequently Abraham’s “seed” is urged to remain holy, separate from the idolatry and sin of all the other nations.¹³⁷ In other texts, the place of Abraham’s holy seed in God’s global purposes is depicted primarily in terms of the condemnation of idolaters: because the idolatrous nations oppose Israel, God will “curse” them and thus display his sovereignty and righteousness (cf. Gen 12:3).¹³⁸

Nevertheless, in a number of other Jewish texts, especially those located in the Diaspora, Abraham’s relationship to the nations is depicted in terms of a *positive* vocation arising from his divine epistemological privileges. Abraham and/or his seed are often described as a locus of divine revelation in the midst of human ignorance.¹³⁹ There are also various claims that Abraham’s monotheism gave him a teaching role toward others. In *Migr.* 118–123, for example, Philo understands the phrase, “In you [Abraham] shall all the nations of the world be blessed” (Gen 12:3 etc.), as a description of the wise man who imparts the treasures of his divine wisdom to others in his nation or city (esp. 120–121).¹⁴⁰ Elsewhere, Philo maintains that the marriage of Abraham with Sarah was intended to produce

an entire nation [ἔθνος]—the most God-loving of all nations—and one which appears to me to have received the offices of priesthood [ἱερωσύνη] and prophecy [προφητεία] on behalf of the whole human race [ὑπὲρ παντὸς ἀνθρώπων γένους]. (Philo, *Abr.* 98 [Yonge])

¹³⁶ E.g. *Jub.* 11.16–17, 12.2b–5; cf. Philo, *Abr.* 60–67, *Virt.* 212–219 (Calvert-Koyzis 2004, 6–18; cf. Goodman 1992, 75).

¹³⁷ E.g. *Jub.* 16.17–18, 22.11–20, 25.5. See further Hayes 1999, 14–25.

¹³⁸ E.g. *3 Macc.* 6.3, 13–15; *Pss. Sol.* 9.3, 9; Pr Azar 12, 20–22 (LXX/*Theod.* Dan 3:35, 43–34).

¹³⁹ E.g. Josephus’s depiction of Abraham as a wise man who is even more learned in the arts of arithmetic and astronomy than the Egyptians (*A.J.* 1.166–168); Pseudo-Philo’s view that God has revealed the secrets of human history to Abraham (*L.A.B.* 18.4–6); *4 Ezra*’s view that Abraham was chosen to receive special knowledge (*4 Ezra* 3.14) in the face of the iniquity of all the nations (3.12)—this knowledge turns out to be the Law (3.19); Philo’s phrase, “the wise Abraham” (ὁ σοφός Ἀβραάμ; *Leg.* 3.244; *Sacr.* 122; *Plant.* 73; *Sobr.* 17, 65; *Conf.* 26; *Congr.* 92; *Somn.* 1.214, 2.89).

¹⁴⁰ A very similar argument is found in *Somn.* 1.175–178. Here, the text about Abraham being a blessing to the nations (1.177) is linked with the “light” metaphor for wisdom teachers (1.176, cf. Rom 2:19). Although Philo tends to blur the boundaries between Jewish particularism and universal wisdom, he does imply that Jews are closer to divine wisdom than any other ethnic group (Makiello 2010).

In a different context, *4 Maccabees* depicts the seed of Abraham as a model of Stoic virtue in the face of suffering, which becomes a positive example even for the tyrant Antiochus and his soldiers (*4 Macc.* 17.23–18.3).¹⁴¹

In Ben Sira's poem praising Israel's "Fathers" (Sir 44–50), the concept of the "seed" of Abraham (and of other great figures in Israel's history) contributes significantly to an understanding of Jewish identity which includes a strong vocational element. As Goering has shown, the entire book describes an important global vocation for Israel which arises from her epistemological privilege: Israel's "election"—i.e. her divinely ordained distinction from other human beings—is caught up with her possession of the Torah, the supreme example of God's universal wisdom.¹⁴² This leads to a central role for Israel within the rest of God's creation: Israel's Torah-based piety sustains the world order.¹⁴³ In the "praise" poem itself (Sir 44–50), Ben Sira draws upon the lives of Israel's "Fathers" in order to demonstrate that his understanding of Israel's divinely ordained role in the world is grounded in a scripturally-informed account of Jewish identity.¹⁴⁴ He first sets out a template for Israel's vocation (44:1–15): Israel's "Fathers" (πατέρες, 44:1) were men of divine "glory" (44:2) and wisdom (44:3–6) who ought to be praised (44:7–9) whose mercy and righteous deeds guarantees that their "seed" (σπέρμα) will remain forever (44:10–14), and who will be renowned among various "peoples" (λαοί, 44:15).¹⁴⁵ He then depicts various scriptural individuals using this template: they are blessed by God with "glory" or otherwise

¹⁴¹ Josephus also depicts Abraham as an energetic teacher amongst Chaldean idolaters (*A.J.* 1.154–157) (see further Watson 2004, 253–257).

¹⁴² Goering 2009, 69–102.

¹⁴³ Goering 2009, 129–186. This is evident, for example, in Sir 24, where universal Wisdom is said to be especially associated with the temple cult (173–185). Israel also has a passive eschatological role towards the nations: God's rescue of Israel informs the nations that he is the God of all the world (pp. 187–236, focusing especially on Sir 36:1–17). Consistent with other Jewish eschatological expectations, "Ben Sira's eschatology does not involve the conversion of non-Jews to a Jewish piety" (p. 234).

¹⁴⁴ The overall structure of the poem seems to approximate the present Hebrew canon, suggesting that it is intended as an interpretation of an authoritative collection of Scriptures (Goshen-Gottstein 2002). *Pace* Goshen-Gottstein, however, this does not prove that the *primary* purpose of the *Praise* is "to describe canon, and to provide meaning for canonical divisions" (244).

¹⁴⁵ The *Praise* also speaks of Israel's *disobedience*. However, Ben Sira consciously distances himself from the disobedient, unrepentant leaders (e.g. Sir 47:23–25). The disobedient leaders do not define Jewish identity for Ben Sira; they simply serve as warnings against straying from the true path (Brown 2002).

described in glorious cultic terms;¹⁴⁶ they live and rule in wisdom and righteousness and/or contribute substantially to the temple cult;¹⁴⁷ they are rewarded with posterity, often described as “seed” (σπέρμα);¹⁴⁸ their posterity is also expected to keep the covenants and so remain forever;¹⁴⁹ and finally, they bring divine blessing to the world and/or are a means for knowledge of God’s glory in the rest of the world.¹⁵⁰ The Abraham pericope, in particular, emphasizes the international significance of Abraham’s “seed” (Sir 44:19–23). The pericope begins with a citation of or strong allusion to Gen 17:4–5, which emphasizes Abraham’s *international* significance. It ends with references to the “inheritance” of Abraham’s seed in global, eschatological terms (cf. Rom 4:13). Within this frame, Ben Sira describes Abraham’s own covenantal obedience, and the national and international significance of Abraham’s seed.¹⁵¹ The statement of Abraham’s international significance in verse 21 is emphasized by its placement first in the list.¹⁵² Thus Ben Sira shows a special interest in the way that the “seed” of the “Fathers” of Israel, especially of Abraham, has a divine role with respect to all the nations.

This survey of second-temple Jewish texts, of course, does not imply that all Jews read the Abrahamic texts as a prediction of universal blessing,¹⁵³ nor that Jews used Abraham as a model for concrete, explicit, missionary efforts.¹⁵⁴ These texts do, however, provide evidence that a number of Jews had a general sense of divine vocation which was connected to the motif of Abraham’s fatherhood / seed. The texts—especially Ben Sira¹⁵⁵—therefore provide us with a context and background for Paul’s own use of the motif of Abraham’s fatherhood / seed as a vocational

¹⁴⁶ Sir 44:19; 45:2–3, 6–14, 23; 46:1–2; 47:2, 6, 11; 48:4; 49:1, 8; 50:5–21.

¹⁴⁷ Sir 44:16, 17, 20; 45:1, 4, 23; 46:3, 14–20; 47:4–5, 13–18; 48:1–10, 17–25; 49:2–3, 10, 11–13; 50:1–4.

¹⁴⁸ Sir 44:17, 21, 22; 45:1, 15, 20–22, 24, 25; 46:9, 12; 47:22.

¹⁴⁹ Sir 45:5, 15, 25.

¹⁵⁰ Sir 44:18, 21, 22; 45:1–3; 46:4–6; 47:14–18; 49:16.

¹⁵¹ Beentjes 2009, 214–216.

¹⁵² Beentjes 2009, 222–223.

¹⁵³ E.g. at Qumran, there is no surviving evidence of a reception history for Gen 12:3 (Popović 2010).

¹⁵⁴ Cf. Goodman 2010, 180–181; see further p. 110.

¹⁵⁵ It is quite likely that Paul himself would have been familiar with many of the traditions represented in Sirach. Sandnes (1991, 22–38) discusses Paul’s knowledge of these traditions in more detail.

descriptor, and help us to see how Paul could use the motif when referring to his own *actual* mission to the Gentiles.

2.3.3. “Judaism” / “zeal”: Paul’s former expression of Jewish vocation

At times, Paul goes out of his way to *reject* a particular expression of Jewish vocation, a vocation to which he had once been singularly dedicated. He refers to this vocation using three interrelated terms: Ἰουδαϊσμός (Gal 1:13, 14), ζῆλος / ζηλωτής (Gal 1:14; Phil 3:6; Rom 10:2), and Φαρισαῖος (Phil 3:5). The first two terms are often rendered in English with direct transliterations: “Judaism” and “zeal[ot].” To the modern reader, these English transliterations suggest that Paul is speaking about a system of thought or a religion called “Judaism,”¹⁵⁶ which he once “zealously” followed but which he has now rejected.¹⁵⁷ However, as we shall see, these English transliterations do not accurately render the meaning of the Greek terms. Ἰουδαϊσμός and ζῆλος / ζηλωτής, along with Φαρισαῖος, do not refer to Jewish religious devotion in general. Rather, they refer to a particular expression of Jewish *vocation*—a vocation which construed Israel’s role in God’s purposes as a call to live as a holy nation in the midst of the other nations, and to preserve that holiness by seeking to protect and remove Jews from the contaminating influence of sinful and unclean Gentiles.

The fact that these terms refer to a kind of Jewish vocation is initially suggested by their function in Paul’s argumentation. In each of the passages in which these terms appear, Paul is also describing his *own* vocation in Jewish terms. This is clear in Gal 1:13–16, where Paul describes his conversion in terms which recall the “call” of Jeremiah and the Isaianic Servant (vv. 15–16).¹⁵⁸ This is also the case in Rom 10:5–18, where Paul presents the apostolic ministry to the nations as a fulfilment of expectations concerning the Isaianic preacher and Servant.¹⁵⁹ This suggests that

¹⁵⁶ Roots of this later meaning of Ἰουδαϊσμός can be found in Ignatius, who compares it with Χριστιανισμός (Ign. *Magn.* 10.3; *Phld.* 6.1; cf. *Magn.* 8.1) (Niebuhr 1992, 21; for text see *The Apostolic Fathers* 2003, 1.248, 1.250, 1.288).

¹⁵⁷ Cf. our discussion in the Introduction of the problems with analysing Paul according to principles or patterns of “religion” (pp. 28–30).

¹⁵⁸ For details see ch. 3, pp. 90, 101.

¹⁵⁹ See ch. 5, pp. 207–228. It is also quite possible that the reference to “circumcision” in Phil 3:3 is intended as a counterpoint to rival missionaries mentioned in Phil 3:2 (see p. 178 n. 171).

Paul is using Ἰουδαϊσμός and ζήλος / ζηλωτής, along with Φαρισαῖος, as descriptions of an alternative Jewish *vocation* which he has rejected. This suggestion is confirmed when we examine the Jewish background of the words themselves.

The term Ἰουδαϊσμός is quite rare in our extant sources. It is entirely missing in Josephus and Philo. Apart from a later appearance in Ignatius,¹⁶⁰ it occurs only in 2 and 4 Maccabees (2 Macc 2:21; 8:1; 14:38 [2x]; 4 Macc. 4.26) and twice in inscriptions.¹⁶¹ The word seems to have been coined as a counterpoint to Ἑλληνισμός and ἄλλοφυλισμός, words which denote the imposition of Greek and foreign influences on Jewish culture (2 Macc 4:10–13). In these texts, the word Ἰουδαϊσμός refers to a revolutionary counter-movement which sought to combat foreign influences and to bring Jews back to true Jewish ways.¹⁶² Paul uses the term in a similar way, linking his conduct ἐν τῷ Ἰουδαϊσμῷ with his violent persecution of the Christ-believing assemblies (Gal 1:13–14; cf. 1 Macc 2:47, 3:5).¹⁶³ Paul is thus not claiming here to have rejected an ethnic group or a religion, but rather to have rejected his former combative protectionism of Jewish ways against Gentile influence.¹⁶⁴

In this connection, Paul also claims that he was formerly an extreme ζηλωτής (Gal 1:14) and that he persecuted the Christ-believing assembly κατὰ ζήλος (Phil 3:6, cf. Rom 10:4). These terms also suggest that Paul is referring to a particular construal of Jewish vocation. The ζήλ- word-group is used generally to describe an intensely passionate commitment to something or somebody,¹⁶⁵ and often implies the exclusion of rival commitments.¹⁶⁶ When used in relation to *God* in the LXX, it describes God's intense commitment to Israel and his desire for Israel to worship

¹⁶⁰ See n. 156.

¹⁶¹ For details, see Niebuhr 1992, 21–22.

¹⁶² Mason 2007, 460–470; Niebuhr 1992, 21–24.

¹⁶³ Frey 2007, 291.

¹⁶⁴ Cf. Dunn 1998a, 260–261. Thus our discussion here circumvents the debate about whether Paul is rejecting “Judaism” itself or simply rejecting his former conduct “in Judaism” (Miller 2011, 48). We are arguing that Ἰουδαϊσμός does not mean “Judaism” at all.

¹⁶⁵ E.g. to a relationship (2 Cor 7:7), a divisive faction (Rom 13:13, 1 Cor 3:3, 2 Cor 12:20, Gal 5:20; cf. Jas 3:14, 16), or a cause (2 Cor 7:11, 9:2); cf. Josephus, *A.J.* 14.161 (Popkes 1991).

¹⁶⁶ E.g. Song 8:6; see also ζηλοῦν in Num 5:14, 30; Sir 9:1.

him alone, often using a marriage metaphor. Since God is “jealously passionate” for Israel, he expects Israel to be exclusively committed to him, i.e. not to worship other gods (Exod 20:5).¹⁶⁷ Certain human beings may also, by their actions, express this “divine jealous passion”: the paradigmatic case is the account of Phinehas in Num 25. In this account, God’s wrath is expressed against those who have committed literal adultery with Moabite women and a corresponding spiritual adultery with Moabite gods (Num 25:3–5). When one of the Israelites brings a Midianite woman into the presence of Israel itself and commits adultery with her (Num 25:6), the priest Phinehas kills both of them together and so averts God’s wrath on Israel (Num 25:7–9). Since Phinehas has acted on God’s behalf, Phinehas’s action is described by God as “being jealous with my jealousy” (ζηλωσαί μου τὸν ζῆλον; Num 25:11). In this case, *divine* ζῆλος is expressed by a *human being* who is utterly committed to God’s own passion for a relationship with Israel which excludes any commitment to other gods. This divine ζῆλος manifests itself chiefly in the exclusion of idolatry and immorality and in the violent removal of any foreigners who are tempting Israel towards such idolatry and immorality.

Phinehas’s “divine jealous passion” provided a fitting model for a widespread Jewish commitment to the purity of Israel’s Law-keeping and monotheistic worship against the threats of immorality, impurity and idolatry, threats which were often associated with Gentile influence.¹⁶⁸ In such cases, individuals or groups of Jews expressed God’s ζῆλος by fighting against anything that might compromise Israel’s exclusive relationship with God, using Phinehas and others as models (e.g. 1 Macc 2:24–58, esp. 2:54; 4 Macc. 18.12; Sir 45:23; cf. Jdt 9:4; Sir 48:2).¹⁶⁹ Since the terms of this commitment were spelt out by the divine revelation in the Law, this divine jealous passion often manifested itself as “zeal of the Law” (ζῆλος νόμου)—i.e. a commitment to struggle for the purity of Israel’s monotheistic worship and obedience, construed in terms of the Law of Moses, against threats from opponents

¹⁶⁷ Cf. many other instances in the LXX, e.g. Exod 34:14; Deut 4:24, 5:9, 6:15, 29:20 (LXX 29:19).

¹⁶⁸ Such commitment was a widespread phenomenon, and not confined to the party of the “Zealots” (Hengel 1989, 177–183). Cf. Philo, *Spec.* 1.54–57, 2.252–253 (Seland 2002).

¹⁶⁹ See further Niebuhr 1992, 27. Philo also sees the ζῆλος of Phinehas the priest as a model of commitment to virtue against natural vice by means of the well-sharpened “word” of God (*Leg.* 3.242, *Conf.* 57, *Mut.* 108).

(1 Macc 2:58; 2 Macc 4:2).¹⁷⁰ Such jealous passion for the purity of the people and the Law is, as we have seen, depicted by others as a commendable commitment to Israel's divine vocation in scriptural terms. It is not merely an expression of nationalistic "exclusivism"—i.e. a desire to keep God's blessing *away* from the Gentiles.¹⁷¹ Rather, it is an expression of Israel's sense of divine vocation. As a "kingdom of priests," Israel's purity and separateness *from* the nations is a key part of their task to display God's glory *to* the nations.¹⁷²

Paul himself displayed this kind of ζήλος before his conversion as he persecuted the "assembly" (ἐκκλησία), presumably because he feared that the proximity of large numbers of Gentiles to Jews within this concrete "assembly" would compromise Israel's purity (Gal 1:14, Phil 3:6).¹⁷³ This also appears to be the motivation behind Cephas's "separation" (verb ἀφορίζειν) from the Gentiles (Gal 2:12). The gospel of Christ, however, radically changes Paul's evaluation of this attitude. The gospel shows that Jews are in fact on the same level as Gentiles in this regard—Jews do not constitute a holy people in need of protection against contamination, but rather are "sinners" in need of justification (Gal 2:15–17; cf. Rom 10:2).¹⁷⁴ Thus, in light of the gospel of Christ, Paul rejects ζήλος as an illegitimate expression of Jewish vocation. In Galatians, he warns the Gentiles that if they acquiesce to those who are convincing

¹⁷⁰ Other texts even speak of Phinehas's actions being "reckoned to him as righteousness" in terms which recall Abraham (Ps 106:30–31, *Jub.* 30.17, cf. 30.20, 23) (Dunn 1988, 2.587). Paul also speaks positively of his own "divine jealous passion" (ζήλος θεοῦ) in 2 Cor 11:2. Paul, like Phinehas, is "jealous with God's jealousy" for the Corinthians, who are figuratively betrothed to Christ, but are in danger of forsaking Christ for "another Jesus" or a "different gospel" (2 Cor 11:3–4). Significantly, however, the "Law" does not feature in Paul's own notions of "divine jealousy."

¹⁷¹ Smiles 2002; *pace* Dunn 2005, 11; 2006, 160.

¹⁷² See e.g. Exod 19:5–6; Lev 20:26; Deut 7:6; Isa 52:10–12, 61:6.

¹⁷³ Cf. the references to Jewish ζήλος in Acts (5:17, 13:45, 17:5). Given the Jewish background to the concept, it is highly unlikely that Acts is depicting the Jews as somehow "jealous" of the Christian missionaries—as if the Jews wished that *they* had brought all those impure people (sick, demoniacs, and Gentiles) into their midst! Rather, like the Maccabees, they are "passionate for the Law" (cf. Acts 21:20–21), and thus fearful that Israel's purity and devotion to God is being compromised by the unprecedented influx of "impure" people resulting from the apostolic preaching. They are not *envious* of the influx of Gentiles (*pace* Witherington 1998, 229); they want to stop it! This is why Acts is at pains to point out that God has made the Gentiles "clean" through faith and the Spirit, thus rendering the Jewish fears illegitimate (Acts 10:28, 15:9).

¹⁷⁴ In Rom 10:2, Paul rejects the Jewish ζήλος as "not according to recognition" (οὐ κατ' ἐπίγνωσιν) i.e. not taking into account the fact that the Law is designed to lead to "recognition of sin" (ἐπίγνωσις ἁμαρτίας, Rom 3:20; see pp. 211–213).

them to “Judaize,” then they too are buying in to this wrong way of thinking, and so rejecting the gospel of Christ itself (Gal 1:6–9, 5:2–3).

This concern for Israel’s spiritual and moral purity and the consequent desire to protect Jews from foreign influence is also implied by the term Φαρισαῖος (Phil 3:5), since it is one of the features of “Pharisaic” life and thought.¹⁷⁵ Thus there is good reason to suppose that Ἰουδαϊσμός, ζῆλος / ζηλωτής and Φαρισαῖος refer to various aspects of a particular construal of Jewish identity and Jewish vocation which Paul formerly held, but which he has now rejected. He has not rejected Jewish identity *per se*. Rather, he has adopted a new understanding of Jewish identity and Jewish vocation, generated and informed by the gospel of Christ. The nature of this Jewish identity and Jewish vocation—which expresses itself primarily in the preaching of Christ to the Gentiles as the fulfilment of Israel’s Law—will be the subject of future chapters.

2.3.4. Paul’s opposition to alternative expressions of Jewish vocation

Paul speaks strongly against certain Jews in a number of other places. His denunciations are strikingly severe: he describes certain Jews as ignorant and foolish,¹⁷⁶ unfaithful / unbelieving,¹⁷⁷ sinning,¹⁷⁸ not pleasing to God,¹⁷⁹ disobedient to God,¹⁸⁰ subject to enmity,¹⁸¹ evildoers,¹⁸² and falling short.¹⁸³ Various Jews are said to stumble over the message of Christ,¹⁸⁴ to kill Christ himself,¹⁸⁵ to kill or

¹⁷⁵ E.g. Josephus, *AJ*. 18.4–10 (Hengel 1991, 44–45). See further Rudolph 2011, 116–125.

¹⁷⁶ Rom 10:2–4, 11:8–10; 2 Cor 3:13–15.

¹⁷⁷ Rom 3:3; 11:20, 23.

¹⁷⁸ Rom 5:20, 11:11–12; 1 Thess 2:16.

¹⁷⁹ 1 Thess 2:15.

¹⁸⁰ Rom 10:21, 11:30–32, 15:31 (cf. Rom 2:8).

¹⁸¹ Rom 11:28.

¹⁸² Phil 3:2.

¹⁸³ Rom 9:31, 11:7.

¹⁸⁴ Rom 9:32–33; 1 Cor 1:23; cf. Gal 5:11.

¹⁸⁵ 1 Thess 2:15.

persecute God’s messengers,¹⁸⁶ to persecute the assembly of God,¹⁸⁷ to oppose all humanity,¹⁸⁸ and to be especially in danger of God’s judgment.¹⁸⁹

These denunciations of Jews are too widely spread across Paul’s letters for individual instances to be dismissed as non-Pauline additions.¹⁹⁰ Yet it is important to note that almost all of these expressions of Jewish failure occur in passages where Paul is directly contrasting his own vocation as apostle to the Gentiles with that of other Israelites. In 1 Thess 2, Paul contrasts his own ministry—in which he “speaks” (verb λαλεῖν) in order to “please” (verb ἀρέσκειν) God (1 Thess 2:4)—with the actions of other Jews—who do not “please” (verb ἀρέσκειν) God, because they killed prophets and hindered Paul’s “speaking” (verb λαλεῖν) to the Gentiles (1 Thess 2:15–16).¹⁹¹ The Jews in 2 Cor 3 are engaged in a διακονία of condemnation which is in contrast to Paul’s own διακονία of righteousness (2 Cor 3:9). In Rom 15:31, Paul prays that he might be rescued from the “disobedient in Judea” because they are opposing his διακονία. Those whom Paul describes as “dogs,” “workers of evil” and the “mutilation” (Phil 3:2) are direct rivals to Paul and Timothy’s ministry to the Gentiles (cf. Phil 2:12–24, 3:3ff).¹⁹² Furthermore, as we will see in chapter 5, Paul’s many references to Jewish failure in Rom 9–11 are presented as part of his argument that his own apostolic ministry is the true expression of Jewish identity.¹⁹³

Hence these denunciations of Jews must be read in the context of Paul’s understanding of Jewish *vocation*. The error of these Jews is not to *be* Jews, but to express their Jewishness in a way that stands opposed to Paul’s own divine Jewish vocation.

¹⁸⁶ 1 Thess 2:15; Rom 11:3, 15:31; 2 Cor 11:24.

¹⁸⁷ Gal 4:29 (cf. 1:13, 4:25).

¹⁸⁸ 1 Thess 2:15, cf. Philo’s references to charges of misanthropy against Jews (e.g. *Spec.* 4.4, *Virt.* 141) (Umemoto 1994, 43–45).

¹⁸⁹ Rom 4:15, 1 Thess 2:16, 2 Cor 3:9.

¹⁹⁰ *Pace* e.g. Tomson 1986, 284.

¹⁹¹ Of course, Paul also indicts them for killing Jesus himself; however, the death of Jesus is not the climactic focus of his denunciation.

¹⁹² See p. 178 n. 171.

¹⁹³ See ch. 5, pp. 190–246.

2.4. Summary: Paul's language of Jewish identity

In this chapter, we have surveyed three key aspects of Paul's language of Jewish identity.

Jewish distinctiveness: Paul sees an ongoing, distinct and positive value for Jewish identity in light of the gospel. This is apparent in many of Paul's uses of the terms "Jew" and "circumcision." These are clearly ethnic designations; but their "ethnic" dimension cannot simply be reduced to geographical origin. Paul, like a number of his Jewish contemporaries, believes that Jewish ethnicity has a special theological significance. Moreover, Paul believes that this theological significance remains an important feature of Jewish ethnicity, even in light of the gospel of Christ.

Divine revelation: For Paul, the value of Jewish identity is not directly soteriological. Rather, the value of Jewish identity arises primarily from the conviction that Israel's Scriptures, and the Law of Moses in particular, are a special gift of divine revelation to Israel. Jewish identity is in large part generated and sustained by the communal reading of the Law of Moses as a divine revelation. Thus Paul often uses the terms "Israel" and "Israelite" to signal to his readers that his discussion of Jewish identity at that point needs to be understood in terms of the scriptural witness to Israel's special place in God's purposes. In a number of places, Paul uses the terms "Israelite" and "Hebrew" of himself and other Jews to evoke a special connection with divine revelation.

Divine vocation: For Paul, as for a number of his contemporaries, the possession of divine revelation by Jews leads to a sense of vocation—i.e. a special place and role within God's wider purposes. There was a variety of views amongst Jews of Paul's day about the exact nature of this divine vocation; and Paul himself has his own particular construal. Paul, like other Jews, believes that the Law of Moses and the circumcision of Abraham are connected to Israel's vocation. His former view of Israel's vocation, which had been associated with the terms "Judaism," "zeal[ot]" and "Pharisee," had construed Israel's role in God's purposes as a call to live as a holy nation in the midst of the other nations, and to maintain that holiness by seeking to protect and remove Jews from the contaminating influence of unclean and sinful Gentiles. Paul, however, has rejected this view of Israel's vocation. Indeed, he

strongly opposes other Jews whose expression of Jewish vocation does not conform to the gospel of Christ. Paul's new view of Israel's vocation involves preaching the gospel of Christ, as the fulfilment of Israel's Law, to the Gentiles. In the rest of this dissertation, we will explore how Paul expounds, defends and even exercises this Jewish vocation through his letter to the Christ-believers in Rome.

Chapter 3: The Jewishness of Paul's Vocation (Romans 1:1–15 & 15:14–33)

To be a Jew is a destiny.

Vicki Baum.¹

*Paul, Servant of Christ Jesus,
called Apostle,
set apart for the gospel of God.*

The Apostle Paul.²

Our contention in this dissertation is that Paul's Jewish identity found its primary expression in his apostolic mission to the Gentiles. In the previous chapter, we laid a linguistic and conceptual foundation for this claim by surveying Paul's use of explicit vocabulary relating to Jewish identity. We found that Paul, like a number of his Jewish contemporaries, believed that God had revealed himself in a special way to Israel and had given Israel a distinct role or task within his wider purposes. In this chapter, we will demonstrate that this sense of Jewish vocation undergirds Paul's self-description in his letter to the Romans. In particular, we will argue that Paul deliberately frames his letter (Rom 1:1–15, 15:14–16:24, esp. 15:14–33) by presenting his apostolic ministry as the fulfilment of positive eschatological expectations concerning Israel's distinct divine vocation with respect to the other nations. One implication of this investigation is that Paul's apostolic mission cannot be viewed primarily as a critique of "ethnic pride" or "national privilege."³ On the contrary, Paul deliberately presents his mission in terms that imply that one particular ethnic group—Jews—or nation—Israel—have a central role in God's plans for all the other nations.

¹ Baum 1931, 190. For a detailed bibliography, see p. 255ff.

² Rom 1:1.

³ Pace, e.g., Dunn 1988, lxix-lxxii; Wright 1991, 240–242; see p. 66.

Romans consists of an introduction (1:1–15), a thesis statement (1:16–17), a series of formal arguments (1:18–15:13), and a conclusion (15:14–16:24).⁴ The introduction and conclusion together constitute an epistolary frame which is increasingly being recognized as a key factor in determining the meaning and purpose of the letter as a whole.⁵ One significant feature of the outer frame is the prominence of Paul’s own authorial persona. First-person singular authorial self-references dominate the introduction and conclusion,⁶ but are relatively rare in the rest of the letter (with the important exception of Rom 9–11; see ch. 5).⁷ A second significant feature of the epistolary frame is the sustained presence of a positive Jew-Gentile dynamic. Indeed, this positive Jew-Gentile dynamic is a feature of Paul’s own ministry. Paul describes his apostolic ministry in terms of the movement of divine revelation from Israel to the nations, which in turn brings a positive response from the nations. In the introduction, Paul defines the gospel for which he has been “set apart” (Rom 1:1) as a message with foundations in the Jewish Scriptures (Rom 1:2), concerning a Jewish Messiah (Rom 1:3), which is now bringing all the nations to obedience (Rom 1:5). In the conclusion, he describes this same gospel as the basis for his “priestly” service (Rom 15:16), which proceeds from Jerusalem to the nations (Rom 15:19), brings spiritual benefits to the nations (Rom 15:27), and results in those nations providing material blessings to the “saints” in Jerusalem (Rom 15:27). Paul thus frames his letter to the Romans by describing his own apostolic ministry as a Jew-Gentile dynamic.⁸

⁴ Cf. Jewett’s (2007, vii-x) rhetorical analysis of the structure of Romans: *Exordium + Narratio* (Rom 1:1–15); *Propositio* (Rom 1:16–17); *Probatio* (Rom 1:18–15:13); *Peroratio* (Rom 15:14–16:24). We exclude Rom 16:25–27 from consideration here since it adds nothing substantial to our argument; furthermore, its textual history is complicated and its authenticity is disputed (for two different opinions see Jewett 2007, 998–1005; Marshall 1999).

⁵ Longenecker 2011, 128–130.

⁶ In the introduction (Rom 1:1–15), there are 17 first-person singular verbs and pronouns, an average of one first-person singular reference for every 14 words. In the first part of the conclusion (Rom 15:14–33), there are 25 first-person singular verbs and pronouns, an average of one first-person singular reference for every 13 words. In the second part of the conclusion (the greetings, Rom 16:1–24), there are 22 first-person singular verbs and pronouns, an average of one first-person singular reference for every 17 words.

⁷ In Rom 1:16–15:13, excluding Rom 7:7–25 (where Paul uses first-person language to vividly illustrate the Law’s effect and ultimate purpose, see ch. 4, p. 188) and Rom 9–11 (which we will deal with in ch. 5, pp. 190–246), there are only 25 first-person singular verbs and pronouns, an average of one first-person singular reference for every 174 words.

⁸ Cf. ch. 1, p. 38.

Moreover, in statements which occur just “inside” the epistolary frame (Rom 1:16, Rom 15:8–13), Paul describes a more general Jew-Gentile dynamic in relation to the Christ-believing community as a whole. In his thesis statement, which follows on directly from his introduction, Paul claims that the gospel is the power of God for salvation to all who believe, “for the Jew first, and also for the Greek” (1:16–17).⁹ In a series of climactic eschatological references just prior to the conclusion (Rom 15:8–13),¹⁰ Paul describes Christ as a “minister of circumcision” whose confirmation of the promises to Israel’s “Fathers” (v. 8) brings the other “nations” to glorify God alongside God’s particular “people” (vv. 9–11).¹¹ Paul cites a number of scriptural texts which envisage an eschatological proclamatory role both for the Messiah (2 Sam 22:50 // Ps 18:49 [LXX 17:50]) and for Israel as a whole (Deut 32:43 LXX, cf. Ps 117:1 [LXX 116:1]).¹² These texts affirm Jewish pre-eminence in the Christ-believing community, and also associate this pre-eminence directly with abundant soteriological blessing for Gentiles. This reference to a general Jew-Gentile dynamic in the Christ-believing community is clearly connected with Paul’s own description of his ministry as a Jew-Gentile dynamic, and shows that this aspect of Paul’s authorial persona in the outer frame of Romans coheres with his argument in the letter as a whole.

Although a number of scholars have drawn attention to various Jewish elements in Paul’s apostolic self-presentation, these elements have generally been presented in an *ad hoc* manner, and as such have often been passed over or dismissed too readily by other scholars. We will seek here not only to answer common objections against the identification of Jewish elements in Paul’s apostolic self-presentation, but also to fit these various Jewish elements into a coherent whole. We will see that there are two related aspects to Paul’s apostolic self-presentation. Firstly, Paul presents

⁹ Cf. ch. 1, p. 39.

¹⁰ Dunn (1988, 2.844–845) views Rom 15:7–13 as a summary statement for the argument of the entire letter.

¹¹ For the significance of the distinction between “nations” (ἔθνη) and “people” (λαός) see p. 236 n. 169.

¹² Donaldson (1997, 195) objects that these texts are not eschatological; he claims that Paul chose the texts only because they are bound together by the keyword ἔθνη. This claim is, however, simply incorrect. Two of the three cited texts come at the end of a description of climactic judgment and salvation described in cosmic terms (cf. Deut 32:36–42, Ps 18:6–16 [LXX 17:7–17]). Waters (2006, 60–66, 73–74) provides evidence for eschatological readings of Deuteronomy 32 amongst other Jews of the second-temple period (see, e.g., *T. Mos.* 10:1–3, 7–10).

himself as participating in the ministry of the “Servant of the Lord,” a figure described in Isaiah 40–55 who both represents Israel and also has a decisive eschatological role vis-à-vis the nations. Secondly, Paul describes his apostolic vocation in terms of Israel’s eschatological “priesthood” among the nations, using terminology and concepts drawn primarily from Jeremiah 1 and Isaiah 60–61.

Understanding Paul’s Jewish self-presentation in the outer frame of Romans will also provide us with a powerful means by which to compare and contrast his mission with other first-century expressions of Jewish vocation. Most scholarly approaches to this question have tended to concentrate on phenomenological concerns—that is, they have sought to discern whether, and to what extent, the kinds of “conversionist” missionary activities in which Paul was engaged can also be found amongst his Jewish contemporaries. Our own approach, by contrast, will concentrate primarily on questions of *identity*. We will use Paul’s own explicit description of the Jewishness of his apostolic ministry in the outer frame of Romans, and will compare and contrast it with the various ways in which Paul’s Jewish contemporaries understood their role in God’s wider purposes. We will see that Paul’s self-description corresponds most closely to certain identifiable Jewish eschatological expectations concerning Israel’s role vis-à-vis the nations than it does to any other expression of Israel’s vocation amongst Paul’s Jewish contemporaries.

At various points in our discussion, we will notice that the exceedingly positive presentation of Jewish identity and vocation in the outer frame of Romans seems to stand at odds with the tension-laden account of Jewish identity which appears at various points in the internal argument of the letter. These anomalies do not undermine our overall thesis. Rather, they constitute support for our claim that Paul is seeking to contest and thus to fundamentally *redefine* Jewish identity and Jewish vocation in light of the gospel of Christ—a claim which we will explore further in future chapters.

3.1. Paul and the Isaianic Servant

Paul begins his letter by calling himself a δοῦλος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ.¹³ Paul is evidently using the metaphor of a “slave” or “servant” to emphasize a particular aspect of his relationship with Christ, and so also to imply something about his relationship with his addressees who are also connected with Christ (cf. Rom 1:6).

We will maintain that Paul is drawing here on the scriptural figure of the “Servant of the Lord” found in Isaiah 40–55, especially (but not exclusively) in Isa 49:1–7.¹⁴ This “Servant” (δοῦλος)¹⁵ both represents Israel and also has a special role with respect to the nations:

“He [the Lord] said to me,
“You are my Servant [δοῦλος], Israel,
and in you I will be glorified.” (Isa 49:3 LXX)

...

“Behold, I have made you a covenant for the people, a light for the nations (ἔθνη),
that my salvation may extend to the end of the earth.” (Isa 49:6b LXX).

Paul is, in other words, portraying himself both as a representative of Israel and also as an instrument of God’s international purposes, which are now being enacted in and through Christ. The phrase δοῦλος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ shows that Paul’s role as Servant is inseparable from his commitment to Christ. Paul may be implying that Christ should be associated directly with God, the κύριος of the Scriptures (Isa 49:1; cf. Rom 1:7), so that Paul’s phrase “Servant of Christ” is in some sense equivalent to Isaiah’s idea of the “Servant” of the “Lord.” On the other hand, the genitive Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ may be intended to imply that Paul is participating in Christ’s *own* ministry as Servant (cf. Rom 10:16, 15:21).¹⁶ In fact, Paul may intend to convey both of these meanings here, since they are clearly connected in Paul’s thought; indeed, in Phil 2:5–11 Paul correlates Christ’s servanthood with his lordship (see esp. vv. 7, 11). In

¹³ Or Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ according to \mathfrak{P}^{26} \aleph A, etc.

¹⁴ So, e.g., Dunn 1988, 1.8; Kim 2011. Cf. a number of interpreters who maintain that Paul is using the term δοῦλος to identify himself as a special agent of God’s purposes, in the line of the various “servants of the Lord” described in the Scriptures (e.g. Barrett 1991, 17–18; Cranfield 1975, 1.50–51).

¹⁵ In Isa 49:1–7, δοῦλος is the predominant term (used 3x). Παῖς also occurs once (Isa 49:6). See further below (p. 93).

¹⁶ For Christ as the Servant, see Wagner 2002, 180, 335; Watson 2009, 238.

any case, our fundamental claim here is that Paul is presenting his apostleship of Christ as a participation in the ministry of the Isaianic Servant, who is a representative Israelite with a key role in God's purposes toward the nations.¹⁷

We will first present the positive evidence that Paul is using *δοῦλος* to describe himself in terms of the Isaianic Servant. We will then seek to answer the common objections to this interpretation of Paul's use of the term *δοῦλος*. Finally, we will examine the significance of Paul's self-presentation as Servant for his wider view of Jewish identity and vocation.

3.1.1. Paul's identification with the Isaianic Servant: Evidence

The immediate context of Paul's use of the term *δοῦλος* (Rom 1:1–5) suggests that Paul is referring to his ministry in terms of the Isaianic "Servant of the Lord." Paul's self-designation (Rom 1:1) is followed by a relative clause which sets his gospel firmly in the framework of Jewish Scriptures: the gospel for which Paul has been set apart was "previously promised" by God through his "Prophets" in the "holy Scriptures" (Rom 1:2). Although, strictly speaking, Paul only claims that it is the *gospel* which is promised in the Scriptures, he links this gospel directly with his own apostolic vocation. In doing so, he implies that his self-descriptions in Rom 1:1, including *δοῦλος*, have a scriptural basis. The fact that Paul specifies the *Prophets* as the means by which his gospel was promised (Rom 1:2) suggests that Paul is thinking of particular prophetic discourses.¹⁸ Moreover, there is good reason to suggest that Paul's self-description as *δοῦλος* has its primary background in the scriptural book of Isaiah.¹⁹

In the early chapters of Isaiah, there is an announcement concerning the coming of a "son" (υἱός, Isa 9:5). This "son" is a king in the line of "David" who will also enact divine rule (Isa 9:6–7 [LXX 9:5–6], 11:1). He will do so by means of the "Spirit" (Isa

¹⁷ Our interpretation fits roughly into what Patte (2010, 223–225) calls the "pastoral reading" of the metaphor, but is not seeking directly to exclude Patte's other readings ("apocalyptic messianic" and "theological philological").

¹⁸ Cf. Sandnes 1991, 149.

¹⁹ Gadenz (2009, 60) suggests that Dan 9 may form part of the background for Paul's self-description as *δοῦλος* (e.g. Dan 9:17 *Theod.*; cf. the description of Moses and the prophets as *δοῦλοι* in Dan 9:6, 10, 11 *Theod.*). However, unlike Isaiah 40–55, Dan 9 lacks any reference to "the nations," a theme which is prominent in Rom 1:1–15 and Rom 9–11.

11:2–3), and will command the “obedience” of the “nations” (Isa 11:10, 12, 14).²⁰ This description of the “son” is similar at many points to Paul’s description of Christ in Rom 1:3–5. Furthermore, Paul cites Isa 11:10 directly in Rom 15:12, implying that the relationship between the Davidic figure and the nations in Isaiah is fulfilled in the relationship between Christ and Gentile believers.

Later in Isaiah, a herald of salvation appears. This herald is designated as an “evangelist” (εὐαγγελιζόμενος, Isa 52:7; see also Isa 40:9, 61:1), which is of course similar to Paul’s description of his own message as the “gospel” (εὐαγγέλιον, Rom 1:1; cf. Rom 1:9, 15–16). In Isaiah, there is a strong connection between the evangelist’s spoken message and the ministry of the Servant. The evangelist brings a “report of peace” (ἀκοή εἰρήνης; Isa 52:7); the Servant’s suffering is for “our peace” (εἰρήνη ἡμῶν; Isa 53:5). The evangelist makes God’s “salvation” (σωτηρία) audible (Isa 52:7); the Servant extends God’s “salvation” (σωτηρία) to the nations (Isa 49:6, cf. 52:10).

Paul also describes himself as having been “called” (κλητός). Although Paul’s calling (Rom 1:1) cannot be separated entirely from his addressees’ soteriological calling (Rom 1:6–7),²¹ it is nevertheless a distinct calling, since it appears here in a list of vocational descriptions.²² Furthermore, since it is placed in direct apposition to the term δοῦλος, there is good reason to see κλητός as an allusion to the “calling” of the Servant as described in Isaiah.²³ In Isa 41:9, the “Servant” Israel is “called” (verb καλεῖν) by God to achieve his purposes of judgment and glory (cf. 41:15–16). In Isa 42:6, the Servant is “called” by God to bring divine salvation and justice to the nations (cf. 42:1–4). In Isa 49:1, 6, as we have already seen, the Servant is “called” to speak God’s word (cf. 49:2) and to extend God’s salvation to the nations.²⁴

Evidence from elsewhere in Romans also suggests that δοῦλος in Rom 1:1 is an allusion to the Isaianic Servant. Isaiah is “both statistically and substantively the

²⁰ See further below, p. 105.

²¹ Pace Stendahl (1976, 7–23) in his essay, “Call Rather Than Conversion.”

²² Sandnes 1991, 148; see p. 97.

²³ Schmidt 1965, 490.

²⁴ Cyrus is also said to be “called” by God to achieve his purposes to defeat Babylon and restore Israel from exile (Isa 41:25, 45:3–4, 46:11, 48:15).

most important scriptural source for Paul.”²⁵ Wagner notes that “[c]itations from Isaiah account for nearly half of Paul’s explicit appeals to Scripture in Romans”²⁶ and argues compellingly that “Paul read large sections of Isaiah as a prophetic word concerning his own role in the eschatological restoration of Israel and the extension of that salvation to the Gentiles”.²⁷ In the body of his argument, Paul cites two key texts from the Isaianic Servant passages which, as we shall see in later chapters, are particularly relevant to his own ministry (Isa 52:5, cited in Rom 2:24; Isa 53:1, cited in Rom 10:16).²⁸ He also cites the passage about the “evangelist” whose message, as we have just seen, is intimately related to the Servant’s ministry (Isa 52:7, cited in Rom 10:15).²⁹ Furthermore, in the conclusion to Romans (Rom 15:21), Paul cites Isa 52:15 in order to show that his expansive pioneering evangelistic endeavours are in fact a fulfilment of Isaianic expectations concerning the widespread acknowledgement of the Servant’s ministry.³⁰ Although Paul here implicitly identifies *Christ* as the Servant,³¹ his own opening self-description as “Servant of Christ” (δοῦλος Χριστοῦ) implies that his own identity and Christ’s identity as Servant are intertwined.³² Paul’s ministry as the Isaianic Servant of the Lord should thus be seen as an extension or participation in the ministry of Christ to Israel, and through Israel to the world.³³

In a number of places in his other letters, Paul explicitly draws on the notion of the Isaianic Servant to describe his own ministry. ³⁴ Galatians 1:10–16, for example,

²⁵ Hays 1989, 162.

²⁶ Wagner 2002, 2.

²⁷ Wagner 2002, 32–33.

²⁸ In Rom 2:24 Paul cites Isa 52:5 to describe the failure of his interlocutor’s “preaching” ministry (we shall discuss this in more detail in ch. 4, pp. 163–164). In Rom 10:16 he cites Isa 53:1 to describe his own ministry (we shall discuss this in more detail in ch. 5, pp. 217–226; cf. Wagner 2002, 170–180).

²⁹ See ch. 5, pp. 217–226.

³⁰ Wagner 2002, 329–336.

³¹ Wagner 2002, 170–180, 335; Watson 2009, 238.

³² Köstenberger and O’Brien 2001, 165–166, 170. Cf. Paul’s use of Isa 49:8 in 2 Cor 6:2 (Gibson 2011, 56–57), and the connection in Philippians between Paul as δοῦλος (Phil 1:1) and Christ as δοῦλος (Phil 2:7, cf. Wright 1991, 60–62). *Pace* Wagner (1998, 222), who rejects the possibility that Paul is identifying directly with the Servant.

³³ Wilk 1998, 367–369. As Dunn (1975) observes: “*Jesus and Paul together fulfil the eschatological role of the Servant.*” (113, emphasis original)

³⁴ Donaldson 1997, 254; Dunn 1975, 389 n. 370; 1988, 1.8; Kim 2002, 101–108; Stanley 1954, 415–418.

contains clear allusions to Isa 49. In Gal 1:10, Paul presents two parallel contrasts. The first contrast is between appealing to “human beings” (ἄνθρωποι) and appealing to “God” (θεός). The second contrast is between pleasing “human beings” (ἄνθρωποι) and being a “Servant of Christ” (Χριστοῦ δοῦλος; cf. Gal 1:1). These parallel contrasts are suggestive of one of the features of the Isaianic Servant: his willingness to obey and entrust himself to God despite being despised and rejected by “human beings” (ἄνθρωποι; e.g. Isa 49:4–5, 7; 52:14; 53:1–4). This suggestion is confirmed by Gal 1:15–16 which, as a number of scholars have pointed out, contains close verbal parallels with Isa 49: Paul was set apart from his “mother’s womb” (ἐκ κοιλίας μητρός, Gal 1:15; cf. Isa 49:1) and given the task of preaching “among the nations” (ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, Gal 1:16; cf. εἰς φῶς ἐθνῶν in Isa 49:6).³⁵

This passage from the opening of Galatians is particularly significant for our purposes since it exhibits close verbal and structural parallels with Rom 1:1–5. In both cases, Paul describes himself as a δοῦλος of Christ (Gal 1:10, Rom 1:1) who has been “called” (verb καλεῖν / adj. κλητός: Gal 1:15, Rom 1:1) and “set apart” (verb ἀφορίζεῖν: Gal 1:15, Rom 1:1) through God’s “grace” (χάρις: Gal 1:15, Rom 1:5) for the preaching of the “gospel” (verb εὐαγγελίζεσθαι / noun εὐαγγέλιον: Gal 1:16, Rom 1:1) concerning God’s “son” (υἱός: Gal 1:16, Rom 1:3) “among [all] the nations” (ἐν [πᾶσιν] τοῖς ἔθνεσιν: Gal 1:16, Rom 1:5). Indeed, the prescript to Romans may very well be an adaptation or rewriting of Gal 1:10, 15–16 for a different rhetorical context. In Galatians, Paul’s allusion to the Isaianic Servant is intended to invoke Christ’s authority *against* certain Jewish opponents (cf. 1:13–14). In Romans, however, Paul alludes to the Isaianic Servant in order to *emphasize* the Jewish nature of his gospel and his ministry (cf. Rom 1:2–5).³⁶

In other letters, too, Paul links his ministry with that of the Isaianic Servant. In 2 Cor 6:2, he cites Isa 49:8; in Phil 2:16, he alludes to Isa 49:4.³⁷ In both of these letters,

³⁵ Donaldson 1997, 253–255; Dunn 1998a, 259–260; Gadenz 2009, 52; Sandnes 1991, 61–65; Tsang 2005, 68–69; Wilk 1998, 292–293. There are also parallels with Jer 1:5, which we shall discuss below (p. 101).

³⁶ Cf. our discussion of the respective purposes of Romans and Galatians with respect to Jewish identity (p. 37).

³⁷ In addition, there are probably allusions to Isaiah 49:1, 4 in 1 Cor 15:10 (Bird 2006, 124–125; Wagner 2002, 343) and to Isaiah 53:12 in Rom 4:25 (Watson 2009, 231). Kim (2011, 13–14) argues,

Paul also describes his own apostolic ministry using the term δοῦλος (2 Cor 4:5, Phil 1:1).³⁸ This high rate of recurrence of the Isaianic Servant motif elsewhere in Romans and in the rest of Paul's letters greatly increases the likelihood that the term δοῦλος in Rom 1:1 is also a reference to the Isaianic Servant.³⁹

3.1.2. Paul's identification with the Isaianic Servant: Common objections

This claim—that Paul's use of the term δοῦλος in Rom 1:1 is a reference to the Isaianic Servant—has been subject to a number of objections. We will now answer the most common of these objections, in turn.

(a) Δοῦλος: A term of humility?

One objection is that the term δοῦλος was normally used to denote a menial social position—i.e. slavery—and thus cannot denote a position of special distinctiveness such as that described in Isaiah for the “Servant.” Indeed, Paul himself occasionally uses the δουλ- word-group to refer to literal “slaves.”⁴⁰ He also uses the term to describe people before or outside Christ who are metaphorically “enslaved,”⁴¹ and to Christ-believers who live metaphorically “in slavery” under the authority of God and/or Christ.⁴² It has been argued, therefore, that Paul's use of the term δοῦλος in Rom 1:1 is intended primarily to communicate his *humility* as a “slave” in order to

on the basis of parallels in Gal 1:15–16 and 2 Cor 1:21–22, that Paul has Isa 42 in mind as well as Isa 49.

³⁸ Paul also uses the verb δουλοῦν to describe himself (1 Cor 9:19), his co-workers (Phil 2:22) and, negatively, his opponents (Rom 16:18). Cf. references to Paul's co-workers as δοῦλοι or σύνδουλοι in Col 1:7, 4:7, 4:12; 2 Tim 2:24, cf. Phil 1:1.

³⁹ Hays (1989) suggests the useful criterion of “recurrence”: “Where such evidence exists that Paul considered a passage of particular importance, proposed echoes from the same context should be given additional credence” (30); cf. Wagner 2002, 12. The book of Acts also provides evidence of a Pauline tradition which understood Paul's ministry in terms of Isa 49:1–7 (Munck 1959, 26–28). Acts 9:15–16 recalls the commissioning of the suffering Servant in Isa 49:1–7 at many points when it speaks of Paul as “a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel” but who will nevertheless “suffer for the sake of my name.” See also Acts 13:47, which cites Isa 49:6 as a command for Paul and Barnabas, and Acts 26:17–18, which recalls Isa 42:7 (Dunn 1998a, 260).

⁴⁰ Gal 3:28; 1 Cor 7:21; Phm 1:16; cf. Eph 6:5, 8; Col 3:11, 3:22, 4:1; 1 Tim 6:1; Tit 2:9.

⁴¹ E.g. many times in Rom 6–8 and Gal 4.

⁴² E.g. many times in Rom 6–8; Rom 12:11, 14:18.

challenge popular notions of status and authority, not to communicate his distinct role as a special instrument of God’s global purposes.⁴³

As we have already seen, however, Paul explicitly directs his readers to view his ministry in terms of the “Holy Scriptures” (Rom 1:2). Although the term “servant” / “slave” (מַטְבֵּל עֲבָד) in the Scriptures may refer to any person who is “subject to the will of and serves another”,⁴⁴ in certain instances it does indeed carry a note of special distinctiveness, especially when the person being served is God himself.⁴⁵ In these cases, עֲבָד is often a relatively exalted title referring to instruments of God’s historical purposes.⁴⁶

The Septuagint translators frequently translated the Hebrew word עֲבָד with δοῦλος—the word which Paul himself uses in Rom 1:1.⁴⁷ Some scholars claim that the preferred LXX translation for עֲבָד is παῖς, and that δοῦλος is much rarer. For example, Combes claims that in Isaiah, “παῖς is far more common [than δοῦλος] vis-à-vis the chosen men of God,”⁴⁸ and cites Isa 49:6 LXX as the “classic expression of vocation”.⁴⁹ If Combes’s claim were true, it may weaken our case that Paul’s self-designation as δοῦλος is an allusion to the figure of the Isaianic Servant, and in particular to Isa 49:1–7. However, Combes’s claim simply does not stand up to close scrutiny. The occurrence of παῖς as a translation for עֲבָד in Isa 49:6 does not prove Combes’s case at all, since there are three other occurrences of עֲבָד in Isa 49:1–7, all of which are translated with δοῦλος, not παῖς (Isa 49:3, 5, 7). In fact, in the book of Isaiah more widely, when עֲבָד refers to a singular or plural agent of YHWH, the LXX

⁴³ E.g. Combes 1998, 77–92.

⁴⁴ Callender 1998, 73. The term can denote “a wide range of relations, from that of a social inferior to a social superior to chattel slavery.” (73)

⁴⁵ The special “servants of the Lord” include Israel as a whole (e.g. Deut 32:36; Ps 34:22 [LXX 33:23]) and significant individuals within Israel—e.g. Abraham (Ps 105:42 [LXX 104:42]), Moses (Ps 105:26 [LXX 104:26]), Joshua (Josh 24:29 [LXX 24:30]) and David (2 Sam 7:5; Ps 78:70 [LXX 77:70]) (Lohse 2003, 60).

⁴⁶ Sandnes 1991, 147–148; Sass 1941. We need not, however, presume that the “exalted” nature of the title excludes the concept of humble service (cf., e.g. Isa 49:7); see below.

⁴⁷ According to an analysis conducted using the Bibleworks 7 parallel BHS-LXX tool, the LXX translates 301 out of 810 occurrences (37%) of the word עֲבָד with the word δοῦλος; conversely, 301 out of 311 occurrences (97%) of the word δοῦλος in the LXX are translations of עֲבָד.

⁴⁸ Combes 1998, 78.

⁴⁹ Combes 1998, 78–79.

uses the translation δούλος (or a participial form of δουλεύειν) with approximately the same frequency as παῖς.⁵⁰ In the LXX as a whole, δούλος is used to translate עֶבֶד almost as much as παῖς.⁵¹ Furthermore, there is compelling evidence that in Paul’s first-century Jewish context, the term δούλος was coming to replace παῖς as the preferred Greek equivalent for עֶבֶד. Josephus and Philo often substitute παῖς with δούλος when citing or recounting biblical narratives or laws.⁵² Later Greek versions such as Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotion frequently use δούλος in place of the LXX παῖς to refer to the Isaianic “Servant of the Lord” (i.e. Isa 41:8, 9; 42:1; 49:6; 52:13).⁵³ Not only does this suggest a general trajectory of an increasing preference for δούλος instead of παῖς in the centuries following the translation of the LXX,⁵⁴ it also may be preserving translations used in Paul’s own time. There is good reason, then, to conclude that Paul intends δούλος to be a straightforward verbal allusion to the Isaianic Servant, the עֶבֶד of God / YHWH, a figure with a distinct role in God’s global purposes.⁵⁵

The use of δούλος as a title of distinction can, in fact, be observed at the beginning of other Jewish letters. The formula in Rom 1:1—δούλος in the nominative case, in

⁵⁰ Δούλος or δουλεύειν is used 15 times (substantive δούλος: Isa 42:19; 48:20; 49:3, 5, 7; 56:6; 63:17; 65:9; participle of δουλεύειν: Isa 53:11; 65:8, 13 (3x), 14, 15), παῖς is used 17 times (20:3; 22:20; 37:35; 41:8, 9; 42:1, 19; 43:10; 44:1, 2, 21 (2x), 26; 45:4; 49:6; 50:10; 52:13), and another word is used twice (θεραπεύουσιν: Isa 54:17; σεβομένοις: Isa 66:14). Although the terms δούλος and παῖς had slightly different technical meanings in official documents of the Hellenistic and Roman periods, the LXX appears to be treating them as synonyms, which is more consistent with the private daily vocabulary of the period (Wright 1998, 89–100).

⁵¹ The LXX translates 37% of the occurrences of the word עֶבֶד with δούλος (see n. 47), compared to 41% (334 out of 810) with παῖς. There are, nevertheless, variations in preference across individual books. The LXX of the Pentateuch strongly prefers παῖς over δούλος as a translation for עֶבֶד. In Isaiah, however, as we have seen, the translation δούλος is more common.

⁵² E.g. compare Josephus, *A.J.* 2.55 with Gen 39:19; *A.J.* 4.282 with Exod 21:32; compare Philo, *Leg.* 3.198 with Exod 21:5; for more examples see Wright 1998 (99, 103–105). Josephus’s and Philo’s reluctance to reproduce the word παῖς from the LXX probably stems from a change in common usage: at this time, the term had a more common meaning of “child” rather than “servant” / “slave”; see e.g. Josephus, *A.J.* 2.38, 4.289; Philo, *Leg.* 3.121 (Wright 1998, 99–100). Of course, the preference for using δούλος in place of the LXX παῖς was not absolute; see e.g. Philo, *Leg.* 3.194; Matt 12:18; Acts 3:13, 3:26, 4:25, 4:27, 4:30.

⁵³ Ziegler 1939, 272–273, 276, 305, 320. Theodotion shows the same tendency to use δούλος instead of the LXX’s παῖς in Daniel (see Dan 3:93 [trans. MT Dan 3:26]; 9:6, 10, 11, 17) (Ziegler 1954, 134, 184–185, 187).

⁵⁴ Katz and Ziegler 1958, 270–273.

⁵⁵ This positive, vocational notion of the δούλος of God does not appear to have any parallels in contemporary Hellenistic literature (Wright 1998, 109).

apposition to the author's name, modified by a genitive noun denoting an exalted / divine master—also occurs in other Jewish letters which seek to invest the author with divine authority. For example, a letter from Baruch to Jeremiah within the narrative of *4 Baruch* (*4 Bar.* 6.17–23) begins: Βαρούχ ὁ δοῦλος τοῦ θεοῦ (*4 Bar.* 6.17). The narrative surrounding the letter implies that the title δοῦλος is being used to depict Baruch as the agent of a special revelation from God (see esp. *4 Bar.* 6.8, 10).⁵⁶ Similarly, the New Testament letter of James begins: Ἰάκωβος θεοῦ καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ δοῦλος (Jas 1:1). The term δοῦλος here places James in the line of authoritative instruments whom God uses to communicate divine revelation.⁵⁷ Since James and *4 Baruch* almost certainly represent traditions independent of Paul in this respect,⁵⁸ it is reasonable to suppose that the self-introduction of a Jewish letter-writer as δοῦλος of Christ or of God to indicate that the writer is an authoritative instrument of divine revelation was a relatively widespread practice. Paul's use of the same formula followed by explicit reference to Jewish themes, then, also implies that he is claiming a kind of divine authority for himself with respect to his readers. This further supports our case that Paul is alluding to the figure of the Isaianic Servant, since the Servant himself is described as having divine authority to speak God's words (e.g. Isa 49:1–2; cf. 52:13).

Of course, Paul's allusion to the Isaianic Servant does not exclude the notion of humility. In fact, such an allusion would have been an even more profound challenge to popular notions of status and authority than a simple reference to the contemporary institution of slavery. In Isaiah, the Servant's divine authority is not opposed to the notion of humility; rather, the Servant's authority is affirmed *in the midst of* humility, astonishing rejection and suffering (Isa 49:4, 7; 52:14; 53:1–4, 7–9).⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Cf. Taatz 1991, 78–79: the use of the title δοῦλος τοῦ θεοῦ shows “dass eine Beauftragung durch Gott vorliegt” (79).

⁵⁷ Burchard 2000, 48. Indeed, Ἰακωβ himself is called God's δοῦλος in the Scriptures (e.g. Isa 48:20; Jer 46:27 [LXX 26:27], Ezek 28:25).

⁵⁸ The Christian redaction of *4 Baruch* is probably to be limited mainly to the addition of 9:10–32 (see Herzer's discussion in the critical edition of *4 Baruch*, 2005, xxxiv–xxxv; see also Taatz 1991, 77).

⁵⁹ Cf. Luther 1961: “In this word, there is majesty as well as humility” (7).

(b) Δοῦλος: A common term for believers?

A second objection to seeing Paul's use of the term δοῦλος as a reference to the Isaianic Servant is that Paul elsewhere describes his *readers* using the δουλ- word-group (Rom 6–8, 12:11, 14:4). On this basis, some scholars conclude that Paul is using δοῦλος in Rom 1:1 primarily to *identify* with his readers by invoking his common status as a slave of God, not to distinguish himself from them by invoking a special divine role for himself. John Byron, for example, after examining Paul's references to slavery in the body of Romans (esp. Rom 6–8),⁶⁰ concludes:

In Romans 1:1, Paul's self-identification as a slave of Christ may be interpreted as a declaration of his common position with all believers [...] it is not an honorific title or designation of leadership but is a conscious recognition of his position as a Jew, as a slave of God, for whom the baptismal identification with the Christ event has provided a way to fulfill his obligations to God.⁶¹

However, since the word δοῦλος was such a common term, it was quite possible for the same author to use it in different ways.⁶² There is no compelling reason to assume that the meaning of the term in Rom 1:1 must be determined by its use five chapters later. The meaning of the word should, rather, be inferred directly from the immediate context. In this case, the immediate context shows that it is highly unlikely that Paul is using the word δοῦλος *only* in order to identify himself with his readers. Paul uses other terms in apposition to δοῦλος in Rom 1:1—the clearly authoritative title ἀπόστολος (cf. Gal 1:1, 1 Cor 1:1, 2 Cor 1:1),⁶³ and the claim to be “set apart” or “consecrated” (verb ἀφορίζειν) by God. These are clearly not expressions of identification, but of divinely ordained distinctiveness.⁶⁴ Although Paul *qualifies* his distinction from his readers by expressions of solidarity—for example, he shares the same κύριος as his readers (Rom 1:1, 4, 7),⁶⁵ and speaks of

⁶⁰ Byron 2003, 207–231.

⁶¹ Byron 2003, 233.

⁶² This may be illustrated by Paul's use of the term in Philippians. Although Paul and Timothy's role as δοῦλοι (Phil 1:1) may be connected in *some* ways to Christ's actions as δοῦλος (Phil 2:6–11, see Byron 2003, 150–180), there is also a very significant element of uniqueness in Christ's actions. Only Christ is in the form of God, only Christ died on a cross, and only Christ receives the worship of all creatures.

⁶³ Martin 1990, 51; Schnider and Stenger 1987, 7–11.

⁶⁴ Schnider and Stenger 1987, 12.

⁶⁵ Schnider and Stenger 1987, 12–13.

mutual encouragement (Rom 1:10–11)—this qualification only implies that Paul’s authority is not meant to be taken as an overbearing, tyrannical form of authority. Indeed, Paul uses certain key terms within Rom 1:1–7 to imply *both* a connection *and* a distinction between himself and his readers. Paul has been “called” (κλητός) apostle (Rom 1:1); his readers, on the other hand, have been “called” (κλητός) to belong to Christ and to be holy (Rom 1:6–7).⁶⁶ Paul has received “grace” (χάρις) and “apostleship” (ἀποστολή), for the task of bringing about the obedience of faith in the nations (Rom 1:5); his readers, on the other hand, are described as receiving “grace” (χάρις) *through* Paul’s apostleship (Rom 1:6–7).⁶⁷ Since Paul can use the words κλητός and χάρις to express a qualified distinction between himself and his readers even within the space of a few verses, there is no reason to assume that he cannot use the term δοῦλος in the same way, especially since the distance between Paul’s self-reference as δοῦλος and his next use of the word-group is a whole six chapters!

Paul’s use of the word δοῦλος, then, carries connotations both of self-denying service towards his master, God / Christ (cf. 2 Cor 4:5),⁶⁸ and of derived authority towards his readers. We need not collapse the reciprocity between Paul and his readers⁶⁹ into an undifferentiated sameness. In fact, it is this difference between Paul and his addressees which forms the basis for Paul’s positive interaction and identification with them. Indeed, Paul’s use of a scriptural term which implies a *distinct* role for a Jew (i.e. himself) in relation to his Gentile readers is clearly germane to his purpose of preaching a gospel which is “for the Jew *first*, and *also* for the Greek” (Rom 1:15–16).⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Cf. a similar dual use of the word in 1 Cor 1:1, κλητὸς ἀπόστολος, and 1 Cor 1:2, κλητοῖς ἁγίοις.

⁶⁷ So for Luther (1961), Paul’s special apostolic service is somewhat analogous to, but not identical with, that of other Christians. Paul is “a *servant of God* for others and over others and for the sake of others” (8).

⁶⁸ Hence the word δοῦλος may also have helped to “soften” Paul’s assertion of apostolic authority in a letter to a church which he himself has not founded (Schnider and Stenger 1987, 10; cf. Lohse 2003, 60–61).

⁶⁹ E.g. Patte 2010, 222.

⁷⁰ Stenschke 2010, 202–203.

(c) *Δοῦλος*: An economic or political allusion?

A third objection to understanding Paul's use of the term *δοῦλος* as a reference to the Isaianic Servant arises from the claim that Greco-Roman economic or political institutions provide a better and more straightforward context for his use of the term. The claim we are engaging with here is not simply that Paul's Roman readership may have *heard* economic or political resonances in the term *δοῦλος*; rather it is that Paul's primary *intention* was to allude to economic or political institutions.

Dale Martin, for example, sees the background of the term *δοῦλος* in the domestic life of Greco-Roman society. He argues that Paul envisages Christ as the master of a Greco-Roman household, and depicts himself in the role of a Greco-Roman "manager slave" who shares in the status of the household master towards the household members.⁷¹ According to Martin, this rhetorical manoeuvre appeals to the aspirations of Paul's lower-class readership, since the slave of a household ruler had a position of derived authority and could wield a great deal of power on behalf of his master.⁷²

Michael Brown, on the other hand, sees in the term *δοῦλος* an allusion to the political life of the Roman Empire.⁷³ According to Brown, Paul envisages Christ in the position of Caesar, and implicitly compares his own situation with that of the high-ranking slaves of Caesar's household.⁷⁴ Like these slaves, Paul is bringing a message from the highest authority. Since the message is being delivered by a slave, however, it cuts across the status quo of his own society and creates a certain alienation from those around him—in this case, his gospel without circumcision equalizes Jews and Gentiles and so alienates him from the "Jerusalem' gospel" which insists on circumcision.⁷⁵ Thus, according to Brown, Paul's use of the term is not a scriptural

⁷¹ Martin 1990, 56–59.

⁷² Martin 1990, 56–57.

⁷³ Brown 2001.

⁷⁴ According to Brown (2001, 734–735), Rom 1:2–4 conforms to the style of imperial propaganda, which was typically promulgated by members of Caesar's household (cf. Jewett 1982, 13). For a description of the social status of this group, see Meeks 1983 (21–22).

⁷⁵ Brown 2001, 736.

allusion at all, but rather a device which would have been well understood by addressees in Rome, designed to elicit sympathy and create solidarity.

Our discussion so far, however, has shown that the Jewish Scriptures are both necessary and sufficient to explain Paul's intention in his use of the term *δοῦλος* in Rom 1:1. In Rom 1:1–5, Paul refers explicitly to the Jewish Scriptures (Rom 1:2), speaks explicitly of Christ in terms of Jewish Messianic expectations (Rom 1:3),⁷⁶ and uses terms for his own ministry, including *δοῦλος*, which allude to specific Jewish Scriptures such as Isaiah 40–55. Since Paul's use of the term *δοῦλος* fits well with this explicitly stated Jewish scriptural background, it is unnecessary to propose an alternative, implicit and unstated Greco-Roman economic or political background.⁷⁷ This is not, of course, to deny that Paul may have intended secondary allusions to Roman household or imperial institutions. Indeed, the possible resonances of the word *δοῦλος* proposed by Martin and Brown may have strengthened the force of Paul's depiction of himself as an individual with divine authority, sent to bring a message of salvation for the sake of the Gentiles. Nevertheless, Paul's primary allusion is to the figure of the Isaianic Servant of the Lord.

3.1.3. Paul's identification with the Isaianic Servant: Significance

We may conclude, then, that Paul uses the word *δοῦλος* in Rom 1:1 to describe his own vocation in terms of the "Servant" of the Lord in Isaiah 40–55 (especially Isa 49). The relevance of this allusion for Paul's own apostolic ministry becomes clear when we examine Isa 49 more closely. In this passage, the Servant is involved in a soteriological dynamic between Israel and the nations. The Servant is chosen by the Lord (Isa 49:1) to speak words which will achieve the Lord's purposes (Isa 49:2). In one sense, the vocation of the *δοῦλος* is a task given to Israel as a whole (Isa 49:3). Yet this vocation seems to be fulfilled in a particular representative *δοῦλος* *within*

⁷⁶ See further pp. 124–126.

⁷⁷ Brown (2001, 730–732) is sceptical about the existence of a significant Jewish presence in the Roman Christian community, which he claims (if true) would "shift the preponderance of the interpretive weight away from a Greco-Roman source toward a Hebrew [sic] Bible source for the locus of the term's use" (730). The argument for a scriptural background, however, is not dependent on the possible demographics of the Roman church, but rather on the fact that Paul himself explicitly refers to Jewish Scripture in his subsequent text (e.g. 1:2–5). In any case, there was almost certainly a significant Jewish presence in the Roman Christian community (see p. 38).

Israel (Isa 49:5). This representative δοῦλος has a two-fold vocation: to bring Israel as a whole back to the Lord (Isa 49:5) and also to extend the Lord's salvation to the end of the earth (Isa 49:6–7). The Servant's ministry to the Gentiles is, in turn, bound up with the restoration of Jerusalem ("Zion," Isa 49:14–26).⁷⁸ This prophetic expectation is neither "universalistic" nor "nationalistic" in any absolute sense. Isaiah 40–55 expects that Israel's final exaltation above all the other nations will also be the prerequisite for her service as God's agent, ruling the nations with divine justice and mercy.⁷⁹

Paul is thus self-consciously appropriating a text which speaks explicitly about a soteriological dynamic between Israel and the nations. This, of course, undergirds the Jew-Gentile dynamic in Paul's own apostolic ministry. Paul is thus not simply identifying with his Gentile readers, nor is he presenting himself as a unique prophetic figure.⁸⁰ Rather, Paul is placing his own apostolic ministry within the context of *Israel's* distinct role vis-à-vis the nations.

3.2. Paul and Israel's priesthood

In addition to his self-identification as the Isaianic Servant (see section 3.1), Paul uses cultic terminology to describe his apostolic ministry in the outer frame of Romans. In the introduction and conclusion of Romans, there are two parallel formulations: Paul is "set apart to the gospel of God" (ἀφορισμένος εἰς εὐαγγέλιον θεοῦ; Rom 1:1) and is "performing priestly service for the gospel of God" (ἱεουργοῦντα τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ; Rom 15:16). As we will now see, this cultic terminology is informed directly by two prophetic scriptural passages. The first passage is Jer 1:1–5, which introduces Jeremiah's prophetic-priestly ministry to the nations. The second passage is Isaiah 60–61, which describes Israel's eschatological priestly role toward the nations. Paul's self-description in the terms of these

⁷⁸ Wilson (1986, 262–288) analyses Isaiah 49 as consisting of two chiasms (vv. 1–13, 14–26), enclosed by references to the nations (vv. 1a, 26b). The careers of the Servant (vv. 1–13) and Zion (vv. 14–26) are parallel to one another. The Servant's exaltation is therefore continuous with Zion's glorification.

⁷⁹ Cf. Van Winkle (1985), who explores this theme in Isaiah 40–55.

⁸⁰ Pace Munck 1959, 24–26.

scriptural passages reinforces his depiction of his apostolic ministry as an eschatological Jew-Gentile dynamic.

3.2.1. Paul's consecration

In Rom 1:1, Paul describes himself as having been “set apart” (verb ἀφορίζειν) for the gospel of God. In the Septuagint, the ἀφορι- word-group is often used in cultic contexts, and is frequently associated with the “holiness” (ἁγία-) word-group.⁸¹ It is used to emphasize the difference between the holy and the common or unclean: e.g. the requirement to separate the common people from a holy place (Exod 19:12, 23); the requirement to separate a diseased person from the community of Israel (Lev 13:4–5); or the need for Israel, as God’s holy people, to separate themselves from the surrounding nations (e.g. Lev 20:26, Isa 52:11). Such separation is seldom an end in itself; rather, the word-group is usually used in cases where objects (e.g. Exod 29:26–27), portions of land (e.g. Lev 27:21, Ezek 45:4), or people (e.g. Num 8:11) are reserved for God’s special use, in order to achieve God’s further purposes.⁸² Elsewhere, Paul uses the term both in a negative sense—to describe Peter’s illegitimate withdrawal from table-fellowship with Gentile “sinners” (Gal 2:12, cf. 2:15)—and in a positive sense, to command his Gentile readers to set themselves apart from unbelievers (2 Cor 6:17, citing Isa 52:11).⁸³ Here in Rom 1:1, Paul is not emphasizing the element of distance or separation from others. Rather, he is emphasizing the purposive aspect of the word ἀφορίζειν, claiming that he has been set apart for a particular divine *role*.⁸⁴

There is, moreover, a likely allusion in Rom 1:1 to the commissioning of Jeremiah, the “priest” (Jer 1:1) who was “consecrated” before he was born and appointed to be “prophet to the nations” (Jer 1:5). Paul elsewhere describes his ministry using language reminiscent of Jeremiah’s commissioning: Paul has the Lord’s authority for “building” and not for “tearing down” (2 Cor 10:8, 13:10, cf. Jer 1:10).⁸⁵ There are

⁸¹ Donaldson 1997, 255; Sandnes 1991, 61; Schmidt 1967, 454–455.

⁸² Cf. Sir 47:2, which applies this cultic metaphor to David, depicting him as having been “set apart” or “consecrated” from the sons of Israel, like a cultic offering, in order to save Israel and to establish cultic worship (cf. vv. 3–11).

⁸³ Cf. p. 220 n. 123.

⁸⁴ Cf. Acts 13:2.

⁸⁵ Paul is also, like Jeremiah, from the “tribe of Benjamin” (Rom 11:1, Jer 1:1); see further ch. 5, p. 236.

also strong verbal connections between Gal 1:15–16—which is a parallel passage to Rom 1:1⁸⁶—and Jer 1:5.⁸⁷ Both Paul and Jeremiah are called in their “mother’s womb” (compare ἐκ κοιλίας μητρός with ἐν κοιλίᾳ ... ἐκ μήτρας) and sent to the “nations” (ἔθνη). This strongly suggests that the word ἀφορίζειν, which occurs in both Rom 1:1 and Gal 1:15, is equivalent to Jeremiah’s “consecration” (verb ἀγιάζειν, Jer 1:5). As we have already seen, the ἀφορι- and ἀγία- word-groups are closely associated in the LXX (see e.g. Lev 20:26), which makes such an equivalence quite likely.⁸⁸ If Paul is indeed alluding to Jeremiah’s commissioning, then he is claiming that his calling to a proclamatory “prophetic” ministry toward the nations can also be understood metaphorically as a divine priestly consecration.

This cultic language in relation to Paul’s apostolic ministry appears later in Romans, in two ways. Firstly, in Rom 12:1, Paul urges the Roman Christ-believers to respond to God’s mercies by participating in a metaphorical cultic arrangement.⁸⁹ They are to offer their bodies as a “living sacrifice” (θυσία ζῶσα) which is “holy” (ἁγία), “acceptable to God” (εὐάρεστος τῷ θεῷ) and a “reasonable service” (λογικὴ λατρεία). Secondly, as we shall see now, Paul describes his own ministry in more elaborate cultic terms in Rom 15:16–19, 25–27.

3.2.2. Paul’s priestly ministry

In Rom 15, Paul claims that his boldness in writing arises from the “grace” given to him by God:

⁸⁶ See above, p. 90.

⁸⁷ Dunn 1998a, 259–260; Hultgren 2011, 42. This is in addition to the even stronger connections between Gal 1:15–16 and Isa 49:1–7 (Kim 2011, 13; Munck 1959, 26).

⁸⁸ According to Holtz (1966, 326), the word ἀφορίζειν in Gal 1:15 (cf. Rom 1:1) is conceptually closer to the term “choose” (ἐκλέγεσθαι, Isa 41:9) than it is to the term “consecrate” (ἀγιάζειν, Jer 1:5). Holtz does not, however, take into account the cultic connotations of the word ἀφορίζειν which we have highlighted above.

⁸⁹ See Gupta 2010, 116–127.

to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the nations,
performing priestly service in the gospel of God,
in order that the offering of the nations may be acceptable,
sanctified in the Holy Spirit. (Rom 15:16)

εἰς τὸ εἶναί με λειτουργὸν Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ εἰς τὰ ἔθνη,
ἱερουργοῦντα τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ,
ἵνα γένηται ἡ προσφορά τῶν ἔθνῶν εὐπρόσδεκτος,
ἡγιασμένη ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ.

As we have seen, Paul has already used cultic terminology in Romans to describe both his own gospel ministry (verb ἀφορίζειν, Rom 1:1) and his Gentile readers' response to the gospel (Rom 12:1). He has also referred to his readers using the term "holy" (ἅγιος, Rom 1:7; cf. Rom 12:1) and called them to act in accord with "holiness" (ἁγιασμός; Rom 6:19, 22).⁹⁰ He also employs identifiable "priestly" terminology in his discourse in Rom 14:1.⁹¹ In Rom 15:16, however, he dwells on cultic terminology even more vividly, describing his own gospel ministry as a cultic arrangement. The metaphorical use of cultic language occurs in a number of Jewish sources.⁹² However, as we shall now see, the terminology and concepts which Paul uses here find their closest parallels in Isaiah 60–61, which describes an eschatological priestly role for Israel toward the nations.

A connection between Isaiah 60–61 and Paul's apostolic ministry is initially suggested by the cluster of words used to describe the first-person figure in Isa 61:1 LXX. This verse alone contains a high concentration of key terms which Paul uses to describe himself and his ministry in his letters.⁹³ The figure in Isa 61:1 has the "Spirit" (πνεῦμα) of the Lord (cf. Rom 1:9; 15:16, 19; 1 Cor 2:10–14; 2 Cor 1:22) who has "anointed" (verb χρίειν) him (cf. 2 Cor 1:21) and "sent" (verb ἀποστέλλειν) him (cf. Rom 10:15, 1 Cor 1:17; and cf. ἀπόστολος / ἀποστολή in Rom 1:1, 5; 11:13; 1 Cor 1:1; 2 Cor 1:1; etc.) to "evangelize" (verb εὐαγγελίζεσθαι; cf. Rom 1:15, 10:15,

⁹⁰ Paul also uses the term "sanctuary" (ναός) elsewhere to describe his Gentile readers (1 Cor 3:16–17, 6:19; 2 Cor 6:16; cf. Eph 2:21).

⁹¹ E.g. his discussion of the non-ontological nature of the "profane" (κοινός) and the "pure" (καθαρός) and his affirmation (indeed, his protection) of distinctions within the "holy" community (esp. Rom 14:14, 20); see Ehrensperger 2010, esp. 101–109.

⁹² See below, pp. 120–122.

⁹³ Evans 1999, 115–117; Kim 2011, 14–15.

15:20; 1 Cor 1:17; etc.) and to “preach” (verb κηρύσσειν; cf. Rom 10:8, 14, 15; 1 Cor 1:23; 2 Cor 1:19). Isa 61:1, then, is a highly significant verse for Paul; indeed, it seems to constitute a “lexical resource” for his apostolic self-understanding.⁹⁴

Moreover, when we examine Rom 15:16–19 more closely, we see that the influence of Isaiah 60–61 on Paul’s apostolic self-understanding extends far beyond this single verse. In the Isaianic vision, the individual first-person gospel preacher (Isa 61:1) plays a decisive role in restoring *Israel* to her pre-eminent role as a glorious, global, eschatological priesthood, centred on a renewed and redeemed Zion. The restoration of Israel and the ingathering of the nations are interdependent phenomena: Israel’s existence as a redeemed people brings the “light” of revelation to the nations, while the nations provide Israel with glory and wealth. Although Isaiah 60–61 can be classified according to a more general Jewish literary type—the “eschatological pilgrimage of the nations”⁹⁵—it is this particular text which Paul seems to have in mind in Rom 15:16–19. There are numerous verbal and conceptual parallels between Isaiah 60–61 and Rom 15:16–19 which, although they are often overlooked, are in fact quite striking.

Firstly, there is a close correlation between Paul’s self-description in Rom 15:16 and the description of Israel’s global priesthood in Isa 61:6.⁹⁶ Paul, like Israel in Isa 61:6, is described as a “minister” (λειτουργός) who is “conducting priestly service” (verb ἱεουργεῖν; cf. the noun ἱερεῖς in Isa 61:6) towards the “nations” (ἔθνη).

There is also close correlation between Paul’s use of the phrase “the offering of the Gentiles” (ἡ προσφορά τῶν ἐθνῶν) in Rom 15:16 and the description of nations bringing their wealth to Israel in Isa 60:7. In Isaiah 60, the Gentiles come to Zion (Isa 60:3), bringing their wealth and livestock in order to provide sacrifices and furnishings for the temple (Isa 60:5–7). The particular terms used in Isa 60:7 to describe this contribution for the temple are echoed by Paul’s own choice of words in Rom 15:16. Paul’s ministry results in an “offering” (προσφορά; cf. the verb

⁹⁴ For the concept of a “lexical resource” see Watson 2009 (241–248).

⁹⁵ Eschatological pilgrimage texts include Isa 2:2–4; Isa 60–61; Mic 4:1–5; Zeph 3:8–10; Zech 2:11 (LXX 2:15); Amos 9:11–12 (cited in Acts 15:14–19); Tob 14:4–7 (Das 2003, 122; Köstenberger and O’Brien 2001, 40–42; Sanders 1992, 289–298).

⁹⁶ Beckheuer 1997, 220–222; Gibson 2011, 58–62.

ἀναφέρειν in Isa 60:7) “of the nations” (τῶν ἐθνῶν; cf. ἐθνῶν in Isa 60:5),⁹⁷ which becomes “acceptable” (εὐπρόσδεκτος; cf. δεκτά in Isa 60:7).

The expression “obedience of the nations” (ὑπακοὴ ἐθνῶν; Rom 15:18), along with the expression “obedience of faith” (ὑπακοὴ πίστεως) in Rom 1:5, is also suggestive of a concept which is depicted strikingly in Isaiah 60–61: the subordination of the nations to Israel and her God.⁹⁸ Certain Scriptures expect that the world’s rulers will “obey” (verb ὑπακούειν) God and Israel (Dan 7:27 *Theod.*), that the “nations” (ἔθνη) will “obey” (verb ὑπακούειν) David (Ps 18:43–44 [LXX 17:44–45]), and that through the Davidic ruler, the “nations” (ἔθνη) will “obey” (verb ὑπακούειν) Ephraim and Judah (Isa 11:14).⁹⁹ Although the word ὑπακοή itself is not used in Isaiah 60–61, the *theme* of the obedience of the nations is extraordinarily prominent in Isa 60:10–14, which forms the poetic centre of Isaiah 60:¹⁰⁰

For the nations and the kings which will not serve you shall perish, and those nations shall be utterly desolated. (Isa 60:12)

The sons of those who humiliated you and provoked you shall come to you in fear, and you shall be called the city of the Lord, Zion, of the Holy One of Israel. (Isa 60:14)

We are not, of course, suggesting here that Paul is claiming that his ministry will lead to the political subservience of the nations to Israel. In fact, in just a moment, we will highlight some of the significant *differences* between Paul’s description of his ministry and other Jewish eschatological expectations. Nevertheless, at this point we wish to point out that the terminology and concepts Paul uses to describe his ministry are intended to evoke certain identifiable Jewish eschatological

⁹⁷ Many interpreters take the genitive τῶν ἐθνῶν in Rom 15:16 as a genitive of apposition, implying that the Gentiles themselves are the offering (cf. Rom 12:1, Phil 2:17) (e.g. Cranfield 1975, 2.756 n. 3). This seems to be the sense of the “offering” in Isa 66:20 (Beckheuer 1997, 222–224). Others take τῶν ἐθνῶν as a subjective genitive, implying that the offering is the contribution which Paul mentions a few verses later in Rom 15:25–27 (e.g. Downs 2008, 149–156). We favour the latter view, on the grounds that Isa 60:7 is the primary background for Paul’s language here, not Isa 66:20. Nevertheless, we cannot rule out the possibility that Paul may be using the phrase to refer *both* to the Gentiles and to their contribution (so e.g. Kim 2011, 20 n. 20).

⁹⁸ Miller 2000, 40–49, 54–59.

⁹⁹ See also the Davidic Messiah in *Psalms of Solomon*: “He will have Gentile peoples serving [δουλεύειν] him under his yoke” (*Pss. Sol.* 17.30 [Wright]).

¹⁰⁰ Polan 2001, 64–66, 70.

expectations, particularly those expectations found in the eschatological vision of Isaiah 60–61.

The geographical features in Paul’s description of his ministry also echo the geographical elements of Israel’s priestly ministry in Isaiah 60–61. Paul’s ministry, like that of Israel, is centred on Jerusalem and brings the knowledge of God “in a circle” (κύκλω) to the nations surrounding Jerusalem (Rom 15:19; cf. Isa 60:2–4, esp. κύκλω in v. 4).¹⁰¹

A few verses later, Paul comes to speak of his delivery of a contribution of Gentile funds to Jerusalem (Rom 15:25–27). When read in the light of Isaiah 60–61, this collection can be understood as an outworking of Paul’s priestly ministry. Although the collection would undoubtedly have had concrete social implications for the relief of poverty amongst Christ-believers in Jerusalem,¹⁰² these implications alone cannot account for Paul’s intense personal involvement.¹⁰³ On the basis of parallels in 2 Cor 8–9 and 1 Cor 16:1–4, some scholars have suggested that the collection has an ecumenical purpose in uniting the assemblies of Jews and Gentiles.¹⁰⁴ While this may well be the case, it still does not explain the unique concepts in Rom 15:25–27, such as the Jerusalem-centred perspective and the spiritual indebtedness of the Gentiles to the Christ-believing Jews.¹⁰⁵ Also in need of explanation are the verbal links between Paul’s description of the “offering of the Gentiles” in Rom 15:16 and his description of the Gentile collection in Rom 15:25–27, 31: in both cases Paul uses the language of acceptability (εὐπρόσδεκτος), holiness (ἀγιάζειν / ἅγιος), and service (λειτουργεῖν / λειτουργός). These features are, in fact, all explicable against the background of Isaiah 60–61.

¹⁰¹ See also Isa 40:9, which speaks of the “evangelist of Jerusalem” (מְבַשְׂרֵת יְרוּשָׁלַיִם / ὁ εὐαγγελιζόμενος Ἱερουσαλημ). Scott (1995, 12–14, 135–149) argues that Paul is here influenced by the “Table-of-Nations tradition” which also informs the vision of Isaiah, especially Isa 66:18–20.

¹⁰² Longenecker 2010, 187–188.

¹⁰³ Kim 2011, 21; Munck 1959, 301–303.

¹⁰⁴ E.g. Kim 2011, 21.

¹⁰⁵ Watson 2007b, 190–191.

In Rom 15:25–27, Paul uses terminology reminiscent of the ministry of the first-person figure in Isa 61:1–3.¹⁰⁶ Paul describes his contribution for the Christ-believing Jews as being “for the poor of the holy ones in Jerusalem” (εἰς τοὺς πτωχοὺς τῶν ἁγίων τῶν ἐν Ἱερουσαλήμ, Rom 15:26; cf. v. 25). The first-person figure in Isa 61:1 also has a ministry “for the poor” (πτωχοῖς) who are in Jerusalem (i.e. Isa 61:3),¹⁰⁷ and who are shortly thereafter described as the “holy people” (λαὸς ἅγιος, Isa 62:12; cf. Isa 4:3).

Another feature of Paul’s description that is explicable against the background of Isaiah 60–61 is his assertion of the indebtedness of Gentiles to Jews (Rom 15:27). The vision in Isaiah describes an eschatological dynamic in which Israel and the nations play distinct but complementary roles. Israel, as a nation of priests, brings God’s revelation to the nations. The nations respond by bringing their offerings to Jerusalem. Israel is God’s instrument, achieving God’s eschatological purposes for the nations. Nevertheless, Israel retains a pre-eminent place within those purposes. Israel shares the “light” of God’s revelation with the Gentiles; the Gentiles respond by bringing material gifts to Israel. This provides a fitting context in which to understand Paul’s description of the Jew-Gentile dynamic in Rom 15:27. Christ-believing Jews, centred in Jerusalem, have provided “spiritual” blessings to the nations; thus the nations are bound to provide “material” blessings to these Christ-believing Jews.

There is, in fact, a connection between Paul’s portrayal of the Jew-Gentile dynamic in Rom 15:27 and his description of his own Gentile ministry elsewhere. In the introduction to Romans, Paul expresses his wish to impart a “spiritual gift” (χάρισμα ... πνευματικόν) to his readers (Rom 1:11)—i.e. to preach the gospel to them (cf. v. 15)—and to receive encouragement from their faith (Rom 1:12), which presumably includes receiving practical help for his mission (cf. Rom 15:24).¹⁰⁸ In 1 Cor 9:11, Paul reminds his readers that he has sown “spiritual things” (πνευματικά) among

¹⁰⁶ Kim (2011, 19–21) argues convincingly that there is strong evidence for the eschatological pilgrimage theme as the background to Paul’s thought here (esp vv. 25–32), esp. given the catena of citations in Rom 15:9–12; *pace* Downs 2008, 3–9.

¹⁰⁷ “Zion” (Isa 61:3) is identified with Jerusalem in Isa 62:1.

¹⁰⁸ Jewett 2007, 125.

his Gentile readers, which gives him the right to reap “fleshly things” (σαρκικῶς) from them (a right which he waives in this case). In Rom 15:27, Paul also describes the way in which Christ-believing Gentiles have come to partake “in the spiritual things” (τοῖς πνευματικοῖς) of Christ-believing Jews, which implies an obligation on Christ-believing Gentiles to be of service “in fleshly things” (ἐν τοῖς σαρκικοῖς) to Christ-believing Jews. Paul, in other words, describes the Jew-Gentile dynamic in Romans using the same terms he uses to describe the dynamic involved in his own gospel ministry in 1 Corinthians.

There is also a parallel between Paul’s self-description in the outer frame of Romans and his more compact self-description in Phil 2:16–17. In Phil 2:16, Paul expects to boast: “I did not labour in vain” (οὐκ ... εἰς κενὸν ἐκοπίασα; cf. the Servant’s expression κενῶς ἐκοπίασα, Isa 49:4),¹⁰⁹ implicitly portraying his ministry in terms of the Jew-Gentile dynamic that is a feature of the Isaianic Servant’s ministry (cf. Phil 1:1).¹¹⁰ Then, in Phil 2:17, Paul describes his distinct ministry in cultic terms: he is being “poured out” (verb σπένδειν) on the “sacrifice” (θυσία) and “service” (λειτουργία) of the Philippians’ “faith”—referring here to their gospel work in general (cf. Phil 1:27), and their monetary gift in particular (cf. Phil 2:30, 4:18).¹¹¹ This has parallels with the Jew-Gentile dynamic described in Rom 15, in which Paul acts as an Israelite priest to the nations, dispensing the gospel to the nations and, in turn, receiving their gifts (Rom 15:16, cf. the verb λειτουργεῖν in 15:27).¹¹²

Thus Paul’s cultic terminology, like his self-description as the Isaianic Servant, serves to locate his own apostolic ministry within the sphere of Jewish eschatological expectations concerning Israel’s distinct vocation towards the nations. Paul portrays himself as the first-person gospel-preacher of Isa 61:1, whose ministry is the catalyst for a more general “priestly” Jew-Gentile dynamic. Through Paul’s own apostolic ministry to the nations, Israel’s pre-eminent role as the source

¹⁰⁹ Dunn 1988, 1.8; O’Brien 1991, 300.

¹¹⁰ Thus, *pace* Byron (2003, 179–180), Paul’s introduction of himself and Timothy as δοῦλοι Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ is, like Rom 1:1, an intentional allusion to the Isaianic Servant.

¹¹¹ On Phil 4:18, see Donaldson 1997, 255.

¹¹² See also Philo, *Spec.* 2.167. Paul’s “continual prayer for all of you” (Phil 1:4) may also be a reference to a cultic Jew-Gentile dynamic (cf. Philo, *Mos.* 1.149).

of God's revelation to the world is restored. Thus Paul's proclamation of the divine gospel is a metaphorical "priesthood" which fulfils and enables Israel's own distinct priestly role in bringing divine revelation to the world. As we shall see when we examine the Rom 2:17–29 (ch. 4) and Rom 9–11 (ch. 5), Paul believes that these eschatological expectations can only be achieved through a thorough-going, radical *redefinition* of Jewish identity. Nevertheless, in the outer frame of Romans, Paul deliberately presents his apostolic ministry in relatively straightforward terms, as the fulfilment of Israel's vocation.

3.3. Paul and contemporary expressions of Jewish vocation

We have seen that Paul, in the outer frame of Romans, consciously places his apostolic ministry within the sphere of certain identifiable Jewish eschatological expectations concerning Israel's distinct role in God's worldwide purposes. On the one hand, Paul portrays himself as the Isaianic Servant who both restores Israel and represents Israel by extending divine salvation to the nations (section 3.1). On the other hand, Paul speaks of his ministry in priestly terms, alluding particularly to Jer 1:5 and Isaiah 60–61 (section 3.2). Paul thereby indicates to his readers that his gospel ministry establishes Israel's pre-eminent role in mediating divine revelation to the nations. We will now assess the similarities and differences between Paul's expression of Jewish vocation and the various expressions of Jewish vocation amongst Paul's contemporaries.

Consistent with our overall approach, our aim here is to understand how Paul's apostolic mission relates to his Jewish *identity*.¹¹³ Hence we are not seeking primarily to describe the organizational patterns or other historical phenomena associated with Paul's mission. Rather, we are seeking to investigate the way in which Paul himself understands and describes his apostolic mission, especially in relation to his Jewish identity. In this section, we will compare and contrast Paul's own description of his mission with other expressions of vocational consciousness amongst Paul's Jewish contemporaries. We will take Paul's self-description in the outer frame of Romans (Rom 1:1–15, 15:14–33) as our primary point of reference, but we will also use data from other parts of Paul's letters where appropriate.

¹¹³ For a summary of our approach in this regard, see ch. 1, p. 14.

Historical considerations are, of course, still relevant for our investigation. In the course of our discussion in this section, we will engage with a vigorous scholarly debate concerning the nature and extent of “missionary” activity amongst first-century non-Christian Diaspora Jews. Some scholars in this area, especially those writing prior to 1990, have taken a “maximalist” position.¹¹⁴ According to this construal, there was widespread missionary activity amongst second-temple Jews—activity which is directly comparable with Paul’s own missionary endeavours. Other scholars, however, have adopted an alternative, “minimalist” position.¹¹⁵ Those who advocate the minimalist position do not deny that a significant number of Gentiles were attracted to Jewish beliefs and practices, or that Jews often welcomed such converts. They are also willing to admit that Jews had a strong sense of divine vocation, and that Jews expressed this sense of vocation in various ways.¹¹⁶ They argue, however, that few or none of these expressions of Jewish vocation can be said to constitute “mission” in the strict sense—i.e. active efforts to convert non-Jews to a Jewish way of life. Hence they are not properly comparable with Paul’s mission. Others, most notably James Carleton Paget and John Dickson, have taken a “medial” position in the debate.¹¹⁷ They accept the minimalist view that there was a variety of expressions of Jewish vocation, but they argue that each of these expressions of Jewish vocation contributes in some way to a sense of active “mission” amongst Jews. Carleton Paget maintains that the various expressions of Jewish vocation, taken together, constitute cumulative evidence for the existence of a “missionary consciousness” which is comparable with the early Christian sense of mission.¹¹⁸ Dickson conceives of a variegated pattern of Jewish “mission-commitment,” which

¹¹⁴ For an earlier influential proponent of the “maximalist” position, see Georgi (1987, 83–228), writing on Paul’s opponents in 2 Corinthians. For a more recent proponent, see Feldman (1993, 288–341). Riesner (2000, 211–221) provides further discussion of the debate prior to the early 1990s. For the term “maximalist” see Carleton Paget 1996 (76).

¹¹⁵ The minimalist position was pioneered by Munck (1959, 264–276) and later vigorously promoted by Goodman (1992; 1994). It has recently gained more widespread advocacy (e.g. Bird 2010; Köstenberger and O’Brien 2001, 55–71; McKnight 1991; Ware 2005, 23–55, 251–256). For the term “minimalist” see Carleton Paget 1996 (76).

¹¹⁶ For Bird (2010, 150), the fact that converts were often welcomed (e.g. Philo, *Spec.* 1.52, *Legat.* 211, *Virt.* 102–103; Josephus, *C. Ap.* 2.210, 2.261) constitutes support for “a pervasive consciousness that [Jews] had a divinely given role vis-à-vis the nations” (cf. Carleton Paget 1996, 86). Goodman (1992) concedes: “I do not doubt either that Jews firmly believed in their role as religious mentors of the Gentile world or that Jews expected that in the last days the Gentiles would in fact come to recognize the glory of God and divine rule on earth.” (53)

¹¹⁷ For the term “medial” see Carleton Paget 1996 (102).

¹¹⁸ Carleton Paget 1996.

constitutes a “continuum of mission” with the ultimate goal of “conversion” and which forms the paradigm for a similarly variegated pattern of “mission-commitment” in Paul’s own communities.¹¹⁹ The various participants in this debate all agree that there was a broad spectrum of vocational consciousness amongst Paul’s Jewish contemporaries, but disagree about whether and to what extent this spectrum of vocational consciousness is comparable with Paul’s own mission.

In light of this disagreement, and consistent with our overall approach, we will avoid using the term “mission” in relation to Paul’s Jewish contemporaries. Rather, we will refer to the broader concept of “vocation.” We will examine, in turn, each element within the broad spectrum of vocational consciousness amongst Paul’s Jewish contemporaries, comparing and contrasting it with Paul’s description of his apostolic mission. We will, in other words, seek to understand how Paul’s description of his apostolic mission “maps” onto this spectrum of Jewish vocational consciousness.¹²⁰ We will find that there are a number of points of contact between Paul’s expression of Jewish vocation (i.e. his Gentile mission) and elements of the spectrum of vocational consciousness amongst Paul’s Jewish contemporaries. Nevertheless, we will find that Paul’s self-description corresponds more closely to certain Jewish eschatological expectations concerning Israel’s role vis-à-vis the nations than it does to any other expression of Israel’s vocation amongst Paul’s Jewish contemporaries.

3.3.1. “Proselytism”?

We will first assess the proposal that Paul’s mission can be understood in terms of first-century Jewish “proselytism.”

It must be noted from the outset that the modern term “proselytism” is itself misleading, because it does not really correspond with the second-temple Jewish

¹¹⁹ Dickson 2003, 8–9, 85, 313. On pp. 86–132, Dickson argues for the existence of the same kind of two-fold missionary pattern amongst the Pauline communities as that seen amongst Paul’s Jewish contemporaries: a few specific individuals are called to proclaim the gospel (comparable to the small number of Jewish “proselytizers”), while all members of the community are called to “promote” the gospel (comparable to the generalized Torah-promoting “mission-commitment” of the majority of Jews).

¹²⁰ Cf. Donaldson’s (1997) “remapping” of Paul’s “convictional world.” Like Donaldson, we are proposing a “remapping” of Paul’s convictions; however, we disagree with Donaldson’s findings at a number of key points.

term “proselyte.” In the scholarly literature, “proselytism” usually denotes an *active effort* to persuade non-Jews to become Jews.¹²¹ Yet when second-temple Jews use the term προσήλυτος, such active efforts are seldom in the foreground of the discussion. In the second-temple period, the term προσήλυτος tends to be reserved for direct citations or discussions of scriptural texts which describe foreigners residing in the land of Israel (cf. Hebrew גֵּר).¹²² The Scriptures themselves are not concerned with whether or how to actively *seek* “proselytes,” but rather with how to treat any foreigners who happen to be in Israel. For example, every προσήλυτος must keep the Sabbath (Exod 23:12) and refrain from blood (Lev 17:10); the προσήλυτος must also be circumcised in the event that he wishes to participate in the Passover (e.g. Exod 12:48–49, Num 9:14); and in all cases the προσήλυτος must be treated well (e.g. Deut 10:17–19). In a similar way, second-temple Jewish discussions which use the word προσήλυτος are seldom concerned with “proselytism” (i.e. seeking proselytes), but rather with how to apply scriptural texts to the case of non-Jews who, for whatever reason, wish to be associated with the Jewish community. For example, Philo’s discussion of the command, “You shall not oppress a προσήλυτος” in Exod 22:21 [LXX 22:20] is intended to answer the question of whether the Gentiles associated with his own Jewish community should be required to be circumcised—in this case, he concludes that they should not (*QE* 2.2).¹²³ Nevertheless, since the term “proselytism” is used so widely in the scholarly literature to denote intentional activity on the part of Jews aimed at persuading non-Jews to become Jews, we will use the term in this way in the following discussion.

As we have already noted, there are few unambiguous examples of this kind of intentional “proselytism” in our sources.¹²⁴ The text which most clearly fits this description is Josephus’s account of the conversion of King Izates of Adiabene (*A.J.* 20.34–46). There are two stages to Izates’s conversion. Initially, a Jew named

¹²¹ E.g. “an impulse to draw non-Jews into Judaism” (Goodman 1992, 53–54).

¹²² Josephus, for example, does not use the word at all. Philo only uses it when citing and interpreting specific scriptural passages: Exod 22:21 [LXX 22:20] (*QE* 2.2), Lev 25:23 (*Cher.* 108, 119), Deut 10:17–19 (*Spec.* 1.51, 308) and Deut 26:13 (*Somn.* 2.272–273).

¹²³ See ch. 4, pp. 171–172.

¹²⁴ The fact that a number of non-Jews did indeed become Jews is not directly relevant to this discussion, since this phenomenon can be explained by the inherent attractiveness of the Jewish way of life (Ware 2005, 54).

Ananias persuades Izates to “worship God according to Jewish customs” (*A.J.* 20.34–35). Subsequently, another stricter Jew named Eleazar persuades Izates to become a “Jew” (Ἰουδαῖος) in the “proper” sense (cf. βεβραίων in 20.38), by being circumcised (20.44–46).¹²⁵ Certainly Eleazar’s activity, and perhaps also Ananias’s activity, can be regarded as “proselytism” according to the generally recognized modern definition. The narrative in Josephus may also be related to Jesus’ polemical reference to the Pharisees who go to extraordinary lengths to “make a single proselyte” (Matt 23:15).¹²⁶

Our question is whether Paul regarded himself as engaging in “proselytism” in this sense. Of course, there are broad correlations between Eleazar’s activity and Paul’s missionary endeavours. Eleazar sought to persuade a Gentile to worship the God of Israel through becoming Jewish; Paul seeks to persuade Gentiles to worship the God of Israel through believing in Christ (Rom 1:3–5, 13–15). The question, however, is whether Paul himself would have admitted a close correspondence between this kind of Jewish “proselytizing” activity and his own mission.

Terence Donaldson has mounted a detailed case that Paul does indeed understand his own mission as a modified form of Jewish proselytism.¹²⁷ According to Donaldson, Paul’s mission cannot be understood in terms of Jewish expectations concerning the eschatological ingathering of the nations.¹²⁸ Rather, Donaldson argues, the Jewish background to Paul’s mission must be sought in a conjectured Torah wisdom tradition which assumed that “the only hope Gentiles had of participating in the coming age of salvation was to become proselytes to Israel in the present age.”¹²⁹ This belief, if it existed, would have led to “an almost inevitable tendency toward proselytism as the means by which the Gentiles too can find

¹²⁵ Carleton Paget 1996, 88–91; McKnight 1991, 73–74. Further possible examples of texts which may imply “proselytism” include Josephus, *A.J.* 18.81–82; Philo, *Spec.* 1.320–323 (Dickson 2003, 37–39).

¹²⁶ Goodman (1994, 69–72) argues that the term “proselyte” in Matt 23:15 refers to a *Jewish* convert to the Pharisaic sect. Carleton Paget (1996, 94–97), however, argues that the term “proselyte” here, as elsewhere, most likely refers to a Gentile convert to Judaism.

¹²⁷ Donaldson 1997.

¹²⁸ Donaldson (1997, 187–197) maintains that there are a number of significant anomalies between Paul’s description of his mission and the form of these expectations.

¹²⁹ Donaldson 1997, 236. Donaldson defends this claim in an earlier article (1993, 94–98), and returns to it in a later work (2007, 333–338, 491, 510).

Wisdom and be assured of salvation.”¹³⁰ Donaldson argues that this is what Paul means when he refers to his past “preaching circumcision” (Gal 5:11).¹³¹ In Paul’s former “convictional world,” “Israel” was understood as the exclusive “community of salvation” and the “Torah” was the instrument which defined its “boundary markers”; hence “the Gentiles’ share in salvation was dependent on their becoming full members of Israel [...] on equal terms with Jews” (i.e. being circumcised).¹³² When Christ revealed himself to Paul, the fundamental shape of Paul’s convictional world remained basically intact. Paul simply replaced the “Torah” with “Christ,” and updated his other convictions accordingly. Hence Paul believes that salvation is still dependent upon entry into “Israel.” However, Paul believes that the boundary markers for Israel are now associated with faith in Christ, not Torah.¹³³ Hence “Paul thinks of the Gentiles as ‘proselytes’ to an Israel defined not by Torah but by Christ.”¹³⁴ *Mutatis mutandis*, Paul’s mission can be understood in terms of the proselytizing imperative from his pre-Christ-believing Jewish past.¹³⁵

Donaldson’s argument is subject to a number of serious criticisms. Firstly, there is little direct evidence that any Jewish proselytic activity in the first century was motivated by a conviction that Gentiles had no hope of future salvation unless they became Jews, as Donaldson claims.¹³⁶ None of the pre-Rabbinic texts which Donaldson cites clearly support this contention.¹³⁷ The story of Izates’s conversion

¹³⁰ Donaldson 1997, 207, cf. 277–284. Donaldson concedes the existence of many other patterns of Jewish “universalism” which did not necessarily involve intentional proselytism (Donaldson 1997, 54–74; cf. Donaldson 2007). He claims, however, that in *Paul’s* Jewish background, intentional proselytism was a very significant factor.

¹³¹ Donaldson 1997, 277–284.

¹³² Donaldson 1997, 78, 242.

¹³³ Donaldson 1997, 197–214.

¹³⁴ Donaldson 1997, 207. See also p. 236.

¹³⁵ Donaldson 1997, 74–78.

¹³⁶ Donaldson 1993, 94–98; 2007, 180–182, 185–191, 333–338, 491, 510.

¹³⁷ Donaldson 1993, 96–97. Donaldson argues, unconvincingly, that CD 4.7–12—which calls *other Jews* to join the sect now in order to receive final salvation—when combined with CD 14.4–5—which mentions the “proselyte” (גֵּר) among the members of the sect—implies that Jews in Qumran believed in the necessity of proselytism for final salvation. However, the גֵּר in CD 14.4–5 is incidental to the concerns of the text; the Qumran material in general is quite varied in its approach to proselytes (Steudel 2010, 115). Donaldson also cites *2 Bar.* 41.1–42.5 and *4 Ezra* 7.37–38, 72. However, these texts are not necessarily insisting that Gentiles must become Jews in order to receive salvation. In fact, *2 Bar.* 72.1–6 claims that those nations who have not known or actively opposed Israel will be spared in the eschatological judgment. In *4 Ezra* 7.37–38, 7.72, the “commandments” which the unrighteous Gentiles have broken seem to be general moral rules available, for example, to individual

in Josephus (*A.J.* 20.34–46), for example, contains no reference to Gentiles “sharing in the blessings of the future age,” as Donaldson maintains.¹³⁸ The issue at hand in the text is the validity of Izates’s reading of the Jewish Law and of his present “worship” (εὐσεβεία, *A.J.* 20.48; cf. the verb σεβείν in 20.34, 41; ἀσεβεία in 20.45), not his future participation in soteriological blessings. If there are any concerns about Izates’s participation in the coming age of salvation, they remain implicit, and cannot be used as the basis for any firm conclusions about first-century Jewish eschatological beliefs concerning Gentiles.

Secondly, despite Donaldson’s argument to the contrary,¹³⁹ we have seen that Paul does indeed describe his apostolic mission in the outer frame of Romans in terms of certain identifiable Jewish eschatological expectations concerning the ingathering of the nations, particularly those found in Isaiah 60–61.¹⁴⁰ According to this (and other) eschatological visions, although the nations were expected to worship the God of Israel, they were *not* expected to become members of Israel itself.¹⁴¹ Paul’s eschatological mission, correspondingly, is conducted towards the nations *as nations*.¹⁴² Paul urges the nations to abandon their idolatry and immorality and to believe in the risen Christ of Israel as the Son of God (Rom 1:1–5). He is not seeking proselytes to *join* a new kind of universalized “Israel”; rather he is seeking non-Israelites who are willing to hear God’s word, to acknowledge Israel’s risen Messiah and to glorify the creator and judge of the world *alongside* God’s particular people

Babylonians (cf. 3.32–36, 7.70–71); their fault does not lie in their failure to be Jewish, but rather their failure to be good. The Rabbinic material Donaldson cites is by itself too late to make confident assertions about Paul’s time.

¹³⁸ Donaldson 2007, 510.

¹³⁹ Donaldson 1997, 187–197.

¹⁴⁰ The “anomalies” which Donaldson points to can be accounted for by the fact that Paul thoroughly contests and redefines the nature of Jewish identity and Jewish vocation in Romans—this will be our contention in chapters 4 and 5.

¹⁴¹ Fredriksen 1991, 545–548. “[I]nterpreters routinely slip from seeing the eschatological *inclusion* of Gentiles as meaning eschatological *conversion*. This is a category error. Saved Gentiles are *not* Jews. They are Gentiles; they just do not worship idols any more” (547–548). On the eschatological expectations of Ben Sira, for example, see Goering (2009): “Ben Sira’s teleological goal is for the nations to practise a piety that includes awe before the creator and the performance of traditional wisdom [...] Ben Sira does not, however, suggest that the nations should follow the ethical and ritual commandments of the Torah” (234).

¹⁴² Cf. Munck 1959, 270.

Israel.¹⁴³ Since Paul does not expect Gentiles to become Jews, his mission cannot be adequately described as a form of Jewish “proselytism,” which according to most modern definitions *does* involve persuading Gentiles to become Jews.

Thirdly, the Pauline texts which Donaldson cites to support his claim that Paul viewed his Gentile converts as “proselytes to a reconfigured Israel” do not, in fact, support this claim. For example, Donaldson cites texts in which Paul “treats his Gentile converts as members of the family of Abraham” (Gal 3, Rom 4).¹⁴⁴ However, as we have already seen, Paul does *not* believe that membership in Abraham’s family is coterminous with membership in Israel.¹⁴⁵ Indeed, Paul emphasizes Abraham’s *international* fatherhood in these texts. He claims that Abraham is *not* only the father of Israel, but the father of “many nations” (Gal 3:8, Rom 4:17–18; cf. Gen 12:3, 17:5); and he maintains that *both* the circumcised—i.e. Jews—*and* the uncircumcised—i.e. Gentiles—can inherit Abraham’s soteriological blessing (e.g. Rom 4:11–12).¹⁴⁶ Thus, although Donaldson is correct to maintain that Paul has an “Israel-centred framework,”¹⁴⁷ he is incorrect to use this framework as a basis for arguing that Paul was persuading the Gentiles to *join* Israel.¹⁴⁸ In fact, Donaldson must dismiss Paul’s assertions about the ongoing significance of circumcision and of ethnic Israel as a “category confusion”¹⁴⁹ and as rendering Rom 9–11 ultimately incoherent.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴³ Similarly in Galatians, Paul’s alternative to “preaching circumcision” (Gal 5:11) is not “preaching Christ” as a new kind of pre-eschatological boundary marker for a reconstituted Israel, but rather insisting that Christ has brought about the eschaton itself (Gal 1:1, 4) which introduces a new *eschatological* criterion for evaluating preachers of circumcision (Gal 6:15, see p. 62 n. 90).

¹⁴⁴ Donaldson 1997, 113–128, quotation from 242; cf. 236–237.

¹⁴⁵ Ch. 2, pp. 67–75. See further Campbell 2006, 54–67.

¹⁴⁶ Donaldson (1997, 236–238) also cites texts in which Paul exhorts his readers not to live as Gentiles or assumes that they are no longer Gentiles (1 Cor 5:1, 10:20, 12:2; 1 Thess 4:5). However, all of these statements are directed against idolatry or immorality, which are the standard sins of the Gentile world according to the apologetic literature (see, e.g., Josephus, *A.J.* 1.155–157; *Wis* 13–15, *Sib. Or.* 3.545–549, 601–607). To insist that Gentiles have given up or should give up idolatry or immorality is not the same as claiming that they have joined Israel. Elsewhere, we discuss the other texts which Donaldson cites (Phil 3:3 on p. 178 n. 171; Gal 6:16 on p. 62 n. 90).

¹⁴⁷ Donaldson 1997, 238.

¹⁴⁸ By using the metaphor of the olive tree (Rom 11:17–24), for example, Paul is not claiming that Gentiles are now joining Israel; rather he is describing the two different kinds of “branches” (i.e. Israel and the Gentiles) who derive salvation from the “root,” i.e. the word of God and/or the promises to the Fathers (Barclay 2002, 152; Gadenz 2009, 269–271; Hodge 2007, 142–147; Walter 1984, 178–182).

¹⁴⁹ Donaldson 1997, 160.

¹⁵⁰ Donaldson 1997, 239–246.

We may conclude, then, that Paul does *not* understand his mission to persuade Gentiles to believe in Christ as a form of Jewish “proselytism.”¹⁵¹ Although Paul speaks from a Jewish perspective, he does not regard Gentile Christ-believers as individuals who have now become “Jews.”¹⁵² Rather, he regards them as Gentiles who, through faith in Christ, have come to salvation *alongside* Jews.¹⁵³ Indeed, if we were to view Paul’s mission in terms of Jewish “proselytism,” we would only obscure the Jew-Gentile dynamic which Paul is at pains to highlight in the outer frame of Romans. According to this dynamic, Jews and Gentiles share together in salvation, yet retain their distinct identities.

There are, however, a number of other forms of Jewish vocational expression which have closer correspondences with Paul’s mission than “proselytism.” We now turn to examine these vocational expressions.

3.3.2. Accommodation?

In certain circumstances, Jewish accommodation toward Gentiles in table-fellowship can be considered to be an expression of Jewish vocational consciousness. Although some Jewish texts forbade eating with Gentiles at all,¹⁵⁴ other texts describe Jews eating with Gentiles once certain conditions had been met.¹⁵⁵ The *Letter of Aristeas* is particularly significant in regard to Jewish vocation, since it uses the setting of a shared meal to depict Jews as supremely wise teachers of Gentiles. The *Letter of Aristeas* as a whole concerns the translation of the Jewish Law into Greek under the direction of King Ptolemy II, an endeavour which made the Law available to the wider world.¹⁵⁶ A large part of the narrative involves a seven-day feast which the

¹⁵¹ Cf. Barclay 2011, 18; Campbell 2006, 6.

¹⁵² These criticisms also apply to the schema of N. T. Wright (2005, 120–122). Although Wright does not deal directly with the question of Jewish mission, he implies that Paul views his Gentile converts as members of a reconstituted “Israel”: “those who hear the gospel and respond to it in faith are *then* declared by God to be his people, his elect, ‘the circumcision,’ ‘the Jews,’ ‘the Israel of God.’” (122)

¹⁵³ See also Fredriksen 2010, 242–243. Fredriksen notes that “both in the older Jewish apocalyptic traditions and in their newer Christian refraction, the nations join with Israel, but they do not join Israel. To phrase this point in Christian theological vocabulary, you do not need to be Jewish to be saved.” (243)

¹⁵⁴ E.g. *Jub.* 22.16.

¹⁵⁵ E.g. Jdt 12:17–19, *Ep. Arist.* 181–186 (Rudolph 2011, 125–130).

¹⁵⁶ The historical accuracy of the document is irrelevant for our purposes, since we are investigating the view of *Jewish identity* presented in the text.

king and his officials share with the Jewish scholars (*Ep. Arist.* 181–294). The scholars agree to the feast after the king has made arrangements to avoid any idolatrous associations in the meal. The feast gives the Jews ample opportunity to provide detailed instruction to the king in various matters (*Ep. Arist.* 187–294; cf. Philo, *Mos.* 2.33). This instruction is based on the divine revelation which has been provided to them in the Law (*Ep. Arist.* 312; cf. Philo, *Mos.* 2.34). The *Letter of Aristeas*, then, is not simply a stylized narrative of the circumstances of the translation of the Law into Greek; it is an expression of Jewish identity and vocation. It presents Jews themselves as teachers of the world, who are able to instruct pagan kings through the divine wisdom given to them in these Scriptures.¹⁵⁷ The fact that this wisdom-teaching takes place in the context of a feast, where both Jews and pagans have made allowances for the existence of the other, may imply that such table-fellowship was a concrete expression of Jewish vocational consciousness among certain Jewish groups, especially in the Diaspora.¹⁵⁸

Table-fellowship was certainly a factor in Paul's apostolic ministry. In 1 Cor 9:19–23 and 10:31–11:1, for example, Paul claims that accommodation—to both Jews and Gentiles—was an element in his own mission strategy, and commends his own accommodation as an example for his addressees.¹⁵⁹ Conversely, Paul berated Peter for his failure to accommodate himself to Gentiles in Antioch (Gal 2:11–14). In Romans itself, Paul maintains that accommodation in table-fellowship is an important element of the Jew-Gentile dynamic. In Rom 14:1, he introduces his discussion of accommodation by instructing his readers to “welcome” (verb προσλαμβάνειν) the “weak in the faith,” i.e. the Jewish or Jewish-oriented Christ-believer with scruples about food arising from a fear of idolatrous contamination.¹⁶⁰ Paul also implies that the “weak” should accommodate themselves to those without

¹⁵⁷ See also our discussion of the keyword “praise” (ἐπαινεῖν) in ch. 4 (pp. 184–186).

¹⁵⁸ Rudolph 2011, 128–129. Cf. the rabbinic *topos* of the Noachide Law which “governs relations between Jews and non-Jews” (Bockmuehl 2000, 150). These are laws for Gentiles which are less strict than those for Jews. The core of the Noachide Law was the prohibition against fornication, bloodshed, and blasphemy or idolatry (160–161). Bockmuehl argues that the “underlying ideas” of the Noachide law are “clearly present in literary sources of the Second Temple period.” (172–173).

¹⁵⁹ Rudolph (2011, 173–208) argues that Paul's description of his actions here is consistent with Jewish practices of accommodation in table-fellowship.

¹⁶⁰ Ehrensperger 2010, 104–105.

such scruples—i.e. Gentile-oriented Christ-believers (Rom 14:3).¹⁶¹ In Rom 15, Paul connects this accommodation with other important theological motifs. He grounds the command to “welcome” (verb προσλαμβάνειν) one another in Christ’s own ministry (Rom 15:7)—which is itself a Jew-Gentile dynamic (Rom 15:8–9a)—and supports the command further with scriptural texts describing an eschatological vision of the nations worshipping God alongside Israel (Rom 15:9b–12).¹⁶² As we have seen, this eschatological Jew-Gentile dynamic is connected with Paul’s own ministry, which is also presented as a Jew-Gentile dynamic (Rom 15:14–33).¹⁶³ Some aspects of Paul’s mission, therefore, are comparable with the Jewish practice of accommodating Gentiles in table-fellowship, which is itself an expression of Jewish vocation.

Nevertheless, accommodation in table-fellowship does not feature as an explicit element of Paul’s description of his own mission in the outer frame of Romans (Rom 15:14–33). This implies that accommodation, while an element of Paul’s mission, is not at the core of his understanding of his mission. To gain a more comprehensive understanding of Paul’s view of his mission, therefore, we need to examine other expressions of Jewish vocational consciousness.

3.3.3. Apologetics?

Jewish “apologetic” writing may be regarded as an expression of Jewish vocational consciousness. Apologetic writing is characterized by certain motifs: it condemns Gentile idolatry and consequent Gentile immorality (e.g. Wis 13–15, *Sib. Or.* 3.601–607), commends Israel’s God to Gentiles (e.g. Josephus, *A.J.* 1.155–156; Tob 13:3–6),¹⁶⁴ and commends Israel’s Law to Gentiles (e.g. Wis 18:4, *Sir Prol* 1:1–6).¹⁶⁵ The mere existence of these motifs, of course, does not necessarily imply that the writer

¹⁶¹ Campbell 2006, 116–117; Das 2003, 75–77; Lampe 2003, 73–74; Watson 2007b, 175–180. For the problems with Nanos’s (1996) alternative proposal, see ch. 1, p. 19.

¹⁶² Cf. Hafemann 2000.

¹⁶³ See above, p. 85.

¹⁶⁴ The fact that Josephus (*A.J.* 4.207, *C. Ap.* 2.237) and Philo (e.g. *Mos.* 2.205, *Spec.* 1.53, *QE* 2.5) cite the command of Exod 22:27 (LXX) not to revile the gods of others does not imply that Jews respected the divinities of the other nations as legitimate and worthy, *pace* Goodman (1992, 73; 1994, 52). In each case, Josephus and Philo feel the need to explain the troublesome text in terms *more* conducive to Jewish monotheism.

¹⁶⁵ See ch. 4, pp. 150–154.

is aiming primarily to convert Gentiles.¹⁶⁶ Nevertheless, since it at least purports to give Gentiles a positive disposition towards Jewish people, Jewish Scriptures and the God of the Jews, apologetic writing may be regarded as part of the spectrum of Jewish vocational consciousness.¹⁶⁷

At times, Paul expresses himself in ways that are reminiscent of Jewish apologetic writing. In his mission, he sought to commend Israel's God above idols (e.g. 1 Thess 1:9–10, Gal 4:8). In Rom 1:18–32, he condemns Gentile idolatry and immorality using phrases and concepts with a number of parallels in Wis 11–15.¹⁶⁸ However, there is also a significant difference between Paul and the Jewish apologetic writing: Paul does not commend the *Law of Moses* to his Gentile readers in the same way that Jewish apologetic writing does. In fact, as we shall see in the next chapter,¹⁶⁹ in Rom 2:17–29 Paul denounces the kind of Jewish vocation based on the preaching of the Law to Gentiles. Thus, while there are some similarities between Paul's mission and the Jewish apologetic writing, apologetic writing alone cannot serve as a paradigm for understanding Paul's mission.

3.3.4. Israel as a global priesthood?

There are a number of references to Jews participating metaphorically in the ministry of the Jerusalem temple, offering sacrifices for the world, and receiving gifts from Gentiles. This may also be seen as an expression of Jewish vocational consciousness. In the Scriptures, Israel is described as a “royal priesthood” (βασιλείον ἱεράτευμα) among all the other nations (Exod 19:5–6), indicating “both Israel's special relation to God and her place among the nations as the mediator of God's presence.”¹⁷⁰ This concept of Israel's global priesthood is given a more

¹⁶⁶ Fredriksen 1991, 538; Goodman 1994, 3–4, 60–61; McKnight 1991, 62–66. *Contra Georgi* 1987, 84–91.

¹⁶⁷ Carleton Paget 1996, 77–78; *pace* Goodman 1994, 3–4. Dickson (2003, 67–74) aligns this material with other strategies designed to “promote the Torah.” Barclay (2004) examines the way in which apologetics in Josephus's *Contra Apionem* can function to promote the Jewish tradition, albeit in terms strongly conditioned by the dominant culture. See also the various Greco-Roman texts that demonstrate that Jewish vocational consciousness was at least known to non-Jews—e.g. Horace (c. 65 – 8 BCE), Seneca (d. c. 65 CE) and Juvenal (c. 60 –130 CE) (Stern 1974–1984, 1.321–327, 1.429–434, 2.94–107; Whittaker 1984, 85–91).

¹⁶⁸ Dunn 1988, 1.53–76.

¹⁶⁹ Ch. 4, pp. 132–189.

¹⁷⁰ Dickson 2003, 51; cf. Durham 1987, 263.

emphatic form by Philo. According to Philo, God, who is the “Ruler and Governor of the universe,” has consecrated the nation of Israel out of all the nations to “be priests” (verb ἱερᾶσθαι) and thus to make continual prayers for the entire race of human beings, that it would repent (*Mos.* 1.149; cf. *Abr.* 56).¹⁷¹ In *Spec.* 2.162–167, Philo compares the “nation of Jews” (Ἰουδαίων ἔθνος) to a “priest” (ἱερεύς, 2.163), and claims that the nation of Jews brings offerings to God on behalf of the rest of humanity who have thus far evaded the “cultic service” (λατρεία) that they “owe” (verb ὀφείλειν, 2.167).¹⁷²

Many Diaspora Jews saw the Jerusalem temple as the focal point for Israel’s global priesthood.¹⁷³ According to Philo, the Jewish High Priest has a global ministry, offering sacrifices on behalf of the entire race of humanity (*Spec.* 1.97).¹⁷⁴ Josephus, too, describes a universal significance for the Jewish temple: it is “[o]ne temple of the one God [...] common to all people as belonging to the common God of all” (*C. Ap.* 2.193 [Barclay, 2007]). In rewriting 1 Kgs 8:41–43, Josephus explicitly presents Solomon as an Israelite king who intercedes for the Gentiles in the temple (*A.J.* 8.115–117).¹⁷⁵ Furthermore, some Jews, especially those more well-disposed to Gentiles, described Gentile gifts to the temple using cultic language, as an “offering.” According to Josephus, for example, the mother of King Izates of Adiabene “offered” a thank offering (verb προσφέρειν, *A.J.* 20.49) and a great deal of money (20.50–53) to Jerusalem.¹⁷⁶

As we have already seen, Paul describes his ministry to the Gentiles using this kind of priestly language. He “conducts priestly service” (verb ἱερουργεῖν) to the nations, ensuring that the “offering” (προσφορά) of the nations is acceptable. As a result of his ministry, the Gentiles offer a “service” (λατρεία, Rom 12:1), and the material gifts

¹⁷¹ Carleton Paget 1996, 85; Leonhardt-Balzer 2007, 52; Umemoto 1994, 42–43.

¹⁷² Leonhardt-Balzer 2007, 36–37; Umemoto 1994, 42.

¹⁷³ Leonhardt-Balzer 2007, 30.

¹⁷⁴ Dickson 2003, 63–66; Leonhardt-Balzer 2007, 48–49; cf. also *Spec.* 1.168 (Umemoto 1994, 43).

¹⁷⁵ Dickson 2003, 60–62.

¹⁷⁶ The question of Gentile offerings was a controversial one. According to 4Q394 [4QMMT^a] 3–7 I 1–9 (text in Parry and Tov 2004–2005, 1.326–327), Gentile offerings (זבֿח הגוֹיִם) were not acceptable (Schiffman 1999a, 269). According to Josephus, the strict Eleazar also opposed any Gentile “gift” (δῶρον) and “sacrifice” (θυσία) (*B.J.* 2.409), while others argued that they should be accepted (*B.J.* 2.412). Josephus sides with the latter opinion.

which the Gentiles “owe” (verb ὀφείλειν) are brought to Jerusalem (Rom 15:27). Thus Paul’s description of his own mission is comparable in some ways with those Jewish writings which refer to Jews as priests for the world.

Once again, however, there are a number of significant differences between Paul’s mission and contemporary descriptions of Israel’s global priesthood. Paul enacts his priestly ministry, not by staying in Jerusalem and offering sacrifices or prayers, but by going out to the nations and proclaiming the “gospel of God” (Rom 15:16). Furthermore, his ministry makes the Gentiles themselves “holy” (Rom 1:7, 12:1), a concept which would have been quite radical in his own context, especially in Pharisaic thought.¹⁷⁷ We can begin to understand these differences when we recall that the primary background to Paul’s description of his priestly ministry is the eschatological vision of Isaiah 60–61. Unlike the other Jewish texts concerning Israel’s global priesthood which we have examined, Isaiah 60–61 describes this priesthood in highly eschatological terms. We must finally turn, then, to examine how Paul’s mission is connected to other Jewish eschatological expectations concerning the destiny of the nations and their relationship to Israel.

3.3.5. Eschatological expectations

As we have already noted, a number of Scriptures, including Isaiah 60–61, describe Zion as a cosmic temple at the centre of a renewed creation to which the nations stream with worship and offerings. The repetition and expansion of these eschatological expectations may be regarded as another significant expression of Jewish vocational consciousness.¹⁷⁸ Although second-temple Jewish expectations concerning the eschatological fate of the nations varied,¹⁷⁹ there was a strand which envisaged some kind of positive destiny for the nations, with Israel herself often playing a positive role. We can, for example, find texts which express expectations that large numbers of Gentiles would recognize the glory of the Lord,¹⁸⁰ submit to

¹⁷⁷ Dunn 1988, 2.860–861; cf. Schmidt 2001, 220–244.

¹⁷⁸ Many of the following Jewish sources are cited and discussed by Fredriksen 1991, 544–548; Sanders 1992, 289–298; Umemoto 1994, 41, 48–50.

¹⁷⁹ A large-scale destruction of disobedient nations is envisaged in a number of places, e.g. *Pss. Sol.* 17.22–25; *Sir* 36:1–9; *Jub.* 24.29–30; *T. Mos.* 10.7; 1Q33 [1QM]; *Sib. Or.* 3.670–672; cf. *Isa* 60:12; *Zeph* 3:8.

¹⁸⁰ E.g. *Pss. Sol.* 17.31; Philo, *Praem.* 93–97, 164; cf. *Isa* 60:1–3.

God,¹⁸¹ submit to a Davidic messiah,¹⁸² honour Israel,¹⁸³ bring gifts to the temple,¹⁸⁴ worship God,¹⁸⁵ recognize and study God’s Law,¹⁸⁶ and benefit in some way from God or his Messiah.¹⁸⁷

As we have already seen, Paul describes his own ministry in Rom 1:1 and Rom 15:14–33 using terms that echo Jewish eschatological expectations concerning Israel’s distinct role in God’s worldwide purposes, especially those in Isaiah (and, to a lesser extent, in Jeremiah). Paul’s language in Rom 1:2–5 is also dominated by recognizably Jewish eschatological expectations. In Rom 1:2, Paul states that his gospel was “promised beforehand” (verb προεπαγγέλλειν) in the Scriptures. The Scriptures, and especially the Prophets, were widely regarded among Paul’s Jewish contemporaries as direct or indirect predictions of future eschatological events. According to Ben Sira, for example, Isaiah was an eschatological prophet:¹⁸⁸

By the spirit of might he saw the last things [τὰ ἔσχατα] and comforted those who mourned in Zion. He revealed what was to occur to the end of time, and the hidden things before they came to pass. (Sir 48:24–25, RSV)

The prefix προ- in Rom 1:2 emphasizes the *past* nature of the promissory activity.¹⁸⁹ Paul believes that he and his Christ-believing communities are located in a time when many of these prophetic expectations have been or are in the process of being fulfilled. This theme is picked up later in Rom 15:4, where Paul speaks of the Scriptures as things “written beforehand” (verb προγράφειν), which are now for the instruction of the Christ-believing community.¹⁹⁰ So too, in Rom 15:8, Paul regards

¹⁸¹ E.g. *Sib. Or.* 3.616–617; cf. *4 Ezra* 6.26; see also Isa 2:3.

¹⁸² E.g. the Davidic King in *Pss. Sol.* 17.30; also Philo, *Mos.* 1.290–291, alludes to the “lion” of Judah (Gen 49:9–10) in describing an eschatological royal figure and claims “he will prevail over many nations” (ἐπικρατήσει πολλῶν ἔθνῶν).

¹⁸³ E.g. Philo, *Praem.* 171–172; cf. Isa 60:14, 61:9.

¹⁸⁴ E.g. Tob 13:11; cf. Isa 60:10–16; Zeph 3:10.

¹⁸⁵ E.g. *1 En.* 10.21; Tob 14:6–7; cf. Isa 2:2; Mic 4:1; Zeph 3:9–10; Zech 2:11.

¹⁸⁶ E.g. *Sib. Or.* 3.710–720; Philo, *Mos.* 2.44, *Virt.* 1.119–120; cf. Isa 2:3; Mic 4:2

¹⁸⁷ E.g. *1 En.* 11.1, 48:2; *Sib. Or.* 3.619–623; *Pss. Sol.* 17.34; cf. Isa 2:4; Mic 4:3–4; Zech 2:11.

¹⁸⁸ Hengel and Bailey 2004, 82–85

¹⁸⁹ Cranfield 1975, 1.55 n. 3.

¹⁹⁰ This kind of hermeneutical strategy can also be found at Qumran. The Qumran exegetical texts exhibit a “heightened eschatological awareness” (Campbell 2004, 104). They regard the prophets as writing in part about events involving their own community (e.g. Isa 8:11 in 4Q174 [4QFlor] 1–2 I 14–17) (Brooke 1997, 613–615; text in Parry and Tov 2004–2005, 2.2–3). They are, nevertheless, still

“the promises [ἐπαγγελίαι] of the Fathers” as having already been “confirmed” (verb βεβαιοῦν) through the coming of Christ (Rom 15:8).

In Rom 1:3–4, Paul claims that his scripturally-grounded gospel concerns the “son” of God, who “came from the seed of David according to the flesh” (cf. Rom 15:12), and was “designated as the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of Holiness.” Although Messianic speculation in the second-temple period was a complex phenomenon,¹⁹¹ “generalized and loosely formed messianic themes and ideas were current and well known” and “characteristically drew on and reused well-known biblical passages and motifs”.¹⁹² There are a number of prophetic Scriptures which refer to the coming of a Davidic Messiah. The right to be called “Son of God” is given to the future “seed” (σπέρμα) of David (2 Sam 7:12–14) and to the “anointed” (Χριστός) king in Zion (Ps 2:2, 7). In Isaiah, a Davidic king is expected to bring victory over the nations who oppose Israel (Isa 9:4 [LXX 9:3], 11:11–14), and a peaceful and just world order (Isa 9:6–7 [LXX 9:5–6], 11:1–7).¹⁹³ Isaiah, moreover, claims that it is the “Spirit of the Lord” which will enable this future Davidic Messiah to rule with divine justice and power (Isa 11:2).

Psalms of Solomon 17 draws on a number of these scriptural expectations concerning the future Davidic ruler.¹⁹⁴ Much of the key vocabulary of *Pss. Sol.* 17 also occurs in Paul’s description of the gospel of Christ, in similar formulations. This may be seen by comparing the two texts side by side:

looking forward to the *future* fulfilment of many key prophetic expectations (e.g. 1QpHab VII 1–14; text in Parry and Tov 2004–2005, 2.84–87). The Qumran texts often describe their community as living in the “end of days” (אַחֲרֵי הַיָּמִים; 4Q398 [4QMMT^e] 14–17 I 14, 11–13 21; text in Parry and Tov 2004–2005, 1.334–335), a time of testing which will usher in the final salvation (1QS I; text in Parry and Tov 2004–2005, 1.2–3) (Collins 1997, 79–86; Roberts 2006, 279).

¹⁹¹ Aune 2001, 153–158; Mowinckel 1959, 286–291; Sanders 1992, 295–298.

¹⁹² Wright 1992, 307–320, here 319. A number of Qumran texts, for example, express specifically Davidic Messianic expectations (e.g. 4Q252 [4QCommGen A] 6 V 1–5; 4Q285 [4QSM] 7 1–5; text in Parry and Tov 2004–2005, 1.244–245, 2.110–111), and the title “son” (בֶּן) of God is used in 4Q174 [4QFlor] 1–2 I 11 (Collins 1998, 102–112; cf. Tromp 2001; text in Parry and Tov 2004–2005, 2.2–3).

¹⁹³ Cf. Ezek 34:23–24, 37:24–25; Jer 23:5–6, 33:14–18; Mic 4:13, Ps 2.

¹⁹⁴ Collins 1998, 104–105; Mowinckel 1959, 308–311.

Those to whom you promised [ἐπηγγείλω] nothing,¹⁹⁶ they violently stole from us (17.5)

... which he promised beforehand [προεπηγγείλατο] through his Prophets in the holy Scriptures (1:2)

It was you, O Lord, who chose David [Δαβίδ] as king over Israel, and you promised him that his descendants [περὶ τοῦ σπέρματος αὐτοῦ] would continue forever (17.4)

concerning his Son, who came from the seed of David [ἐκ σπέρματος Δαβίδ] according to the flesh (1:3)

... a son of David [υἱὸν Δαβίδ], to rule over your servant Israel (17.21)

And he will not weaken during his reign, relying upon his God, because God will make him powerful [δυνατόν] by a holy spirit [ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ] (17.37)

who was designated Son of God in power [ἐν δυνάμει], according to the Spirit of Holiness [κατὰ πνεῦμα ἁγίωσύνης] (1:4a)

Look, O Lord, and raise up [ἀνάστησον] for them their king (17.21)

by the raising from the dead [ἐξ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν] (1:4b)

and their king will be the Lord Messiah [χριστὸς κύριος]¹⁹⁷ (17.32)

of Jesus, Christ our Lord [Χριστοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν] (1:4c)

He will be merciful to all the Gentiles [πάντα τὰ ἔθνη] that fearfully stand before him (17.34)

through whom we have received grace and apostleship for the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles [ἐν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν] (1:5a)

and they did not glorify your honorable name [ὄνομα] (17.5)

for the sake of his name [ὄνομα] (1:5b)

... because everyone [πάντες] will be holy [ἅγιοι] (17.32)

... to all [πᾶσιν] those in Rome, beloved of God, called holy [ἅγιοις] (1:7a)

¹⁹⁵ Translation by Wright (2007).

¹⁹⁶ Note the focus on the *lack* of scriptural warrant for the rulers in *Pss. Sol.* 17.5, which further highlights the importance of scriptural promises (*Pss. Sol.* 17.21–25; cf. Isa 11:4, Ps 2.9) (Collins 1998, 104, 107).

¹⁹⁷ All the manuscripts read χριστὸς κύριος; the common alternative reading (χριστὸς κύριου) is a conjectural emendation (see Wright's discussion in the critical edition of the *Psalms of Solomon* 2007, 48–49).

Although Jewish Messianic expectations cannot explain every element of Paul's description of Christ, it is clear here that Paul is to some extent identifying the risen Lord Jesus Christ with the Davidic Messiah expected by at least some Jewish groups. He is claiming that the Christ-event, though unique in and of itself, is also in some sense a fulfilment of a recognizable Jewish expectation.

Furthermore, Paul does not only speak of the Son of David being "raised up" (cf. *Pss. Sol.* 17.21), but speaks of the "raising of the dead" (ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν). Although the implied primary referent of this phrase appears to be Jesus' own personal resurrection (cf. Rom 6:5),¹⁹⁸ it seems that Paul is here also alluding to a more general eschatological hope, which is now focused on the *past* resurrection of one person—the seed of David—even though it awaits a future completion in all of God's children (cf. Rom 8:11; 1 Cor 15:20, 23). In the second-temple period, there was a relatively widespread belief in a general resurrection at the end of the ages, in which many individuals expected to participate.¹⁹⁹ Pre-Christ-believing Jewish texts which speak of the resurrection of the dead, even those with imminent eschatological expectations, nevertheless viewed the resurrection itself as a future event.²⁰⁰ In referring to the resurrection of the dead, then, Paul is again claiming that a certain Jewish eschatological expectation has been fulfilled.

In Rom 1:5, Paul claims that his own apostolic ministry brings about "the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations." This recalls another strand of Jewish eschatological expectation: the "obedience" of the non-Israelite nations to the

¹⁹⁸ The Scriptures do not explicitly speak of the physical resurrection of the Davidic Messiah through the power of the Spirit. However, Paul's citation of Isa 11:10 in Rom 15:12 is almost certainly intended to allude to Christ's resurrection through the use of the verb ἀνίστασθαι (Wagner 2002, 319). This suggests that Paul may have seen in Isa 11:1–10 a convergence of the activity of the Spirit and the resurrection of the Davidic Messiah, which informed the compact formulation of Rom 1:3–4. Knohl (2009) argues for a resurrection motif in relation to a messiah figure in a stone tablet found in Jordan. However, the relevant text is unclear and difficult to decipher, and is thus open to other interpretations.

¹⁹⁹ Wright (1992, 320–334) traces the eschatological expectation of resurrection from scriptural texts such as Dan 12:1b–3; Isa 26:19; Hosea 5:15–6:3 and Ezek 37:1–14 (the last of which explicitly mentions the Spirit as the agent of resurrection) through texts from the second-temple period such as 2 Macc 7 and Josephus, *B.J.* 3.374, *C. Ap.* 2.218.

²⁰⁰ Wagner 2002, 30–31 n. 106. See, e.g., 4Q521 [4QMessianic Apocalypse] 2 II, 11–14, "and the Lord shall do glorious things which have not been done, just as He s[aid.] For He shall heal the critically wounded, He shall revive the dead, 'He shall send good news to the afflicted' [Isa 61:1], He shall sati[sfy] the [poo]r, He shall lead the uprooted, and the hungry He shall enrich [...] all of them like hol[y ones (?)]" (text in Parry and Tov 2004–2005, 6.60–61).

God of Israel. As we have already seen in our discussion of Rom 15:18, this theme is particularly prominent in Isaiah 60 (esp. Isa 60:10–14).²⁰¹ Isaiah 60, along with other eschatological texts, describes how the obedient offerings of the nations will glorify God’s “name” (ὄνομα, Isa 60:9; cf. ὑπὲρ τοῦ ὀνόματος, Rom 1:5).²⁰² While Paul regards the eschatological events of verses 3–4 as having already been substantially completed, in verse 5 the obedience of the nations is presented as a “work in progress”; a work which he himself is accomplishing, and in which his readers are directly involved (Rom 1:6). Furthermore, Paul describes this work in the outer frame of Romans using the verb εὐαγγελίζεσθαι (Rom 1:15, 15:20) which, as we have seen, recalls the activity of both the eschatological herald of Isa 52:7,²⁰³ and the eschatological preacher of Isa 61:1.²⁰⁴

All of this evidence drives us to conclude Paul is presenting his apostolic ministry as the climax of a series of recognizably Jewish eschatological expectations. Indeed, Paul’s self-description corresponds more closely to these Jewish eschatological expectations than it does to any other expression of Israel’s vocation amongst Paul’s Jewish contemporaries.

3.3.6. Apparent anomalies

As we have seen, Paul describes his ministry in the outer frame of Romans using terms, phrases and concepts which indicate that his apostolic ministry fulfils certain eschatological expectations concerning Israel’s vocation with respect to the nations, particularly those expectations described in Isaiah 40–55 and 60–61. This close correspondence makes the apparently “anomalous”²⁰⁵ features of his ministry—i.e. characteristics which do not correspond in any straightforward way to other recognizable Jewish eschatological expectations—even more prominent.

We have already noted the most striking anomaly: Paul designates himself, not as the Servant of “the Lord” (cf. e.g. Isa 49:5), but as “Servant of Christ Jesus” (Rom 1:1).

²⁰¹ See p. 105.

²⁰² See also Isa 59:19, 60:9, 66:19; Tob 13:11.

²⁰³ See p. 89.

²⁰⁴ See p. 103.

²⁰⁵ Cf. Barclay (1996), who notes Paul’s “truly anomalous character” (393).

He thus connects the now risen “Christ” closely with the “Lord” of the prophetic Scriptures—in other words, God himself (cf. Rom 1:4, 7). This Christological interpretation of scriptural expectations is associated with a number of further apparently unique features in Paul’s apostolic ministry.

Firstly, as we have seen, Paul claims that expectations concerning the advent of the eschatological herald and the ingathering of the nations are *presently being fulfilled* through his own apostolic ministry.²⁰⁶ Indeed, in Rom 10:14–15, Paul implies that his own ministry fulfils the combined expectations of Isa 52:7 and Isa 61:1.²⁰⁷ Outside the Christ-believing community, however, these motifs remained future expectations.²⁰⁸ Even those documents at Qumran which combine these same Isaianic texts in an eschatologically-charged context are still looking forward to a *future*, not a present, fulfilment.²⁰⁹ In drawing upon eschatological motifs to describe his own *present* gospel-preaching activity, then, Paul is somewhat anomalous.²¹⁰

Secondly, the correspondence between the Jew-Gentile dynamic which Paul describes and the various scriptural expectations concerning the eschatological pilgrimage of the nations is not entirely straightforward. In Isaiah 60–61 and elsewhere, the eschatological pilgrimage of the nations was expected as a *consequence* of Israel’s restoration. Paul, however, sees a far more complex relationship between Israel and the nations. On the one hand, Paul views *himself*, in his missionary activity, as already constituting a kind of restored Israel, the “Servant” whose *own* “calling” and expansive missionary efforts fulfil these

²⁰⁶ Bird 2010, 152–154; Köstenberger and O’Brien 2001, 68–69; Munck 1959, 271–272; Nanos 2010, 136, 157.

²⁰⁷ See ch. 4, pp. 217–226.

²⁰⁸ McKnight 1991, 50–51; Ware 2005, 153. Carleton Paget (1996, 86) maintains that this eschatological conviction *could* have influenced actual Jewish missionary practices. He provides no evidence, however, that it did *in fact* influence any pre-Christian Jewish practice. Dickson (2003, 15–24) claims that the eschatological pilgrimage motifs provided a “conceptual context” that was conducive for some instances of actual mission in the Jewish communities of the second-temple period. However, none of the non-Christian Jewish texts which Dickson cites (24–49, 156–159) explicitly links either the eschatological gospel preacher or the eschatological pilgrimage motif with the activity of any actual Jewish “missionary.”

²⁰⁹ E.g. 11Q13 (11QMelch) II 13–23 (text in Parry and Tov 2004–2005, 2.24–27), which combines Isa 52:7 and 61:1–3 and interprets the two texts as prophecies concerning imminent, but nevertheless future, events. See also the Isaiah *pesharim* 4Q161–165 (Hengel and Bailey 2004, 84–85; text in Parry and Tov 2004–2005, 2.30–49, 2.52–59).

²¹⁰ Cf. Ware (2005, 251–256) who discusses Paul’s eschatologically-charged description of the mission of the Philippian community itself (Phil 2:14–15).

eschatological expectations for the salvation of the nations (Rom 1:1, 15:18–21). On the other hand, when Paul discusses the nation of Israel as a whole in Rom 9–11, he seems to expect the *opposite* of this consequential order—salvation for the Gentiles will lead to Israel’s restoration (Rom 11:25–27).²¹¹ Although this is not a reason to reject Isaiah 60–61 or other eschatological texts outright as the background to Paul’s self-description in the outer frame of Romans,²¹² it does show that Paul reads these expectations in light of his own gospel-preaching ministry, in a way that most likely would have been seen as anomalous by most of his Jewish contemporaries.

Thirdly, in Rom 1:5, Paul significantly qualifies the term “obedience” (ὕπακοή) by the genitive “of faith” (πίστεως). As we have seen, in a number of Jewish eschatological expectations, the theme of Gentile obedience involved political subservience to Israel and her God (Isa 60:10–14). Paul’s qualification, however, suggests that this term “obedience” ultimately needs to be read in light of the “faith” which he expounds in the inner argument of the letter as a key element of his “gospel.” In fact, within this inner argument, Paul often uses the word “faith” in antithetical and polemical contexts to describe an *alternative* view of the significance of Israel and her “Law” (cf. e.g. Rom 3:21–22, 27–28; 4:13–16; 9:30–10:6).²¹³ Furthermore, when we come to examine Rom 10:16 in detail, we will see that Paul claims that the true “obedience” of “faith” is not political subservience to Zion at all, but rather “faith” in the “report” about the suffering Servant (Isa 53:1).²¹⁴ In light of Paul’s argument in the rest of Romans, then, it is clear that his view of the *nature* of Gentile “obedience” has an anomalous character.

Nevertheless, even Paul’s most anomalous gospel-related concepts and vocabulary are steeped in Jewish Scripture—particularly in the Isaianic descriptions of the ministries of the Servant and the “preacher” (cf. Rom 10:14–16). Paul’s ministry may be anomalous, but it is still the ministry of an anomalous *Jew*, a Jew who is demonstrably reading Jewish Scripture. We will, however, need to examine parts of the internal argument of Romans (Rom 2:17–29 and Rom 9–11 in particular) to see

²¹¹ Donaldson 1997, 188–189.

²¹² *Pace* Donaldson (1997, 187–197) who, as we have seen, rejects the eschatological pilgrimage motif entirely as the background to Paul’s understanding of his mission.

²¹³ Cf. Garlington 1991, 1–4, 253–268.

²¹⁴ See ch. 5, p. 222.

how Paul's reading of the Scriptures informs his understanding of Jewish identity and thus shapes his apostolic mission.²¹⁵

3.4. Summary: Paul's fulfilment of Israel's eschatological vocation

In this chapter, we examined the epistolary frame of Romans (Rom 1:1–15, 15:14–16:24). We found that Paul presents his apostolic gospel-preaching ministry as the fulfilment of certain positive scripturally-based eschatological expectations concerning Israel's divine vocation with respect to the nations. Conversely, we found that Paul reads these scriptural expectations in light of his own gospel-preaching ministry, in a way that way that would have been seen as anomalous by many of his Jewish contemporaries.

Paul's description of his apostolic ministry in the outer frame of Romans involves a prominent and irreducible Jew-Gentile dynamic. Two concepts in particular are important for Paul in expounding this Jew-Gentile dynamic. Firstly, Paul describes himself as participating in the ministry of the Isaianic "Servant of the Lord," an eschatological figure who is expected both to restore Israel's prominent place in the world and also to extend the salvation of God to the nations. Secondly, Paul describes his apostolic vocation in terms of Israel's exalted eschatological "priesthood" among the nations, using terminology and concepts from Jeremiah 1 and Isaiah 60–61.

We compared and contrasted Paul's expression of Jewish vocation in the outer frame of Romans with the spectrum of Jewish vocational expression amongst Paul's contemporaries. We saw that there were a number of points of contact between Paul's expression of Jewish vocation and elements of the spectrum of vocational consciousness amongst Paul's Jewish contemporaries: accommodation in table-fellowship, apologetic writing, and describing Israel as a global priesthood. We found, however, that Paul's self-description corresponds more closely to *eschatological* expectations concerning Israel's role vis-à-vis the nations than to any other contemporary expression of Jewish vocation.

²¹⁵ See chs. 4 (pp. 132–189) and 5 (pp. 190–246).

Despite this close and striking correspondence between Paul's self-description and Jewish eschatological expectations, we saw that there were also a number of apparent anomalies which stemmed from Paul's reading of the Jewish Scriptures in light of the gospel of Christ. Firstly, while some Jewish texts expected the eschatological herald and the ingathering of the nations as future events, Paul claims that they are presently being fulfilled through his own apostolic ministry. Secondly, while some Jewish texts expected the eschatological pilgrimage of the nations to occur as a consequence of Israel's restoration, Paul's use of the eschatological pilgrimage notion, esp. Rom 9–11, seemed to imply the reverse. Thirdly, while some Jewish texts expected Gentiles to be politically subservient to Israel, Paul's notion of Gentile obedience is qualified by the term "faith" which, in light of the internal argument of Romans, suggests that Israel's role in God's purposes must be understood in relation to the gospel of Christ.

These seeming discrepancies, however, constitute support for the wider argument of this dissertation. We are seeking to show not only that Paul's apostolic ministry is intimately related to his Jewish identity, but also that Paul's Jewish identity is *contested* and *redefined* in light of the gospel of Christ. In this chapter, we have seen a great deal of support for the former claim: Paul's apostolic ministry is intimately related to his Jewish identity, particularly to his sense that Israel has been given a distinct divine role vis-à-vis the nations. The discrepancies we have seen, however, suggest that we need to explore the latter theme—Paul's contested redefinition of Jewish identity—in more detail. This will be the burden of the remainder of this dissertation. In the following chapter, we will see how Paul *contests* an alternative view of Jewish identity, a view that is located in the mainstream Jewish community, sees the Law of Moses as a gift of divine revelation, and seeks to proclaim it as such to Gentiles (Rom 2:17–29).²¹⁶ In the final chapter, we will examine how in Rom 9–11 Paul discusses and seeks to resolve the deep tensions between Israel's present role in God's purposes and his own, very Jewish, apostolic ministry as the preacher of the gospel of Christ to the Gentiles.²¹⁷

²¹⁶ Ch. 4, pp. 132–189.

²¹⁷ Ch. 5, pp. 190–246.

Chapter 4: Paul's Contest over Jewish Identity (Romans 2:17–29)

“What do you say to St Paul, itching with a Jewishness he couldn't scratch away until he'd turned half the world against it?”

“I say thank you, Paul, for widening the argument.”

Libor and Finkler, *The Finkler Question*.¹

4.1. Romans 2:17–29 as an argument about Jewish identity

Paul's apostolic ministry was his way of being Jewish. This, of course, was a provocative, contentious, even scandalous, claim. It generated conflict, especially with the “mainstream” Jewish community.² In fact, as we are maintaining in this dissertation, Paul's Jewish identity was shaped *through* conflict with other Jews. This conflict over the nature of Jewish identity comes to the surface most explicitly in Rom 2:17–29. If we take this passage at face value—and we will maintain that we should—it appears as a sustained contest over Jewish identity. The passage begins with a direct question about Jewish identity (v. 17), ends with a direct statement about Jewish identity (vv. 28–29), and is replete with arguments and disputes over terms relating to Jewishness. In fact, as we shall see, the subject-matter of this passage makes it a uniquely fitting lens for examining Paul's contested redefinition of Jewish identity and its relationship to his own Jewish vocation.

The problem that this passage poses for most interpreters is, of course, its place within Paul's letter to the Romans. Romans is a letter whose overarching theme is the Christian gospel (Rom 1:1–5, 16–17). This fact leads many scholars to bring to their interpretation of Rom 2:17–29 themes which do not in fact appear explicitly in

¹ Jacobson 2010, 45. For a detailed bibliography, see p. 255ff.

² Consistent with our usage throughout this dissertation, we are using the term “mainstream” to denote Paul's perception of the conventional Jewish community to which he is offering a radical alternative; cf. p. 17.

the passage, but which are present in the rest of the letter—themes such as salvation, faith, righteousness, etc. Many interpreters, for example, analyse this passage (or parts of it) on the basis that it consists of two distinct, primarily soteriological, arguments. The first of these soteriological arguments (Rom 2:17–24) is that possession of the Law provides no advantage in the face of God’s eschatological judgment.³ The second of these soteriological arguments is that the designations “Jew” and “circumcision” no longer apply to ethnic Jews, but rather pertain to all Christian believers; i.e. the true recipients of salvation.⁴ This reading, however, does not properly take Paul’s wider argument into account. Paul believes that there *is* an ongoing pre-eminence and distinctiveness associated with the terms “Jew” and “circumcision,” and makes a number of statements to this effect.⁵ Indeed, Paul’s *very next statement*—Rom 3:1–2—constitutes one of his clearest affirmations of Jewish distinctiveness:

What, then, is the advantage of the Jew?
Or what is the value of circumcision?
Much in every way—
primarily, that they were entrusted with the oracles of God. (Rom 3:1–2)

Τί οὖν τὸ περισσὸν τοῦ Ἰουδαίου
ἢ τίς ἡ ὠφέλεια τῆς περιτομῆς;
πολὺ κατὰ πάντα τρόπον.
πρῶτον μὲν γὰρ⁶ ὅτι ἐπίστεύθησαν τὰ λόγια τοῦ θεοῦ.

Since Paul immediately follows his argument in Rom 2:17–29 with a strong affirmation of Jewish *advantage* in terms of the possession of divine revelation, the passage cannot simply be read as a straightforward “universalistic” transfer of Jewish identity from ethnic Jews to Christian believers.⁷

³ E.g. Dunn 1988, 1.116–118; Moo 1996, 158.

⁴ E.g. Barclay 1998, 553; Boyarin 1994, 94–95; Das 2003, 182–184; Dunn 1988, 1.125; Jewett 2007, 236; Käsemann 1971, 144; Moo 1996, 175; Schmidt 1966, 53–55; Schreiner 1998, 141–145; Watson 2007b, 215; Wright 1996, 133–139; Zoccali 2010, 55–71.

⁵ See p. 40.

⁶ The γάρ is omitted by B D* G Ψ 81 etc., but this omission can be explained as an attempt to smooth out Paul’s awkward expression (Jewett 2007, 238).

⁷ Campbell’s (2009, 573–575) solution to this issue posits that Paul’s own position is actually located in the *questions* of Rom 3:1–8 (3:1, 3, 5, 7–8a, 9a), whereas the *answers* are those of Paul’s Jewish opponent, who represents an influential Jewish teacher (3:2, 4, 6, 8b, 9b). In this view, the statement in 3:2 is an “essentially stupidly” conceived and misguided answer which shows up the contradictory position of the Jewish teacher (575). However, Campbell’s reading assumes a complete reversal of the

Some interpreters seek to read Rom 2:17–29 as a thoroughly Jewish discussion. Even these scholars, however, tend to assume that the point of the passage is primarily soteriological. They thus construe Rom 2:17–19 as an idiosyncratic yet comprehensible exhortation to first-century Jews, urging them to secure their salvation by heartfelt obedience to the Jewish Law.⁸ If this were Paul’s point, of course, it would be directly contradictory to his wider argument, in which he affirms universal sinfulness (e.g. Rom 3:9, 23) and asserts that salvation and justification come through faith in Christ *apart* from the Law for all without distinction (e.g. Rom 3:21–22).⁹ It is difficult to believe that Paul (or even a later redactor) would allow such contradictory soteriological schemas to exist side by side in a letter which in most other ways appears to be a unified work.¹⁰

Thus Paul’s argument in Rom 2:17–29, and its place in Rom 1–3 as a whole, are in need of thorough re-examination. The aim of this chapter is to conduct such a re-examination of Rom 2:17–29 in light of our claims concerning Paul’s Jewish identity. We have maintained that Paul neither accepts the conception of Jewish identity prevalent in the mainstream Jewish community nor rejects the value of Jewish identity altogether. Rather, in light of the gospel of Christ, Paul *contests* and *redefines* the distinct nature of Jewish identity itself.¹¹ In this chapter, we will argue that Rom 2:17–29 constitutes a densely argued summary of this contested process of Jewish

normal function of the rhetorical question-answer form in Paul’s letters. Normally, the *question* raises or implies a possible but incorrect inference from Paul’s previous argument, while the *answer* represents Paul’s own position. Indeed Campbell himself assumes this normal function just a few verses later in 3:27–4:1, identifying the *questions* as those of the teacher and the *answers* as those of Paul (716–717 and ff.). Campbell’s rhetorical reading, then, is ultimately undermined by its own incoherence.

⁸ So O’Neill 1975, 51–56; Sanders 1983, 123–132; cf. Carras 1992; Schmithals 1988, 97–101, esp. 101.

⁹ Sanders (1983, 131) considers the position on circumcision taken in Rom 2:25–29 to be “Jewish,” but “not Pauline.” O’Neill (1975, 51–56) believes that it must be a later interpolation.

¹⁰ Campbell (2009, 559–572) explains the various discrepancies by assuming that Paul’s fundamental convictions are not actually driving the argument here (or, in fact, anywhere in 1:18–3:20). Rather, Paul is simply “trying to humiliate the Teacher on the Teacher’s own terms” (570). Campbell ultimately rests his argument on the coherence and “explanatory power” of his overall schema (501–511). We cannot refute Campbell here point by point; rather, our own argument will also have to rest on its coherence and explanatory power—with the significant added benefit that, unlike Campbell, we do not have to assume that Paul is not presenting his own views here.

¹¹ See p. 23.

identity redefinition.¹² We will demonstrate that the social setting presupposed throughout Rom 2:17–29 is the mainstream Jewish community, focused on the teaching of the Law in the synagogue. Paul is here seeking both to reject the mainstream Jewish community’s understanding of the significance of Jewish identity,¹³ and also to affirm a distinct, pre-eminent and theologically significant place for Jewish identity, informed by the prophetic Scriptures and, ultimately, by the gospel he preaches (cf. Rom 1:1–2).

Furthermore, we have consistently maintained that Paul does not understand the distinct value of Jewish identity primarily in *soteriological* terms. Rather, Paul understands Jewish distinctiveness primarily in terms of a divine *vocation*—i.e. a conviction that God has given Israel a special role or task within his wider purposes—which arises from the possession of divine *revelation*—in the first instance, God’s gift of the Law to Israel.¹⁴ Indeed, there are vocational connotations to Paul’s use of the word “entrust” (verb πιστεύειν) to describe Jewish identity in Rom 3:2. Jews are “entrusted” with the oracles of God; this implies some role or task they are to perform.¹⁵ Elsewhere, Paul uses the same term to describe his own ministry—Paul has been “entrusted” with the gospel message (Gal 2:7; 1 Thess 2:4; 1 Cor 9:17; cf. 1 Tim 1:11, 2 Tim 1:12, Tit 1:3).

We have already seen in the previous chapter that Paul sets the entire argument of his letter within the framework of his own Jewish vocation as the bearer of the gospel to the nations (Romans 1:1–15 & 15:14–33).¹⁶ Here, we will see that a sense of divine vocation based on divine revelation is also fundamental to Paul’s contest over Jewish identity in Rom 2:17–29. Paul’s discussion of the Jewish “teacher” of Gentiles, therefore, is not merely a rhetorical device used to make a further point about Jewish sin or Jewish arrogance with respect to salvation. Rather, Paul is

¹² Cf. Esler (2003, 152–153), who also maintains that Paul is here engaging in Jewish identity redefinition in light of an overarching Christian identity. Esler’s treatment of Rom 2:17–29, however, is quite cursory, since he believes that Paul’s “heart is not really in the argument.” (152)

¹³ Cf. Watson 2007b, 197–216.

¹⁴ See pp. 23–36.

¹⁵ Hays 2005, 99; Jewett 2007, 243; Stowers 1994, 166–167; Williams 1980, 267–268. Nanos (2010) calls this “the special prophetic privilege of bringing God’s word to the rest of the nations” (153) and links it with Paul’s discussion in Rom 10–11.

¹⁶ See pp. 83–131.

discussing an issue that is directly relevant for his contest over Jewish identity—the existence of a distinct Jewish *vocation* based on the possession of divine *revelation*. Paul is rejecting the mainstream Jewish community’s understanding of this vocation, and paving the way for an alternative understanding. Indeed, as we shall see in the following chapter, the Jewish teacher in Rom 2:17–29 can be seen as a foil for Paul’s own vision of Jewish vocation, which he sees fulfilled in his own apostolic ministry of preaching the gospel of Christ to the Gentiles (Romans 9–11).¹⁷

4.1.1. The discrete function of Rom 2:17–29 within the argument of Romans

In his thematic statement (Rom 1:16–17), Paul has already indicated the importance of the Jew-Gentile dynamic in his gospel ministry. Paul is not ashamed of the gospel because it is the power of God for salvation “for everyone who believes, for the Jew first (πρῶτον) and also for the Greek.” On the one hand, this means that believing Jews and believing Greeks are united in salvation through the gospel. On the other hand, within this fundamental unity, Jews have a certain pre-eminence.¹⁸ Thus Paul’s thematic statement signals a dialectic between Jewish equality and Jewish pre-eminence which remains active in his subsequent discussions.¹⁹

Romans 1:18–3:20 does not constitute a singular and seamless argument. Rather, it consists of a series of pericopes, each of which is interwoven with the others, yet is also relatively self-contained.²⁰ The first pericope (Rom 1:18–32) describes God’s righteous judgment against humanity. Several times in the subsequent pericopes, Paul affirms that this judgment is equally applicable to both Jews and non-Jews (e.g. 2:6, 2:13, 3:19–20),²¹ yet he also refers back to his initial affirmation of Jewish pre-eminence using the keyword πρῶτον (2:10, 3:2, cf. 1:16). If Paul’s entire argument in Rom 1:18–3:20 were designed *only* to establish universal sinfulness or the equality of Jews and non-Jews with respect to God’s judgment, we would expect him

¹⁷ See ch. 5, pp. 190–246.

¹⁸ Stenschke 2010, 202–203.

¹⁹ See p. 40.

²⁰ Cf. Watson 2004, 69–71. This is notwithstanding Campbell (2009), who argues that Paul’s argument is incoherent unless we assume that many of the sections are (unmarked) representations of the position of his opponent. Since we do not have space to directly refute every aspect of Campbell’s complex thesis, our own interpretation will have to be judged simply on the basis of its own coherence.

²¹ Fitzmyer 1993, 98; Jewett 2007, vii–viii; Moo 1996, 33; Schreiner 1998, 25.

simply to deny any value to Jewish identity at all. Yet the dialectic between Jewish equality and Jewish pre-eminence which Paul introduced programmatically in Rom 1:16–17 remains active in Rom 1:18–3:20. Great care is needed, therefore, in determining the precise and distinct function of each pericope and how it relates either to Jewish equality, or to Jewish pre-eminence, or to both.

In Rom 2:1–16, Paul envisages a representative judgmental human being (ὁ ἄνθρωπος πᾶς ὁ κρίνων, v. 1), actively condemning members of his surrounding society. A Jewish figure is probably envisaged here;²² nevertheless he is addressed as an ἄνθρωπος in order to highlight his equality with Gentiles with respect to the criteria by which God will judge him (vv. 9–11, cf. 3:28). As we have seen, one of the ubiquitous features of Jewish identity in Paul's Jewish context was the possession of and regular communal engagement with the Law of Moses.²³ Paul argues in Rom 2:1–16 that Jewish possession of the Law provides no special protection from God's judgment for sin (vv. 9–10, 13; cf. 3:19–20). The function of Rom 2:1–16, therefore, is to deny soteriological advantage to members of the mainstream Jewish community by showing that God's eschatological judgment is impartial (v. 11), according to works (v. 6).²⁴ Mere possession of the Law of Moses provides no security in the face of this judgment, because possession of the Law does not define the limits of knowledge of or obedience to the divine moral will (vv. 12–16).

Many scholars treat Rom 2:17–29 simply as an elaboration upon 2:1–16. According to this common view, in Rom 2:17 Paul explicitly names the imaginary interlocutor whom he has so far been addressing implicitly and then uses sharper, more polemically crafted statements in order to drive home points similar to those he has already introduced in 2:1–16.²⁵ However, this construal does not bear up under close scrutiny.

²² Dunn 1988, 1.78–82.

²³ See ch. 2, pp. 55–60.

²⁴ Aletti 1988.

²⁵ E.g. Aletti 1988, 50–51; Boyarin 1994, 87–88; Dunn 1988, 1.108–109; Fitzmyer 1993, 315; Gathercole 2002a; Jewett 2007, 221; Käsemann 1980, 72; Moo 1996, 157–158; Schreiner 1998, 127; Watson 2007b, 198–199; Wright 1996, 147–148.

There are, of course, a number of parallels between Rom 2:1–16 and Rom 2:17–29.²⁶ Both pericopes begin with an explicit address to an interlocutor (vv. 1, 17). Both pericopes affirm that the *practice* of the Law is more fundamental than other aspects of Jewish identity, i.e. merely *hearing* the Law (v. 13) and circumcision (v. 25). Both pericopes attribute certain Jewish privileges to non-Jews in a qualified way: “the work of the Law” is written on the hearts of Gentiles (v. 15);²⁷ and uncircumcision can be “reckoned” as circumcision (v. 26). Both pericopes use the example of non-Jews who are morally aware or morally active (vv. 14, 26) to relativize perceived Jewish advantages (vv. 13, 25–27). In both cases the non-Jew in question is doing something in relation to an aspect of the Law (vv. 14, 26–27). Finally, both pericopes conclude with an affirmation that God is primarily interested in the “heart” (καρδία) and in “secret” (κρυπτός) things (vv. 15–16, 28–29).

Despite these parallels between Rom 2:1–16 and Rom 2:17–29, however, the two pericopes differ significantly with respect to their setting and function. Paul envisages a global world-setting in vv. 1–16, but a more specific and concrete setting in vv. 17–29. He begins the former pericope by addressing his interlocutor as an ἄνθρωπος (v. 1, cf. v. 3), highlighting his humanity. He begins the latter pericope, however, by addressing his interlocutor as a Ἰουδαῖος (v. 17), highlighting his Jewish identity—and so implicitly his membership of a concrete Jewish community. In the former pericope, Paul frequently uses words emphasizing universality such as ἄνθρωπος (vv. 1, 3, 9, 16), πᾶς (vv. 1, 9, 10) and ἕκαστος (v. 6), all of which are absent from the latter pericope.²⁸ In the former pericope, there is no indication of any social contact between Jews and Gentiles: Jews are “hearers” (ἀκροαταί) of the Law (v. 13), while Gentiles are defined as those who do *not* “have” (verb ἔχειν) the Law (v. 14). By contrast, in the latter pericope, those who “have” (verb ἔχειν) the advantages of the Law are thereby instructors of others (vv. 19–20), implying significant social contact between these people who “have” the Law and those who do not. In the former pericope, the Gentiles who “do the things of the Law” are described using a third-person *plural* subjunctive verb (ποιῶσιν, vv. 14–15),

²⁶ Gathercole 2002a.

²⁷ Cf. Jer 31:33 where God will write his laws on the hearts of Israel.

²⁸ Apart from a negative reference in v. 29, where praise ἐξ ἀνθρώπων is denied significance.

implying a more general scenario, whereas in the latter pericope, the uncircumcised Law-keeper is described using a third-person *singular* subjunctive verb (φυλάσσει, v. 26), implying that Paul is prompting his readers to visualize a more specific scenario. This individual must, in fact, be counted among the recipients of Jewish instruction in the Law, because he is described as observing the specific “regulations of the Law” (τὰ δικαιώματα τοῦ νόμου, v. 26), as opposed to the Gentiles in the former pericope who simply do the general “things of the Law” (τὰ τοῦ νόμου, v. 14).

Even more significantly, the stated purpose of the two pericopes is different. In Rom 2:1–16, Paul is arguing for the equal standing of Jews and Gentiles as humans facing divine eschatological judgment. This purpose can be seen in the introductory and concluding remarks of the pericope, which form an *inclusio* around its contents. The pericope begins with the human (ἄνθρωπος) who judges (verb κρίνειν, v. 1) and concludes with the day when God will judge (verb κρίνειν) the secrets of humans (ἄνθρωποι, v. 16). Jewish identity itself is not disputed in Rom 2:1–16; its soteriological value is merely relativized in the face of eschatological judgment. On the other hand, Rom 2:17–29 is an argument about the meaning of Jewish identity itself. The pericope begins with an implied question about the Jewish identity of Paul’s interlocutor: Εἰ δὲ σὺ Ἰουδαῖος ἐπονομάζῃ (v. 17), and concludes with an affirmation of the true meaning of Jewish identity (v. 29), placed in precise opposition to the other (v. 28).

Romans 3:1 exhibits a marked change in style. After its frequent use in Romans 2, the second person singular form of direct address disappears and is replaced with a question-answer form (Rom 3:1–8).²⁹ This implies the beginning of a new section. Nevertheless, the questions raised in Rom 3 are clearly connected to the dialectic between Jewish equality and Jewish pre-eminence which has characterized the two pericopes in Rom 2. Paul has claimed that Jewish possession of the Law does not, in and of itself, necessarily lead to obedience (e.g. Rom 2:23), nor to any advantage in the face of God’s judgment (e.g. Rom 2:13); thus obedience to God seems to be just as possible for uncircumcised Gentiles as it is for circumcised Jews. Yet Paul has also claimed that circumcision may somehow “be valuable” (verb ὠφελεῖν, Rom 2:25). It

²⁹ Paul also begins to engage far more directly with Scripture in Rom 3 than he had been in Rom 2 (Watson 2007b, 218–219).

is this tension which informs the question in Rom 3:1. The question is not *whether* circumcised Jews have an advantage—Paul has already stated that they do (Rom 1:16, 2:25). The question, rather is, “*What* [Τί] is the advantage of the Jew? Or *what* [τίς] is the value [ὠφέλεια] of circumcision?” Paul’s answer is that the key to Jewish advantage is the possession of God’s word: Jews were “entrusted with the oracles of God” (Rom 3:2). In Rom 3:3–8, Paul affirms the value of God’s “words” (v. 4) and his “truth” (vv. 4, 7) despite the disobedience of “some” (τινες) Jews (v. 3).

Romans 2:17–29, then, should be treated as a coherent argument in its own right with its own particular setting and purpose. This is not to deny that the passage has an integral place within the wider argument of Rom 1:18–3:20. In fact, as we shall see, an understanding of Rom 2:17–29 which treats it as a self-contained unit with its own distinct setting and purpose fits *more* closely into the flow of Paul’s overall argument than other interpretations which treat it as an elaboration of points made elsewhere.

4.1.2. The social context of Rom 2:17–29: the Jewish synagogue

We have argued that the differences between Rom 2:1–16 and Rom 2:17–29 imply that the latter pericope is a coherent textual unit with its own distinct setting. As we will see, this setting is best understood as the *Jewish synagogue* and its related Jewish community. This synagogue setting for Rom 2:17–29 is fundamental for the interpretation of the pericope. It enables us to understand Paul’s interlocutor as a synagogue-based Law-teacher, and thus as a paradigm for Jewish identity and vocation. It also enables us to understand the uncircumcised Law-keeper of vv. 25–27 as a Gentile synagogue adherent, and thus to make sense of Paul’s logic in these verses. Finally, it enables us to understand Paul’s statement about Jewishness in vv. 28–29 as just that—a statement about Jewishness, which would have been quite comprehensible (albeit controversial) in a first-century synagogue context.

There are a number of explicit indications within Rom 2:17–29 that Paul intends his readers to envisage a synagogue setting for the pericope.

The first, and most obvious, indication is that Paul explicitly addresses his interlocutor, for the first and only time in his letter, as a “publicly recognized Jew” (σὺ Ἰουδαῖος ἐπονομάζη). Some scholars have suggested that the interlocutor is a

Gentile who “wants to be called a Jew” or who “calls himself a Jew.”³⁰ This suggestion presupposes that the verb ἐπονομάζειν is being used in the middle voice to refer to a personal act of self-designation in opposition to the public consensus. However, this would not fit with the known usage of the word. This verb is frequently used in the LXX and Josephus to describe the act of giving a *publicly* available name to an individual or place.³¹ Neither the LXX nor Josephus ever use this verb in the middle voice, since such public names are conferred by others or come about through general consensus, never simply through the will of the named individual.³² The passive voice is, however, used in the LXX and Josephus to mean “publicly known by the name ...”³³ This suggests that the verb in Rom 2:17 should also be understood in the passive voice. Hence we should paraphrase, “you are publicly acknowledged as entitled to the name Jew.” Paul is emphasizing the public nature of the interlocutor’s Jewishness, and hence his membership of the mainstream Jewish community situated in the synagogue. The reason that Paul does not simply say, “If you are a Jew...” is not because the interlocutor is really a Gentile with Jewish pretensions, but rather because, as we shall see, Paul is seeking to contest his interlocutor’s understanding of Jewish identity.

Secondly, there is a strong emphasis on the “Law” (νόμος) as the basic constitutive element for all the other activities in Rom 2:17–29. This Law is not the general moral will of God available to the Gentiles (cf. Rom 2:15), but the specific Law of Moses which is read in the synagogue and which (as Paul has already indicated) the Gentiles do not “have” (cf. Rom 2:14). The participial phrase, “being instructed from the Law” (κατηχούμενος ἐκ τοῦ νόμου, v. 18) indicates the means by which the Jewish interlocutor is able to boast in God, know his will and distinguish what is best (vv. 17–18).³⁴ Similarly, the participial phrase, “having the embodiment of knowledge and truth in the Law,” explains how the Jewish interlocutor can be

³⁰ Campbell 2006, 108; Jewett 2007, 221–222; Thorsteinsson 2003, 197–204.

³¹ The many instances include, e.g., Gen 21:31, 25:25; Jos. *A.J.* 7.21.

³² *Pace* Jewett 2007, 222. Jewett cites Thucydides, *Hist.* 7.69, but there the term is in the active voice, not the middle voice.

³³ e.g. Jos. *A.J.* 2.1; Exod 15:23. See also the use of the passive in the Papyri to denote a publicly acknowledged name (Moulton and Milligan 1914–1929, 3.251).

³⁴ The “participle of means” usually follows the main verb(s) and usually takes the present tense, as here (Wallace 1996, 628–630).

confident in his pedagogical activities (v. 20). The content of the Jewish interlocutor’s preaching (μὴ κλέπτειν and μὴ μοιχεύειν, vv. 21, 22) consists of direct citations of written commandments from the Law (Exod 20:15, 14 [LXX 20:14, 13]).³⁵ The νόμος forms the explicit object of the Jewish interlocutor’s boast (v. 23), as well as the explicit boundary that he has transgressed (vv. 23, 25, 27). Even the “uncircumcised” person in vv. 26–27 is said to “observe” (verb φυλάσσειν) “the regulations of the Law” (τὰ δικαιώματα τοῦ νόμου) and to “keep” (verb τελεῖν) the Law, indicating that he has had an opportunity to learn particular requirements relating to the Law of Moses, in contrast with the mass of Gentiles in Rom 2:14 who have not had such an opportunity.³⁶ It is unlikely that Paul is thinking of the use of the Law in the Christ-believing community, because Paul never speaks of the relationship between Christ-believers and the Law in these terms. Paul nowhere speaks of Christ-believers relying on the Law, boasting in the Law, knowing God’s will through the Law, being educated in the Law, observing the Law, keeping the Law, or transgressing the Law.³⁷ On the other hand, this description conforms closely to what we know of the diaspora synagogue of Paul’s time. The synagogue was the place where membership of the mainstream Jewish community, in all its social dimensions, was thoroughly integrated with its key defining activity: reading of and instruction in the Law.³⁸

Thirdly, in Rom 2:25–29, Paul enters into an argument about the “reckoning” (verb λογίζεσθαι) of circumcision to somebody who is physically uncircumcised. Paul himself does not regard the “reckoning” of circumcision as an important issue anywhere else in his letter to the Romans.³⁹ Paul is much more concerned about God’s “reckoning” of righteousness, which is clearly a different issue since, as Paul is at pains to point out, this latter kind of “reckoning” can occur *regardless* of a person’s circumcision or uncircumcision (Rom 4:9–12).⁴⁰ Yet there was a debate among

³⁵ Paul has transformed God’s direct speech in Exodus into indirect speech attributed to his interlocutor; hence the changes from οὐ to μὴ and from future indicative to infinitive.

³⁶ Cf. similar language used of Jewish Torah-observance in Gal 6:13; Acts 7:53, 21:24.

³⁷ Rosner 2010, 406–415.

³⁸ See ch. 2, pp. 55–60.

³⁹ On circumcision elsewhere in the Pauline correspondence, see p. 178 n. 171 on Phil 3:3 and p. 179 n. 172 on Col 2:11.

⁴⁰ Nygren 1952, 134.

Paul's Jewish contemporaries concerning the issue of whether uncircumcised Gentile adherents to the Jewish community were to be welcomed or treated like Jews—a concept which may easily have been expressed by a phrase such as “reckoned as circumcised.”⁴¹ Thus the phrase “reckoned as circumcised” indicates that Paul is entering into a mainstream Jewish debate, which implies that he is situating his argument in the social context of the mainstream Jewish synagogue.

Fourthly, the idea that Rom 2:17–29 is set in the context of a synagogue is consistent with other evidence about Paul's practices. In 2 Cor 11:24, Paul reports that five times he received thirty-nine lashes “by the Jews” (cf. Josephus, *AJ*. 4.238). This implies that he repeatedly expressed vocal opposition to authorities in a synagogue context for at least some time after his conversion.⁴² Acts also depicts Paul customarily preaching in the synagogue.⁴³

Finally, a number of scholars have pointed out that Paul's use of certain rhetorical devices in Rom 2:17–27 indicates that he is entering into an inner-Jewish debate.⁴⁴

Although this pericope is intended to be read as if it were spoken in the synagogue, Paul's immediate purpose here is, of course, towards his Christ-believing addressees (cf. Rom 1:7).⁴⁵ Paul's aim is to let his Christ-believing audience “overhear” his contest with the mainstream Roman Jewish community, in order to lay the groundwork to persuade them to accept his own view of Jewish identity and Jewish vocation, and thus to accept his apostolic ministry, along with its implications for Jew-Gentile relationships in the Roman community itself.⁴⁶ Nevertheless, since the

⁴¹ Watson 2007b, 74–79. We shall discuss this debate in more detail below, pp. 170–174.

⁴² Frey 2007, 304; Stowers 1984, 64–65; Watson 2007b, 79–80; Cf. Josephus, *AJ*. 4.238.

⁴³ E.g. Acts 13:5, 14–15; 14:1; 17:1–2, 10, 17; 18:4, 19; 19:8. Cf. Stowers 1984, 61.

⁴⁴ Campbell 1991, 137–138; Carras 1992, 188–191; Jewett 2007, 221–222; Stowers 1981, 183. Stowers (1981, 85–118, esp. 112–113; 1994, 144–149) notes some parallels between this passage and diatribes in ancient philosophical schools. For Stowers, Paul has “adapted the censure of the pretentious student to a Jewish setting” (1994, 149; cf. 1981, 174). Stowers's insistence on a direct parallel between the diatribal form used in ancient philosophical schools and Paul's own dialogues is, however, ultimately unprovable (cf. Schmeller 1987, 47, 436).

⁴⁵ Cf. Stowers's (1994, 21–23) distinction between different kinds of readers: the “encoded explicit reader” (anyone overtly addressed in the text), the “encoded implicit reader” (anyone whom the text is actually intended to persuade) and the “empirical reader” (anyone who happens to read the text).

⁴⁶ Furthermore, in light the fact that Paul plans to visit the Roman Christ-believers to impart to them a “spiritual gift” (Rom 1:11), Rom 2:17–29 may serve another purpose. By dramatizing a debate with a Jewish synagogue teacher, Paul may be proving to his readers that he is perfectly capable of engaging

pericope is expertly crafted and rhetorically forceful,⁴⁷ we cannot discount the possibility that it is a polished or compact version of a speech that Paul used on other occasions, perhaps in the synagogue itself.

4.1.3. The unity of Rom 2:17–29

Romans 2:17–29 is commonly divided into two distinct arguments: a discussion about the Law (vv. 17–24) and a discussion about circumcision (vv. 25–29).⁴⁸ Often, the transition between vv. 24 and 25 is seen as so abrupt that it warrants the delineation of an entirely new pericope.⁴⁹ However, a number of features of Rom 2:17–29 cut across this two-part division. For example, the term “Law” is not restricted to the argument of verses 17–24; on the contrary, it is mentioned 5 times in verses 17–24 and a further 5 times in verses 25–29. Indeed, the key indictment, “transgression” (παραβάσις) / being a “transgressor” (παραβάτης) of the Law, connects vv. 17–24 (see v. 23) with vv. 25–29 (see vv. 25, 27). Furthermore, the conclusion in vv. 28–29 provides an answer *both* to the question concerning the term “Jew” in v. 17 (εἰ δὲ σὺ Ἰουδαῖος ἐπινομάζῃ) and *also* to the issue of “circumcision” (περιτομή) in vv. 25–27.

We should, therefore, see the pericope as a coherent whole, divided into three related sections:

1. vv. 17–20: a statement of the mainstream view of Jewish identity and Jewish vocation. This statement is concerned with the significance of the reading and teaching of the “Law” for Jewish identity.
2. vv. 21–27: a deconstruction of this view of Jewish identity and Jewish vocation. This deconstruction employs two figures: the Law-teaching Law-breaker (vv. 21–24), and the uncircumcised Law-keeper (vv. 25–27).

in actual disputes with such teachers, and so will be useful to them in their struggle for legitimacy (cf. Watson 2007b, 180–182) upon his arrival in Rome.

⁴⁷ Jewett 2007, 219–221.

⁴⁸ E.g. Dunn 1988, 1.108–128; Fitzmyer 1993, 314–323; Jewett 2007, 220–221; Moo 1996, 157; Schreiner 1998, 127–128.

⁴⁹ E.g. Dunn 1988, 1.118–119; Moo 1996, 166.

3. vv. 28–29: a conclusion, rejecting the mainstream view of Jewish identity and Jewish vocation—which is focussed on the communal reading and teaching of the Law of Moses as an exemplary witness to God’s power and wisdom—and replacing it with an alternative, redefined understanding of Jewishness—which is based in prophetic themes and focussed on marginal figures. This alternative understanding of Jewishness ultimately finds its expression in Paul’s apostolic mission and in Jewish members of his Christ-believing communities.

4.2. Jewish identity and the Law (Romans 2:17–20)

Paul begins his contest over Jewish identity by summarizing the close relationship between Jewish identity and the synagogue-based communal engagement with “the Law” (Rom 2:17–20). By employing the participial phrase *κατηχούμενος ἐκ τοῦ νόμου* at the end of verse 18, Paul emphasizes that the other three characteristics of Jewish identity listed in verses 17–18—“boasting in God,” “knowing the will” and “approving what is excellent”—are realized through communal “instruction” in the synagogue.⁵⁰ He also places the phrase *ἐν τῷ νόμῳ* right at the end of the list of teaching activities in Rom 2:17–20, reminding his readers once again that it is the reading of this text—the Law—which stands at the heart of Jewish teaching efforts. Furthermore, the “alliterative wordplay” of the first two verbs in Rom 2:17 links the public identity of Paul’s Jewish interlocutor (*Ἰουδαῖος ἐπονομάζῃ*) with his reliance on the Law (*ἐπαναπαύῃ νόμῳ*).⁵¹ As we have already seen, for Paul and for many of his Jewish contemporaries, the reading and interpretation of the Law of Moses in the synagogue constituted a defining aspect of Jewish communal life.⁵² This synagogue-based Law-teaching context is clearly in view in this passage.

⁵⁰ Both of the other Pauline references to the verb *κατηχεῖν* occur in the context of communal instruction (1 Cor 14:19, Gal 6:6; see Jewett 2007, 224). Although we have no examples of this word being used by other Jewish authors in the same way, it is reasonable to suppose that Paul is referring in Rom 2:18 to a communal teaching context also; i.e., the teaching of the Law in the synagogue.

⁵¹ Jewett 2007, 219.

⁵² See pp. 55–60.

Interpreters often approach Rom 2:17–29 by assuming that Paul takes an overtly hostile stance towards his interlocutor from the outset.⁵³ However, the word εἰ in verse 17 introduces the protasis of a first class condition. Hence Paul wishes to begin his pericope by entering into the conceptual world of his interlocutor and assuming his understanding of Jewish identity, at least for the sake of argument.⁵⁴ Indeed, the structure of the protasis (Rom 2:17–20) conforms in many ways to the general pattern of Paul’s own understanding of Jewish identity which we outlined in chapter 2.⁵⁵ There, we saw that the value of Jewish identity arises from two related convictions: firstly, that the Law of Moses is a special gift of divine revelation to the nation of Israel, and secondly, that the possession of divine revelation provides Israel with a special vocation—i.e. a role or task in God’s wider purposes. Here in Rom 2:17–20, we see Paul speaking about Jewish identity in these same terms: firstly, he lists particular Jewish prerogatives which derive from the possession of the Law as a divine revelation (vv. 17–18), and secondly, he discusses the Jewish vocation towards others which arises from their knowledge of the Law (vv. 19–20). It is not until verse 21 that Paul begins his apodosis, and thus his deconstruction of the mainstream understanding of Jewish identity.⁵⁶ We should take a little time, then, to examine what Paul *affirms* about Jewish identity, before we concentrate on his deconstructions and denials.

⁵³ E.g. Jewett (2007) maintains that Paul’s audience is “invited to join Paul’s indictment of an insufferably arrogant bigot” (221).

⁵⁴ The first class condition indicates “the assumption of truth for the sake of argument” (Wallace 1996, 689–690).

⁵⁵ See pp. 43–82.

⁵⁶ In strictly grammatical terms, there is no apodosis (hence the almost certainly secondary emendation ἴδε, which removes this grammatical inconsistency; Cranfield 1975, 1.163). Nevertheless, the inferential particle οὖν in verse 21 indicates the beginning of a virtual apodosis (Moo 1996, 158–159), which consists of a series of rhetorical questions designed to point out the problems with the interlocutor’s view of Jewish identity as described in verses 17–20. For a similar grammatical construction, also in a dialogical setting, see Matt 12:27.

4.2.1. *The Law and Jewish privilege (Rom 2:17–18)*

But if you are (publicly) called “Jew,”
and rest on the Law and boast in God
and know the will and approve of what is excellent,
being instructed from the Law... (Rom 2:17–18)

Εἰ δὲ σὺ Ἰουδαῖος ἐπονομάζη
καὶ ἐπαναπαύῃ νόμῳ καὶ καυχᾶσαι ἐν θεῷ
καὶ γινώσκεις τὸ θέλημα καὶ δοκιμάζεις τὰ διαφέροντα
κατηχούμενος ἐκ τοῦ νόμου, ...

Paul begins his discussion of Jewish identity by recalling the privileged position of Jews which arises from their engagement with the Law of Moses. Paul’s Jewish interlocutor “rests” (verb ἐπαναπαύεσθαι) on the Law and consequently “boasts” (verb καυχᾶσθαι) in God (Rom 2:17). This same idea is also expressed in a more compact formulation in verse 23: the interlocutor “boasts in the Law” (ἐν νόμῳ καυχᾶσαι). A modern English reader of this passage might be prejudiced by the fact that the English word “boast” usually carries negative connotations. The Greek term καυχᾶσθαι (cf. καύχησις), however, is often used in a positive sense by Paul and other ancient writers, and means something like “take pride in” or “glory in.”⁵⁷ The activity denoted by καυχᾶσθαι may only be conceived negatively when the grounds of the “boast” can be shown to be illegitimate.⁵⁸ In Rom 2:17 and 23, it is clear that Paul’s interlocutor would have viewed his own “boast” in a positive light. We must, then, investigate the precise grounds for the interlocutor’s boast, and ask whether Paul himself would have viewed these grounds to be legitimate.

The grounds for the interlocutor’s boast are, according to this passage, principally epistemological.⁵⁹ In verse 18, Paul says of his Jewish interlocutor: “You *know* the

⁵⁷ Cosgrove 2006, 277; Rosner 2010, 407; Schreiner 1998, 130.

⁵⁸ E.g. 1 Cor 4:7, 2 Cor 5:12; cf. James 4:16, “You boast in your arrogance. All *such* boasting is evil” (not “All boasting is evil”). Similarly, the word ἐπαναπαύεσθαι (Rom 2:17) can be used to express either well-placed confidence (e.g. 1 Macc 8:11) or misplaced confidence (e.g. Ezek 29:7, Mic 3:11).

⁵⁹ Many interpreters maintain that the “boast” here is principally *soteriological*; i.e. it is referring to Jewish confidence in eschatological salvation on the basis of the Law. The precise dynamics of this soteriological confidence are conceived in different ways. Some interpreters, for example, maintain that Paul is referring to an arrogant nationalistic belief that the mere possession of the Law by Jews, irrespective of whether they obeyed it, guaranteed their eschatological salvation (Wright 1996, 139; cf. Sanders 1977, 422–423). Others (rightly) point out that obedience to the Law was a characteristic middle term between possession of the Law and eschatological blessing in many Jewish sources (e.g. Gathercole 2002b, 197–215; see e.g. Wis 15:2–3). However, interpreters rarely question whether

will” (γινώσκεις τὸ θέλημα). “The will” here is almost certainly the will of God, who was just mentioned in the previous clause. In the context of this passage, it should be understood as a reference to God’s moral will for his people.⁶⁰ The participle at the end of verse 18 indicates that this knowledge of God’s will comes about through instruction in the Law. The idea that God’s moral will is revealed through the Law is established in Jewish literature.⁶¹ The Jewish interlocutor is also said to “approve of what is excellent.” This is consistent with other descriptions of hermeneutical activity in the synagogue. Philo, for example, describes the synagogues as schools of “moral excellence” (ἀρετή, *Legat.* 312). Josephus sees the “excellence” (ἀρετή) of Moses in his ability, above all other lawgivers, “to recognize what is best” (τὰ βέλτιστα συνιδεῖν; *C. Ap.* 2.153).

There is no indication in this passage or elsewhere that Paul denies the epistemological privilege which arises from Jewish possession of the Law.⁶² On the contrary, in Rom 3:1—which follows on directly from this discussion of Jewish identity—Paul continues to affirm the epistemological advantages of Jews. In response to the question, “what is the advantage [περισσόζ] of the Jew? Or what is the value [ὠφέλεια] of circumcision?” (cf. Rom 2:25), Paul answers that “primarily” (πρῶτον) they were “entrusted” (verb πιστεύειν) with the “oracles of God” (τὰ λόγια τοῦ θεοῦ).⁶³ The word πρῶτον (Rom 3:2) recalls the statement of Jewish priority in Rom 1:16.⁶⁴ For Paul, then, the *primary* advantage of being Jewish is

soteriological issues are on view *at all* in Rom 2:17–29. Certainly, soteriological questions concerning the Law are addressed elsewhere in Romans (e.g. 2:12–13, 3:20–21, 3:28, 4:13, 9:31, 10:4–5), and there is also a soteriological dimension to Christ-believers’ “boasting” (Rom 5:2, 3, 11; Gathercole 2002b, 260–262). Yet within Rom 2:17–29 itself, there is little reason to assume that the main issue is eschatological salvation. Paul addresses issues of knowledge, virtue, obedience, teaching, praise and honour, but none of this means that he is speaking at this point about final salvation.

⁶⁰ Cf. e.g. 1 Thess 4:3, 5:18; also Eph 6:6. Thus it is not a reference to God’s general purposes (as in e.g. Rom 15:32).

⁶¹ E.g. Ps 40:8 [LXX 39:9]; 1QS IX 13, 23–25 (Rosner 2010, 408).

⁶² Pace Jewett (2007, 223–224), who sees the claim to know God’s inscrutable will as another example of the presumptive bigotry of Paul’s interlocutor.

⁶³ Paul probably chooses the term λόγια because it highlights the special and exalted nature of the Law as God’s very own words (cf. Ps 119:162 [LXX 118:162]; Philo, *Legat.* 210; Acts 7:38). Paul may also be making a broader point, that God’s revelation to Israel includes *all* the Scriptures, not just the Law of Moses (cf. Rom 1:2, 3:21).

⁶⁴ Thus it means “primarily” rather than indicating the “first” item in a hypothetical list of further advantages of equal value (Jewett 2007, 243–244).

epistemological. In Rom 3:3–8, Paul goes on to claim that God’s “words” (Rom 3:4) and his “truth” (Rom 3:4, 7), are indeed very good, since they show God’s righteousness in judging sin—even if that sin is committed by the hearers of the Law themselves.⁶⁵ The revelatory value of the Law is not in question for Paul: Paul views Jews as possessors of substantial divine epistemological privileges.⁶⁶ Indeed, Paul returns to the theme of ongoing Jewish epistemological advantage in Rom 9–11 (see e.g. Rom 9:4–5, 11:11–31).⁶⁷ The question, as we shall see in a moment, is not whether the Jewish possession of the Law is a privilege, but rather whether this privilege leads straightforwardly to *obedience*, as the mainstream Jewish community assumes.

4.2.2. The Law and Jewish vocation (Rom 2:19–20)

In Rom 2:19–20, Paul refers to the interlocutor’s claim that the Law not only gives him substantial privileges, but also provides him with a teaching role towards others. We will show here that the teaching role of Paul’s interlocutor is not simply a rhetorical device to expose the “pretensions” and “insufferable arrogance” of a “bigot,”⁶⁸ nor is it an indication that Paul is only speaking of certain individual “missionary” opponents.⁶⁹ Rather, Paul is addressing a Jewish synagogue teacher—a person whose ability to understand and to teach of the Law of Moses makes him a paradigm for Jewish identity itself. This teacher is not just any Jew, but the prime example of a Jew; a “publicly known Jew” (Ἰουδαῖος ἐπονομάζῃ, Rom 2:17); a Jew *par excellence*.

⁶⁵ This observation leads to a plausible reading of the question in Rom 3:9 (προεχόμεθα;) as “Are we [Jews] worse off?”, taking the verb as a passive indicative rather than a middle indicative. Cranfield (1975, 1.189) rejects this interpretation as “unsuitable to the context.” Yet if Rom 3:1–2 is asserting that God’s Law is indeed a special epistemological privilege for Jews, while Rom 3:3–8 is asserting that God’s glory is specially revealed by his *judgment* against those Jews who did not respond rightly to the Law, then “Are we [Jews] worse off [by having the Law]?” (Rom 3:9a) follows naturally. Furthermore, Paul’s reminder about universal subjection to sin (Rom 3:9b) is a suitable answer to the question, since it reminds the readers that Gentiles are just as sinful as Jews and so *equally* subject to judgment (cf. Rom 2:9–13). Although Jewish sin may have a special role in *revealing* God’s justice, Jews are no more or less liable to judgment itself than Gentiles are.

⁶⁶ Elliott 1990, 191–192.

⁶⁷ “In chapters 9–11 Paul answers the questions he asked but did not answer in 3:1–5” (Dahl 1977, 139). For a detailed investigation of Rom 9–11, see ch. 5, pp. 190–246.

⁶⁸ So Jewett 2007, 225–226

⁶⁹ So Stowers 1994, 150–158.

(a) *Jewish Law and the teaching of Gentiles*

Paul introduces his discussion of the mainstream Jewish teaching vocation with a statement about the “confidence” of his interlocutor:

and [if] you are sure about yourself, ... (Rom 2:19)

πέποιθάς τε σεαυτὸν ...

Jewett claims that these words mean, “[If] you have convinced yourself...?” and that Paul is thus ascribing an illegitimate “cocksuredness” and “transparent arrogance” to his interlocutor, casting him as a “bigot.”⁷⁰ However, the perfect active of *πείθειν* is intransitive and means “to be sure”; it does not mean “to convince.”⁷¹ Since it is an intransitive verb, the reflexive pronoun *σεαυτόν* cannot be the direct object of *πέποιθας*. Instead, it should be taken as an accusative of reference. Hence the beginning of verse 19 means, “[If] you are sure about yourself, [that].” This leaves open the possibility that Paul might agree (at least to some extent) that there is some pedagogical value in the Law, and thus in Jewish identity.

Paul lists a series of short phrases which indicate that his interlocutor believes that his possession of the Law gives him a teaching role in the synagogue. Each of the short phrases in vv. 19–20 consists of a singular noun indicating that Paul’s Jewish interlocutor possesses some wisdom to impart to others, followed by a plural genitive construction indicating the epistemologically deficient status of those to whom he imparts his knowledge:

... that you are a guide for the blind, (Rom 2:19)

... ὁδηγὸν εἶναι τυφλῶν,

Paul’s interlocutor considers himself to be a “guide for the blind.” In the Scriptures, especially in Isaiah, “blindness” was often used in relation to God’s own people Israel, as a metaphor for the irrational confusion resulting from sin or from God’s

⁷⁰ Jewett (2007, 225). Jewett cites Aristophanes, *Eq.* 770 to support his argument; yet the construction in Aristophanes (*καὶ μὴ τοῦτοισι πέποιθας*) simply means “but if you are not sure about these things”; it does not contain any accusative term nor any reflexive pronoun and so is not a clear parallel to Rom 2:19.

⁷¹ See Bauer et al. 2000, 2.b. For Paul’s usage see 2 Cor 10:7, Gal 5:10, Phil 2:24, 2 Thess 3:4.

judgment.⁷² In Isaiah 42, it is unclear whether the “blind” of v. 7 are to be identified with the “people” (Israel) or with the “nations” of v. 6. But a few verses later, God himself appears as the guide (v. 16) for blind Israel (v. 19, cf. Isa 41:8), suggesting that Israel herself should be included among the blind. Later Jewish teaching seems to have preferred to apply the metaphor of “guides for the blind” to Jews themselves who, by virtue of their superior wisdom gained through the Scriptures, can guide Gentiles. In Matt 23:15–16, the Pharisees see themselves as “guides” for proselytes, but according to Jesus, they themselves are blind.⁷³ In *1 Enoch*, the righteous and wise are given the Scriptures which make them still wiser (*1 En.* 104.12–13) and which enable them to be guides for all the children on the earth (*1 En.* 105.1).⁷⁴ It is likely, therefore, that Paul is employing a metaphor here which was commonly used for Jews teaching others on the basis of God’s revelation, but which at least has the potential to be turned back upon Jews themselves in light of its scriptural background (cf. 2:21–24).⁷⁵

light for those in darkness, (Rom 2:19)

φῶς τῶν ἐν σκότει,

The interlocutor is also convinced that he is a “light for those in darkness.” Paul has already referred to the “darkening” of the foolish hearts of unrighteous Gentiles (Rom 1:21). The “darkness” metaphor is used in the Scriptures, especially in Isaiah, for a state of foolishness or condemnation in which God’s people (e.g. Isa 29:15) or Gentiles (e.g. Isa 60:2) may exist. The Law, on the other hand, is described in the Scriptures as a “light” which is given to Israel (Ps 119:105). In Isaiah, Israel’s eschatological redemption is associated with a renewed emphasis on the Law which goes out as a “light” to the surrounding nations (Isa 2:2–5, 51:4–5). It is worth noting here, in view of Paul’s appropriation of Isaiah 60–61 to describe his own ministry (Rom 15:16–19, 25–27),⁷⁶ that in the later formulation of Isaiah 60–62, the “light” which is given to Israel and illuminates the nations is God’s salvific activity which

⁷² E.g. Deut 28:28–29; Isa 6:10, 29:9, 29:18, 35:5, 43:8, 56:10, 59:10, 61:1 (LXX); Lam 4:14.

⁷³ Cf. Matt 15:14, 23:24.

⁷⁴ See also *Syb. Or.* 3.194–195.

⁷⁵ Jewett 2007, 225.

⁷⁶ See ch. 3, pp. 102–109.

glorifies Israel (Isa 60:1–3, 19–20),⁷⁷ or Israel’s eschatological righteousness (Isa 62:1–2), without any explicit reference to the “Law.”

In second-temple writings, the Law can be viewed as a “light” given to Israel so that God’s wisdom could be revealed to the entire world. Sirach 24:23–34, for example, says that the Law “makes instruction [παιδεία] shine forth like light [φῶς]” (v. 27), and uses the global metaphor of the life-giving waters flowing from Eden (vv. 25–27; cf. Gen 2:10–14), suggesting that “all who seek” the wisdom of the Law (v. 34) may include Gentiles also. Wisdom 18:4, recalling the plague of “darkness” (σκότος) in Egypt, speaks of the sons of Israel as those “through whom the imperishable light (φῶς) of the Law (νόμος) was to be given to the world.”⁷⁸ This background provides a close conceptual parallel with the claims of Paul’s Jewish interlocutor.⁷⁹ Philo speaks of Israel as a “wise nation” which acts as a light to the world, diffusing blessings to all the nations, thus fulfilling the promise to Abraham, “in you shall all nations be blessed” (*Somn.* 1.175–178).⁸⁰ For Philo, Israel’s relationship to the rest of the world parallels that of a wise individual (i.e. a philosopher) to a city. Elsewhere, Philo indicates that the Law of Moses is a primary source of such wisdom, and is therefore honoured amongst all nations (cf. *Mos.* 1.1–4, 2.25).⁸¹ In denouncing Alexandrian mystery religions on account of their “darkness” (i.e. their secrecy), Philo claims that the Jews walk in “daylight,” promoting the teachings of the Torah widely, even amongst the pagans (*Spec.* 1.320–323).⁸²

It may be significant that Paul’s interlocutor here claims to *be* the light, not just to possess the light. The closest verbal parallel to this expression occurs in two places in Isaiah, where the Servant of the Lord himself is said to be a “light to the nations”

⁷⁷ Cf. Luke 2:32.

⁷⁸ At other times, the light / darkness contrast is used to urge the people of the light to *avoid* those in the darkness: see Bar 4:1–4 and various instances in the Qumran literature cited by Jewett (2007, 225); and cf. 1 Thess 5:5; 2 Cor 6:14; Eph 5:8–9; Col 1:12–13. However this is not the purpose of the light / darkness contrast in Rom 2:19.

⁷⁹ *4 Baruch* also refers to the Law using the metaphor of “light” (e.g. *4 Bar.* 5.34). Schnabel (1985, 156–158, 174, 198, 345) provides many other examples of “light” as a metaphor for wisdom and the Law.

⁸⁰ Cf. Umemoto 1994, 40.

⁸¹ The universal applicability of the Law’s wisdom is the reason Philo gives for its translation into Greek (*Mos.* 2.26–27)

⁸² Dickson 2003, 37–39.

(Isa 42:6–7; Isa 49:6). In the Hebrew text of Isa 42:4, the Servant is associated with bringing the Law to the nations (“the coastlands wait for his Torah”).⁸³ The Servant / Israel’s role as a light to the nations is a prominent theme in Isaiah.⁸⁴ It is possible, therefore, that Paul is here alluding to the Servant figure of Isaiah 40–55, in order both to recall his own opening self-description as δοῦλος (Rom 1:1),⁸⁵ and also to anticipate his citation of Isa 52:5 in v. 24. The purpose of such an allusion would be to highlight the failure of the mainstream Jewish community to fulfil the Servant’s role because of their own blindness due to their own disobedience to the Law (cf. Isa 42:19, 24), and to pave the way for a notion of the fulfilment of the Isaianic Servant figure associated with Paul’s redefinition of Jewish identity.⁸⁶

tutor of fools,
teacher of infants, (Rom 2:20)

παιδευτὴν ἀφρόνων,
διδάσκαλον νηπίων,

The interlocutor also claims a role as “tutor of fools” (παιδευτὴ[ς] ἀφρόνων) and “teacher of infants” (διδάσκαλο[ς] νηπίων, Rom 2:20). There is a parallel here with certain statements in the Wisdom of Solomon. In Wisdom, the Egyptians, on account of their idolatry, are described as being deceived like “foolish” (ἄφρονες) “infants” (νήπιοι, Wis 12:24; cf. a similar formulation in 15:14). The book of Wisdom as a whole is addressed to all the rulers of the earth (Wis 1:1), purporting to “teach” (verb διδάσκειν) wisdom to such rulers (Wis 6:9–10). The beginning of wisdom is a desire for “instruction” (παιδεία, Wis 6:17), which is ultimately about keeping wisdom’s “laws” (νόμοι, Wis 6:18), leading to immortality and proximity to God. This wisdom, as we have seen, is ultimately found in the imperishable “light of the Law” (νόμου φῶς) given to Israel (Wis 18:4, cf. Rom 2:19).

There are also a number of verbal and conceptual parallels with the prologue to Ben Sira. The prologue claims that the Law and Prophets and others that followed them

⁸³ Note, however, that there is no reference to νόμος in the LXX, which reads: “nations will hope in his name.”

⁸⁴ Clements 1996; Muthunayagom 2000, 147; Van Winkle 1985; Watts 2004, 505–507.

⁸⁵ See ch. 3, pp. 87–100.

⁸⁶ See ch. 5, pp. 217–226.

have provided Israel with “instruction” (παιδεία) and wisdom (Sir Prol 1:3). This leads to three outcomes: Israel herself is “praised” (verb ἐπαινεῖν, Sir Prol 1:3; cf. ἔπαινος, Rom 2:29), those who read the Law receive understanding (Sir Prol 1:4, cf. Rom 2:17–18), and *outsiders* (those ἐκτός) also benefit through the disciples’ verbal activities of speaking and writing (Sir Prol 1:5–6, cf. Rom 2:19–20).

There is also a parallel between Paul’s description of his Jewish interlocutor’s pupils here and his own terminology for his addressees. When Paul, in the course of his apostolic teaching ministry, wishes to admonish his Gentile addressees particularly harshly, he employs the terms ἄφρων (1 Cor 15:36) and νήπιος (1 Cor 3:1; cf. Eph 4:14).

having the embodiment of knowledge and truth in the Law (Rom 2:20)

ἔχοντα τὴν μὀρφωσιν τῆς γνώσεως καὶ τῆς ἀληθείας ἐν τῷ νόμῳ

The interlocutor also believes that the Law provides him with “the embodiment of knowledge and truth.” This appears to be a reference to the idea that the Law of Moses is a unique expression of principles which God has placed in the created order. Philo, for example, claims that although other lawgivers conceal the “truth” (ἀλήθεια, *Opif.* 1), the Law of Moses reveals the order of creation itself (*Opif.* 3). In *Legat.* 1.19–21, Philo implies that the Law “reflects most accurately the nature of the universe as well as God’s own *poesis* and character.”⁸⁷ For Philo, the Law embodies principles which are embraced by “all nations, barbarians, and Greeks, the inhabitants of continents and islands, the eastern nations and the western, Europe and Asia; in short, the whole habitable world from one extremity to the other” (*Mos.* 2.20 [Yonge]).

Hence each of Paul’s descriptions in Rom 2:19–20 alludes, in various ways, to a sense amongst Paul’s Jewish contemporaries that their possession of the Law gave them a special access to divine revelation, which often implied a divinely ordained role in teaching this revelation to others.

⁸⁷ Niehoff 2001, 206.

(b) *The identity of Paul's interlocutor*

We have already argued that Paul has situated his argument in the mainstream Jewish community, centred on the synagogue. Within this setting, what kind of person does Paul envisage as he writes his denunciation?⁸⁸

Each of the four descriptions in vv. 19–20 speaks of a learned individual (singular) instructing a foolish or uneducated group (plural). This corresponds to an identifiable type in Paul's Jewish context. Philo, for example, describes the ubiquitous synagogue Sabbath meetings as "schools of wisdom" (διδασκαλεῖα φρονήσεως) during which those who are "in the world" (οἱ ... ἐν κόσμῳ)—which must at least include the "lay" Jewish people but may also include Gentile synagogue adherents—sit and listen in quietness, drinking in the words, while "one of the experienced" (τις τῶν ἐμπειροτάτων) stands and explains certain important and useful aspects that will help them to improve their lives (*Spec.* 2.62). Philo also speaks of the synagogue leader (ἡγεμόν) who guides and teaches (verb διδάσκειν) the people "what they ought to do and say" (ἅ τε χρὴ πράττειν καὶ λέγειν; *Mos.* 2.215). Furthermore, as we shall see in a moment, the details of the often-cited incident in Josephus of the Jewish wisdom teachers who defrauded a wealthy proselyte woman (*A.J.* 18.81–84) conform closely to the charges which Paul brings against his interlocutor in vv. 21–22. The incident demonstrates that individual Jews in Rome, through their Law-teaching activities, could gain a position of heightened influence which could extend even to aristocratic proselytes. Paul's argument, therefore, would have been particularly relevant for those in the Roman Jewish community with an active teaching role, both towards other Jews and also, by extension, towards non-Jews.⁸⁹

Stanley Stowers argues that Paul is not addressing Jews in general, but is rather confronting a particular kind of Jew: a missionary to Gentiles.⁹⁰ Stowers argues that Rom 2:17–29 exhibits the features of a moral-philosophical lecture or "diatribe"

⁸⁸ The interlocutor is, of course, fictional; nevertheless, he must represent a recognizable type in the world of Paul's readers for the fiction to be effective.

⁸⁹ This helps to explain the motivation behind Paul's pattern of going to the synagogues first, as described in Acts (e.g. 13:5, 14–15; 14:1; 17:1–2, 10, 17; 18:4, 19; 19:8.)

⁹⁰ Stowers 1994, 144–158. See also Campbell 2009, 560–561; Gaston 1987, 138–139.

which is usually aimed at a pretentious teacher. According to Stowers, this shows that Paul's interlocutor must be identified as a moralizing Jewish "missionary" who is teaching Gentiles that righteousness can be attained by keeping certain universal ethical teachings found in the Law. The interlocutor should thus be identified precisely as one of Paul's competitors in the Gentile mission. "The Jew in 2:17–29 appears almost as a mirror image of Paul the teacher of Gentiles. He is the image against which Paul partly defines his own gospel."⁹¹ Stowers is correct in what he affirms, but wrong in what he denies. The interlocutor does indeed represent a form of Jewish teaching activity directed in part toward Gentiles, and so acts as a foil for Paul's own ministry. The import of Paul's argument, however, cannot be restricted to particular individuals who have adopted a special "teaching" role towards Gentiles. The teaching of the Law in which this figure is engaged is, in fact, a definitive articulation of what it means to be Jewish in the mainstream synagogue.⁹² This person is of course an able and articulate teacher, but he is at the same time a "publicly recognized Jew" (Ἰουδαῖος ἐπονομάζῃ, 2:17). As a Law-teacher, then, he is also a representative of the synagogue *par excellence*; he is somebody who speaks *to* the synagogue, *on behalf* of the synagogue, and *from* the synagogue to others. In other words, this individual is both a talented Law-teacher and, at the very same time, a representative and exemplar of Jewish identity itself.

Paul's argument, therefore, while directed at a Jewish Law-teacher, also speaks persuasively to the whole synagogue community. This is entirely consistent with our thesis that Paul is engaging in a contest over Jewish identity itself. In order to redefine Jewish identity, Paul needs to denounce the teachers of the Law, because it was these teachers whose own vocation enabled them to become the key exponents and exemplars of Jewish identity in their communities. The teachers Paul has in mind were not mavericks or itinerants, but genuine leaders whose understanding of Jewish identity and Jewish vocation was generally shared by the community as a whole.

⁹¹ Stowers 1994, 153.

⁹² Cf. Heb 5:12, where the author assumes that hearing the λογία τοῦ θεοῦ over a period of time ought to make all of his addressees fit to be διδάσκαλοι, and expresses his indignation that this has not yet happened.

Ascribing a vocational dimension to Jewish identity does not, of course, require us to presume that any kind of active “proselytizing” activity was taking place in the mainstream Jewish community.⁹³ There are many different ways in which a Gentile could have heard the Law from Jews, corresponding to the many forms and degrees of Gentile “sympathisation” with the Jewish community.⁹⁴ Some non-Jews are said merely to recognize the truth and value of the Law without their means of their contact with the Law being specified. Other non-Jews attended Sabbath synagogue meetings in various locations and heard the Law read and expounded.⁹⁵ It is not hard to imagine an individual Jew in such a gathering, sitting silently but nevertheless viewing himself or herself as part of the privileged group whose Law was being expounded and taught to the Gentiles. The teachers who did actually read or expound the Law would most likely have been viewed as representatives of the entire privileged Jewish community. The significance of Paul’s reference to a teaching role for his interlocutor, therefore, cannot be read merely as a denunciation of a particular type of rival missionary. Paul is tapping into an aspect of Jewish identity—a vocational aspect—which was quite significant for many of his Jewish contemporaries.

4.3. Jewish identity deconstructed (Romans 2:21–27)

In Rom 2:21–27, Paul presents two related arguments which are intended to deconstruct and invalidate his interlocutor’s understanding of Jewish identity and Jewish vocation. Firstly (vv. 21–24), the interlocutor’s transgression of the Law shows that he has forfeited the right to be regarded as a teacher of God’s will to others. Secondly (vv. 25–27), the existence of an uncircumcised Law-keeper relativizes the value of the interlocutor’s circumcision. Paul’s deconstructions are not intended to annul the value of Jewish identity altogether. Rather, they provide a context and a foil against which Paul can describe his own Jewish identity, an identity which is intimately connected with his own sense of divine vocation towards the rest of the world.

⁹³ Cf. our discussion in ch. 3, pp. 109–130.

⁹⁴ Donaldson 2007, 469–482; cf. Cohen 1999, 140–174; Segal 1990, 93–96.

⁹⁵ In Asia Minor, we read about “God-fearers” in the synagogue in Acts 13:16, 26. In Aphrodisias, there are proselytes and God-fearers attached to the synagogue (Koch 2006, 65–75).

4.3.1. *The failure of Law-teaching (Rom 2:21–24)*

In Rom 2:21–24, Paul presents the first of two arguments intended to critique the view of Jewish identity which he has presented in verses 17–20. He does so firstly by charging his interlocutor with a number of crimes (vv. 21–22), and then by stating that Jews have failed in their divine vocation to the nations (vv. 23–24).

(a) *Jewish transgression of the Law (vv. 21–22)*

You who teach others, do you teach yourself?
You who preach not to steal, do you steal?
You who say not to commit adultery, do you commit adultery?
You who abhor idols, do you profane the temple? (Rom 2:21–22)

ὁ οὖν διδάσκων ἕτερον σεαυτὸν οὐ διδάσκεις;
ὁ κηρύσσων μὴ κλέπτειν κλέπτεις;
ὁ λέγων μὴ μοιχεύειν μοιχεύεις;
ὁ βδελυσσόμενος τὰ εἰδῶλα ἱεροσυλεῖς;

In Rom 2:21–22, Paul addresses a series of rhetorical questions to his Jewish interlocutor. Paul’s specific charges include theft, adultery and temple-robbery. The charges of theft and adultery are drawn directly from the Decalogue (Exod 20:14, 15 [LXX 20:13, 14]). Paul’s questions assume that the interlocutor’s actual practice does not match the content of his Law-based teaching.

At first glance, this list of charges against Jews appears to be arbitrary, exaggerated and unconvincing, especially if it is viewed as a blanket condemnation of the regular practices of the entire Jewish community.⁹⁶ However, the charges are more comprehensible if we assume that Paul is seeking not to prove the universal sinfulness of Jews, nor to devalue the Law *per se*, but rather to demonstrate the failure of Jews—especially the Jewish teachers who acted as the exemplars of Jewish identity—in their divine vocation toward the Gentiles.

A number of scholars have drawn attention to the parallels between these charges and the incident related by Josephus in *AJ.* 18.81–84. Josephus describes how a Jewish Law-teacher and his accomplices defrauded a Roman aristocratic woman of money intended for the Jerusalem temple, leading to the banishment of Jews from

⁹⁶ E.g. Esler 2003, 153; Sanders 1983, 124–125. Aletti calls it a caricature which no pious Jew would accept (1988, 51). Räisänen 1987, 101 labels it “propagandist denigration.”

Rome under Tiberius in 19 CE.⁹⁷ If, as is likely, Romans was written just a few years after a similar banishment of Jews under Claudius in 49 CE,⁹⁸ then this kind of story may have gained a renewed currency in Rome as Paul was writing.

An incident such as this would explain Paul's otherwise puzzling question: "Do you commit temple-robbery [ἱεροσυλεῖς]?" (Rom 2:22). Although the charge of temple-robbery does not appear explicitly in the Law of Moses, it does appear in Philo, *Conf.* 163, at the end of a list of vices prohibited by the divine Law—a list which also includes charges of theft (κλέπτειν) and adultery (μοιχεύειν). The word here cannot refer to Jews plundering heathen temples, since such an activity does not directly violate the principle of "abhorring idols," and so does not fit Paul's implicit claim that the interlocutor is acting hypocritically.⁹⁹ Some scholars suggest that ἱεροσυλεῖν refers to gaining illegitimate profits from the use of items taken from pagan shrines (cf. Deut 7:25–26).¹⁰⁰ However, this is not the meaning of the word itself. The word refers to the direct desecration of a sacred building, not to any subsequent use of items from that temple.¹⁰¹

The word can, however, be understood as a polemically crafted reference to the theft of funds intended for the *Jerusalem* temple, an action which is comparable to desecration of the temple. Diaspora Jews identified strongly with the Jerusalem temple, expressing their devotion to God by providing financial gifts.¹⁰² Josephus elsewhere uses the verb ἱεροσυλεῖν to denote the robbery (by Gentiles) of such contributions (*A.J.* 16.45).¹⁰³ However, Jews themselves could also "desecrate" the

⁹⁷ Watson (2007b, 204) shows how this incident could give rise to the charges of theft and adultery. Dunn (1988, 1.114–115) initially suggests that the incident could give rise to charges of sacrilege against the Jerusalem temple, but then dismisses the suggestion. Campbell (2009, 561) acknowledges Watson's original suggestion, and claims that the incident explains all three charges "perfectly." Cf. Carras 1992, 201.

⁹⁸ Watson 2007b, 204.

⁹⁹ Pace Wilckens (1978–82, 1.150) and Jewett (2007, 228–229). The suggestion that robbing heathen temples might indicate a disrespect for the concept of divinity which the idols represent is irrelevant; if this were the reason for the interlocutor's perceived hypocrisy, Paul would have described him as somebody who "respects divinity," not as somebody who "abhors idols."

¹⁰⁰ Derrett 1994; Dunn 1988, 1.115.

¹⁰¹ Cf. Garlington's (1990) suggestion that ἱεροσυλεῖν denotes a sacrilegious "preference for the law to the exclusion of Christ" (151); this fails to deal adequately with Paul's lexical choice.

¹⁰² Barclay 1996, 418–421.

¹⁰³ Gaston 1987, 231 n. 21.

temple through opportunistic fiduciary actions. The prophet Jeremiah charges the Israelites of his day with theft, adultery and idol-worship among other transgressions of the Law (Jer 7:9). These activities had made a mockery of their temple-worshipping activities and had effectively turned the temple into a “den of robbers” (Jer 7:11).¹⁰⁴ In the Synoptic Gospels, this charge is leveled by Jesus against the temple-related financial opportunism of his Jewish contemporaries (Matt 21:13, Mark 11:17; Luke 19:46). In 2 Maccabees, ἱεροσυλεῖν refers to the sacrilegious removal of vessels from the Jerusalem temple by treacherous Jewish usurpers (2 Macc 4:39, 42).

Paul, therefore, is using ἱεροσυλεῖν in Rom 2:22 to imply that the misappropriation of funds for the holy temple in Jerusalem *by Jews*, such as that described by Josephus, is equivalent to desecration of the temple itself.¹⁰⁵ This, of course, makes a mockery of the Jewish claim to “abhor idols,” since the abhorrence of idols and the upkeep of the worship in the Jerusalem temple were two sides of the same coin—negative and positive aspects, respectively, of Jewish worship (2 Kgs 23:19–25, 2 Chr 33:7–8; cf. 1 Macc 1:41–53). Paul’s charge is thus a prophetic indictment, equivalent to Jeremiah’s condemnation of his Israelite contemporaries. It places Paul’s Jewish interlocutor in the same moral position as the foolish Gentiles who worship idols and dishonour God himself (cf. Rom 1:21–23). In this way, the Law-teacher becomes a foil for Paul’s own prophetically informed apostolic ministry. In fact, Paul later claims that his own apostolic ministry will succeed at precisely the same point that his interlocutor’s preaching had failed: Paul himself fulfils this very task by bringing funds from the Gentiles to the “poor” in Jerusalem (Ἱεροσολήμ, Rom 15:25–27).

Josephus’s account is most likely summarizing a negative stereotype of Jews and their suspicious Law-teaching activities, which purported to explain the large-scale banishment of Jews. Josephus himself seeks to counter the stereotype by presenting these Jewish teachers as isolated anomalies of “wickedness” in an otherwise Law-abiding Jewish community.¹⁰⁶ The view of Jewish identity common in the

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Berkley 2000, 134–136.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Schmidt (1966, 52), who suggests that Paul may be thinking of embezzlement of the temple-tax.

¹⁰⁶ Josephus claims that the ringleader of the fraudsters had already been recognized as a transgressor in Judea but had escaped to Rome (*A.J.* 18.81), implying that under most circumstances such anomalous transgressors are caught and punished (cf. *C. Ap.* 2.178). His conclusion isolates the

mainstream Jewish community assumed that knowledge of the Law leads, in a fairly straightforward manner, to obedience. Elsewhere, Josephus expresses his view that the Jews as a whole, by virtue of their uniquely intimate knowledge of their own Law, are exceptionally upright in their behaviour. Jews rarely sin, and when they do sin, they are always punished—i.e. any anomalies to the community’s moral uprightness are invariably dealt with (*C. Ap.* 2.174–178). For Josephus, the Jewish community as a whole was ideally an obedient community precisely *because* it possessed the Law and knew its decrees intimately.¹⁰⁷ Since Josephus was educated as a Pharisee (*Vita* 1.12) we can assume that his view of the Law’s role in the mainstream Jewish community would have been somewhat similar to that of Paul, who himself was once a “Pharisee with respect to the Law” (Phil 3:5).¹⁰⁸ Paul would almost certainly have assumed that the mainstream Jewish view of the Law operated along these lines—that a moral problem (sin) had a generally effective epistemological solution (the Law). A thorough knowledge of God’s will in God’s Law should lead in a reasonably straightforward manner to obedience to God, and thus guard Jews against falling through sin.¹⁰⁹ According to this view, then, the Law provides both an epistemological *and* a moral advantage for Jews.¹¹⁰ Furthermore, it

transgressors from the mainstream Jewish community and emphasizes the injustice of the banishment: “So then, these [Jews] were driven from the city by the wickedness of four men.” (*AJ.* 18.84)

¹⁰⁷ Josephus claims: “it is innate in every Judean, right from birth, to regard them [i.e. the Scriptures] as decrees of God, to remain faithful to them and, if necessary, gladly to die on their behalf” (*C. Ap.* 2.42 [Barclay, 2007]); “Were anyone of us to be asked about the laws, he would recount them all more easily than his own name” (*C. Ap.* 2.178 [Barclay, 2007]). These, of course, are not statements of historical fact, but articulations of an ideal of Jewish identity, an ideal which would have been reinforced by the regular synagogue gatherings (*C. Ap.* 2.175).

¹⁰⁸ Cf. p. 17.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. *4 Maccabees*, which argues for an optimistic Hellenistic anthropology in which “reason rules over the passions” (*4 Macc.* 2.6). In this anthropological schema, instruction in the Law is assumed to be sufficient for moral conduct, since a properly instructed reason will be able to put sin in its place. This is seen, for example, in the operation of the tenth commandment, “do not covet” (οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις; *4 Macc.* 2.5). The Law “rules” the covetous person, through his reason, enabling him to avoid covetousness (*4 Macc.* 2.9). Paul’s discussion of the same commandment in Rom 7 provides a striking contrast to this view. Paul argues that instruction in the Law is *not* sufficient for moral conduct, since a properly instructed individual will only be able to recognize sin, not to deal with it. For further comparisons between Paul and *4 Maccabees* see Watson 2007a (108–116, esp. 112–113).

¹¹⁰ Philo, too, speaks of the people assembling together in the synagogue for the entire Sabbath to hear the Law (*Hypoth.* 7.12) and claims that *every* Jew thus has an intimate knowledge of the laws and that leaders of individual households were fully competent to pass them on to their household members (*Hypoth.* 7.14; cf. *Decal.* 98). Niehoff (2001, 94–110) demonstrates that Philo viewed the Jewish laws on sex, food and festivals as a supremely effective means for inculcating virtue, especially *enkrateia*, in the Jewish nation. For example, the festivals ensure that “[t]he whole people inhabits in

gives Jews a sense of vocation towards the rest of the world.¹¹¹ On this basis, the Jewish “boast” in the possession of the Law (cf. Rom 2:17) is quite understandable.

Paul, however, exploits the stereotype for his own purposes, and thus reaches the opposite conclusion. By alluding to this well-known incident (or something like it), Paul *undermines* his readers’ confidence in this mainstream understanding of the operation of the Law, and thus of Jewish identity and vocation itself. For Paul, the incident shows all too clearly that being knowledgeable in the Law, even to the point of becoming an influential and respected teacher of other Jews and proselytes—i.e. a paradigm of Jewish identity—does *not* guarantee upright behaviour. Hence, although the Law does indeed provide an epistemological advantage, it does not necessarily lead to obedience, even amongst those who were regarded as Jews *par excellence*.¹¹²

Hence Stowers’s suggestion that Paul is not speaking to all Jews here but is merely denouncing those particularly pretentious Jewish teachers who are typical of his rivals¹¹³ is inadequate. Paul’s pointed questions to his Jewish Law-teaching interlocutor are directly relevant to his entire engagement with the mainstream understanding of Jewish identity, for which a certain understanding of the normal operation of the Law of Moses is fundamental.¹¹⁴ Paul’s rhetorical questions demonstrate that the epistemological privilege which accrues to the mainstream Jewish community through their possession of the Law does not necessarily lead to an automatic ethical advantage (vv. 21–22). Paul, in other words, is demonstrating

regular intervals a higher spiritual realm which is in the Gentile world only occasionally reached by exceptional individuals.” (106)

¹¹¹ Josephus, *C. Ap.* 2.293, wishes to portray the Jewish people *as a whole* as “introducers” (εἰσήγητες) of great things to the other nations, primarily through their knowledge of the Law of Moses and their subsequent exemplary obedience by which they have commended the Law to the world (cf. 2.280–286).

¹¹² Later, after his exposition of the condemnatory role of the Law (Rom 3:1–20) and the redemption in Christ Jesus (Rom 3:21–26), Paul concludes that “the boast” (ἡ καύχησις) is excluded—that is, the boast mentioned in 2:17 is illegitimate (taking the article here as anaphoric; cf. Wallace 1996, 217–220). This boast is excluded, not because the general concept of “boasting” is wrong-headed, but because this particular mainstream Jewish boast is based on a hermeneutical error which reads the Law in terms of “works” rather than in terms of faith (Rom 3:27–28; cf. Watson 2007b, 256–258); *pace* Dunn (1988, 185–187), who construes the essence of the boast as national pride in God’s election of Israel.

¹¹³ Stowers 1994, 144–150.

¹¹⁴ Cf. Watson 2004, 346–348.

that Jews who have the Law are subject to the same anthropological realities as Gentiles who do not have the Law, by reminding his readers that even some of the most respected and knowledgeable Jewish Law-teachers have committed the most serious crimes. As we shall now see, this failure calls the entire vocational dimension of the mainstream understanding of Jewish identity itself into question.

(b) The failure of Jewish vocation to the nations (vv. 23–24)

(You) who boast in the Law
dishonour God through transgression of the Law! For
“the name of God—through you—is blasphemed among the Gentiles,”
just as it is written. (Rom 2:23–24)

ὃς ἐν νόμῳ καυχᾶσαι,
διὰ τῆς παραβάσεως τοῦ νόμου τὸν θεὸν ἀτιμάζεις·
τὸ γὰρ ὄνομα τοῦ θεοῦ δι’ ὑμᾶς βλασφημεῖται ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν,
καθὼς γέγραπται.

In verses 23–24, Paul takes his denunciation a step further. Not only are Jews *equal* to Gentiles in their propensity to sin (vv. 21–22); but their privileged status and their purported vocation to glorify God’s name amongst the nations makes the notorious moral failure of their leaders especially serious.¹¹⁵ Paul asks rhetorically, “You who boast in the Law, do you dishonour God through transgression of the Law?” Paul’s denunciation of the mainstream view of Jewish identity is sharpest at this point in his argument—precisely because it is at this point in his argument that the notion of a Jewish vocation “among the nations” (ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν) is directly in view.

In Rom 2:24, Paul cites Isa 52:5 from the LXX, making a few minor changes to enable the citation to fit more smoothly into the logical and grammatical structure of the pericope.¹¹⁶ This citation illustrates quite starkly how Israel’s transgression has led to her vocational failure. Instead of being a blessing to the world and thus bringing glory to God, Israel by her sin has brought only disgrace and dishonour to God among the nations. Isaiah 52:5 claims that the people were taken away “for nothing” (δωρεάν). This does not mean that Israel was undeserving of God’s wrath in sending

¹¹⁵ Cf. Amos 3:2, cited by Carras (1992, 194); cf. also Philo’s observation about the drawback of belonging to God’s special people: those who are of noble birth are “deserving of greater wrath” (μείζονος ὀργῆς ἄξιός) if they perform evil deeds (*Spec.* 4.182) (Umemoto 1994, 38).

¹¹⁶ Jewett 2007, 230.

her into exile (cf. Isa 50:1, 53:4–6), but rather that Israel’s judgment has so far produced no glory for God; rather, it has only produced slander among the nations.¹¹⁷ Not only was Israel’s exile a deserved punishment for breaking God’s Law (cf. Isa 42:24), it also brought her entire divine vocation into question.

Paul uses this same part of Isaiah in other parts of Romans to describe his *own* apostolic vocation. Paul has introduced himself in terms which recall the Isaianic “Servant” (δοῦλος, Rom 1:1; cf. Isa 49:1–7). In Rom 15:21, he cites Isa 52:15 to show that his apostolic mission is informed by scriptural passages concerning this Servant.¹¹⁸ In Rom 10:15–16 he cites Isa 52:7a and 53:1 in support of his claim that his own Gentile mission *fulfils* Israel’s eschatological vocation towards the nations, despite the failure of Israel as a whole to achieve this divine goal.¹¹⁹ The denunciation of the Law-teacher’s failure in Rom 2:17–29, therefore, provides an appropriate foil against which Paul can later present his own apostolic ministry as the successful accomplishment of Israel’s divine vocation.

It is also significant that Paul uses an anonymous formula (καθὼς γέγραπται) for his citation of Isaiah. By doing so, Paul presents the notion of Israel’s failure in relation to the Gentiles as being representative of all Scripture, not just of a single text from Isaiah.¹²⁰ Paul thus demonstrates that the failure of the Law-teacher’s vocation is not merely an isolated anomaly, but rather is a fundamental feature of Israel’s past history and present identity.¹²¹ Paul’s denunciation is not simply an indictment of Jewishness *per se*. Rather, it is an indictment of the particular view of Jewish *vocation* represented by the activity of the Law-teacher in the mainstream Jewish community.

¹¹⁷ Watts 1987, 216.

¹¹⁸ See ch. 3, pp. 87–100.

¹¹⁹ See ch. 5, pp. 217–226.

¹²⁰ By contrast, Rom 9:27, 29; 10:16, 20; 15:12 name Isaiah as the author of the citation, highlighting in each case the text’s individuality and distinctiveness. Watson (2004, 43–47) demonstrates the way in which the forms of the citation formulae play an important role in Paul’s rhetoric in Romans.

¹²¹ Cf. Berkley 2000, 137–141. This is consistent with other instances of opposition by Paul to alternative expressions of Jewish vocation (see ch. 2, p. 79).

4.3.2. *The failure of circumcision (Rom 2:25–27)*

In Rom 2:25, Paul begins to discuss the topic of circumcision. Paul is not introducing a radically new subject at this point, since “circumcision” (περιτομή), like “Jew” (Ἰουδαῖος, cf. Rom 2:17), is a common term to denote Jewish distinctiveness.¹²² The whole of Rom 2:17–29 is concerned with Jewish identity, especially in its relationship to Gentiles. Romans 2:25–27 simply constitutes the second of two arguments (the first being vv. 21–24) deconstructing his interlocutor’s understanding of Jewish identity and its relationship to Gentiles.¹²³ The immediate purpose of this second argument is to show that the mainstream Jewish community’s claim that they are more enlightened than Gentiles, and thus qualified to teach them, simply by virtue of their possession and superior knowledge of the Law of Moses is, in fact, absurd. Jewish identity (i.e. circumcision) only makes sense in the context of *obedience to the Law*.¹²⁴ In fact, as Paul shows, a Law-keeping non-Jew has more right to Jewish identity than a Law-breaking Jew.

In verse 26, Paul introduces a new character: an “uncircumcised” person who “observes” the “regulations” of the Law, whose uncircumcision may consequently be “regarded” as circumcision, and who may even “judge” Paul’s interlocutor. The question which immediately demands our attention is the identity of this uncircumcised Law-keeper. There are two common positions taken in relation to this question. The first position regards the uncircumcised Law-keeper as a “righteous pagan”—i.e. a person who is generally moral without any substantial knowledge of the Law of Moses. This righteous pagan may be regarded as a hypothetical construct¹²⁵ or a real possibility.¹²⁶ The second position regards the

¹²² See ch. 2, pp. 45–48.

¹²³ See p. 144.

¹²⁴ Cf. Nanos 2010, 137–138 n. 55.

¹²⁵ E.g. Bell 2005, 190–196; Kuss 1957, 90. Käsemann (1980, 73–76) contends that the description begins as a hypothetical projection (since if taken literally, it could not refer to any real person), but in the light of 2:28–29 which introduces the eschatological context of the Spirit, the uncircumcised Law-keeper can be understood as a Christian.

¹²⁶ E.g. Campbell 2009, 564–566; Carras 1992, 203–204; Fitzmyer 1993, 322; Lohse 2003, 113. Cf. also Theodore of Mopsuestia on Rom 2:29 (Staab 1988, 116).

figure as a proleptic description of a Gentile Christ-believer.¹²⁷ However, there are problems with both of these positions.

Both positions are commonly supported by the parallels between Rom 2:1–16 and 2:17–29, which are taken to imply that conclusions about the identity of the Gentiles in vv. 14–15 (whether righteous pagans or Christian Gentiles) should be brought to bear on vv. 26–27.¹²⁸ However, as we have already shown, there are significant differences between the implied social settings of Rom 2:1–16 and Rom 2:17–29,¹²⁹ which mean that the Gentiles of vv. 14–15 and the uncircumcised Law-keeper of vv. 26–27 cannot be identified so directly.

The “righteous pagan” is usually understood to be a person with no substantial knowledge of the Mosaic Law and little regular contact with Jews. The description in vv. 19–22, however, implies that this uncircumcised Law-keeper *has* heard the Mosaic Law directly from a Jewish teacher. Furthermore, he is observing (verb φυλάσσειν) the Law’s specific “regulations” (δικαιώματα, v. 26). The plural δικαιώματα is often used in the LXX to refer to the explicit contents of the Law of Moses (e.g. Exod 21:1, Lev 25:18, Num 36:13, Deut 4:1, etc.). Certainly, the Gentiles in v. 14 might be “righteous pagans,” since they have not even heard the Law (cf. v. 13) and they are simply doing the general “things of the Law” (τὰ τοῦ νόμου). However, the situation is quite different when it comes to the person in vv. 26–27. This person has heard the Law, and is observing the Law’s *specific* regulations.

Advocates of the “Gentile Christian” position often argue that in 2:26–27, Paul uses terms similar to those he uses to describe Gentile Christ-believers in other places (e.g. Rom 8:4).¹³⁰ However, the setting and context of Rom 2:17–29 and Rom 8 is quite different: in the former passage, as we have seen, Paul is speaking to a “Jew” (Rom 2:17) in a synagogue setting, while in the latter passage, he is unambiguously addressing Christ-believers (Rom 8:1). In any case, the vocabulary is not identical; in

¹²⁷ See the following notes for examples of this position.

¹²⁸ For righteous pagans, see e.g. Bell 2005, 195–196; Campbell 2009, 564–566; Carras 1992, 203–204; Fitzmyer 1993, 322; Lohse 2003, 113. For Christian Gentiles see e.g. Gathercole 2002a, 33, 37, 40; Wright 1996, 144–148.

¹²⁹ See pp. 136–140.

¹³⁰ E.g. Cranfield 1975, 1.173; Das 2003, 183; Gathercole 2002a; Schreiner 1998, 140; Wright 1996, 136–138.

Rom 8:4, Christ-believers are said to “fulfil” (verb πληροῦν) the Law by the Spirit and by the love command (cf. Rom 13:8, 10; Gal 5:14),¹³¹ but they are not said to “observe” (verb φυλάσσειν) or to “keep” (verb τηρεῖν) the Law as this uncircumcised person is said to do.¹³² Thus, although Rom 8 may contain echoes of the description of the uncircumcised Law-keeper, it cannot be used to determine his identity.

Advocates of the “Gentile Christian” position also often take the word λογίζεσθαι as a reference to the eschatological justification of Christ-believers and the word κρίνειν as a reference to the eschatological judgment of unbelievers.¹³³ However, as we shall see below, the words λογίζεσθαι and κρίνειν should be understood as temporal human activities, not as descriptions of eschatological vindication and judgment.

We have been arguing that Paul has a specific social situation in mind when composing this pericope: the mainstream Jewish synagogue. This social setting suggests another quite plausible possibility for the identity of this uncircumcised Law-keeper: a Gentile synagogue adherent. There is ample evidence for the existence of Gentiles who were attracted to the God of Israel and whose social connection to the synagogue meant that they had the opportunity to hear God’s Law taught and to respond to this Law in some way, but who had not taken the step of “conversion” by being circumcised.¹³⁴ There were many different levels of Gentile connection with the Jewish community, ranging from general interest in the synagogue teachings through to imitation of particular Jewish practices. There was no standard nomenclature for such people. There are people referred to as “God-fearers” (φοβούμενοι τὸν θεόν) or “[God]-worshippers” (σεβομένοι [τὸν θεόν]) in Acts, but these terms may have denoted both “full” and “partial” Jewish converts.¹³⁵

¹³¹ Cf. Matt 5:17.

¹³² Rosner 2010, 411–414; *pace* Wright 1996, 137.

¹³³ Campbell 2009, 565; Cranfield 1975, 1.173–174; Das 2003, 183; Dunn 1988, 1.122; Jewett 2007, 234; Käsemann 1980, 73–74; Sanday and Headlam 1902, 67; Schreiner 1998, 140–141; Wright 1996, 136; cf. Matt 12:41–42; Luke 11:31.

¹³⁴ Bird 2010, 44–52; Carleton Paget 1996, 92–93; Cohen 1999, 55, 168–174; Donaldson 2007, 469–482; Fredriksen 1991, 541–543; 2010, 238–239; Goodman 1994, 86–89; Koch 2006; McEleney 1974, 325–328; Segal 1990, 93–96; Ware 2005, 34–47; *pace* e.g. Kraabel 1981. See, e.g., Acts 13:16, 26; 17:4, 17; 18:7.

¹³⁵ Acts 13:16, 26; 17:4, 17; 18:7 (Ware 2005, 34–47). 4th–5th century inscriptions found in Aphrodisias list Jews, proselytes and “God-worshippers” (θεοσεβεῖς) (Koch 2006, 65–75). There are

We shall speak here of “Gentile synagogue adherents,” both to avoid confusion, and to highlight the social status of such people in relation to the Jewish community.¹³⁶

The Gentile synagogue adherent appears to have been a distinct and significant category for Paul. In 1 Cor 9:22, Paul speaks of particular people within his sphere of missionary activity called the “weak.” These “weak” were neither Gentiles “outside the Law” (ἄνομος, v. 21) nor Jews “under the Law” (ὑπὸ νόμον, v. 20). Paul could describe them as belonging to this distinct category even before they became Christ-believers (i.e. before they were “won”).¹³⁷ In Rom 14:1–2 and 15:1, Paul speaks of the “weak” as individuals who have become members of the believing community (τῇ πίστει) yet who have particular issues surrounding food and calendar observances. They almost certainly include Gentiles with a prior connection to the synagogue.¹³⁸

The uncircumcised Law-keeper of Rom 2:26–27 fits well into this category of the Gentile synagogue adherent. He is not, therefore, to be identified with the Gentiles of Rom 2:12–15 who “do not have the Law” at all and thus have little or no connection with the synagogue. Rather, he is best understood as one of those “non-Jews with a more or less strong relationship to the synagogue, including not only social affinities, but to a certain degree also a religious commitment.”¹³⁹ Viewing the uncircumcised Law-keeper as a Gentile synagogue adherent not only makes sense of Paul’s individual choice of words in Rom 2:25–27, but also of the overall logic of his argument.¹⁴⁰

two different texts in this Stele: on the front side, the term “God-worshipper” is used merely to denote someone with a social relationship to the Jewish community; while on the left side, it is used to describe people who study the Torah and praise the God of Israel yet seem to have a lower status than Jews and “proselytes” (75). This and other epigraphic material confirms that Luke is referring to a real historical category when he mentions the φοβούμενοι / σεβομένοι τὸν θεόν (80–81).

¹³⁶ Cf. Cohen (1999, 171), who uses the term “venerators of God”; Segal (1990, 93–96) prefers “God-fearers” or “semi-proselytes”.

¹³⁷ Watson 2007b, 73.

¹³⁸ Das 2003, 69, 75–77; Hvalvik 2007a, 195–196; Lampe 2003, 73–74.

¹³⁹ Koch 2006, 80.

¹⁴⁰ Schmithals (1988, 98–99) also believes that Paul is referring here to a Gentile synagogue adherent. However, for Schmithals, Paul’s purpose in referring to a Gentile synagogue adherent is to convince the Gentile synagogue adherents in the Christian church to find their *Christian* identity in the church rather than in the synagogue by showing that Jews and Gentiles are equal with respect to the Law.

(a) *A commonly held truth (v. 25)*

For circumcision would be valuable
if you were to practise the Law;
but if you were to transgress the Law,
your circumcision would become uncircumcision. (Rom 2:25)

Περιτομή μὲν γὰρ ὠφελεῖ
ἐὰν νόμον πράσσης·
ἐὰν δὲ παραβάτης νόμου ᾖς,
ἡ περιτομή σου ἀκροβυστία γέγονεν.

The idea that physical circumcision loses its value for transgressors of the Law (v. 25) is found in particularly stark terms in Jeremiah 9, a passage which Paul has already alluded to through his reference to “boasting” (Rom 2:17).¹⁴¹ Jeremiah pronounces the judgment of exile and death upon Israel because they have abandoned his Law (νόμος, Jer 9:13 [LXX 9:12]). He concludes his oracle of judgment with the following indictment:

Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will call to account all those who are circumcised in their foreskin [περιτετημένους ἀκροβυστίας αὐτῶν]—Egypt and Judea [Ἰουδαίαν]¹⁴² and Edom and the sons of Ammon and the sons of Moab and everyone who is trimmed around his face and dwells in the desert—for all the nations are uncircumcised in flesh [ἀπερίτμητα σαρκί],¹⁴³ and all the house of Israel are uncircumcised in their heart [ἀπερίτμητοι καρδίας αὐτῶν]. (Jer 9:25–26 [LXX 9:24–25], my translation)

According to this oracle, there are several nations who practise a physical rite of cutting around their penises (or their heads).¹⁴⁴ Yet this does not save them from God’s judgment. Similarly, Israel’s physical circumcision will not save her from judgment, because she herself has broken the Law (9:13) and hence is uncircumcised in the place where it matters most—the heart. Israel’s Law-breaking

However, Schmithals does not adequately deal with the fact that Paul’s conclusion (v. 29) is not a denunciation of Jewish privilege, but a strong positive statement about Jewish identity.

¹⁴¹ Barclay 1998, 552 n. 30.

¹⁴² The reading Ἰουδαίαν is found in one manuscript (613) and in Origen and Theodoret of Cyrus; many of the early Greek witnesses (⊗ A B, etc.) read Ἰδουμαίαν (Ziegler 1957, 199). Nevertheless, Ἰουδαίαν is probably the earlier reading. It is closer to the MT יהודה, and may have been changed to Ἰδουμαίαν to avoid the problematic implication that Judeans were to be called to account by God along with the other nations.

¹⁴³ MT lacks an equivalent for σαρκί.

¹⁴⁴ For circumcision of Egyptians and others in Paul’s time see Philo, *QG* 3.48; Josephus, *C. Ap.* 2.141.

puts her on the same level as any other nation who merely practises a physical rite of circumcision; and therefore on the same level as *all* the nations who are not circumcised at all. Paul’s logic follows Jeremiah’s: “Circumcision would be valuable if you were to practise the Law; but if you were to transgress the Law, your circumcision would become uncircumcision.”

Paul is not negating the value of physical circumcision here; he is simply saying that physical circumcision derives all its value from Law-keeping and thus has no independent status. At this point, then, Paul is in substantial agreement with other Jewish interpreters of his day.¹⁴⁵ Nevertheless, the idea that circumcision can “become uncircumcision” is stated in rather stark terms. It paves the way for Paul’s next assertion in verse 26, which would have been more controversial.

(b) A contested issue (v. 26)

So—if the “uncircumcised” were to observe the regulations of the Law, would not his uncircumcision be reckoned as circumcision? (Rom 2:26)

ἐὰν οὖν ἡ ἀκροβυστία τὰ δικαιώματα τοῦ νόμου φυλάσσει,
οὐχ ἡ ἀκροβυστία αὐτοῦ εἰς περιτομὴν λογισθήσεται;

In verse 26, Paul introduces the figure of the Gentile synagogue adherent who “observes [verb φυλάσσειν] the regulations [δικαιώματα] of the Law.” In verse 27, he is described as somebody who “keeps [verb τελεῖν] the Law.” In view of the contrast with the notorious and public nature of the Jewish interlocutor’s sin in 2:21–22, we do not have to assume that this Gentile synagogue adherent is exhibiting a perfect and flawless obedience to the Law. Rather, we only need assume that Paul is speaking about a Gentile who is generally Law-abiding by the standards of the Jewish community.

Could any person be said to keep the regulations of the Law without being circumcised? From a rabbinic perspective, the very idea of an uncircumcised Law-

¹⁴⁵ E.g. Philo defends physical circumcision against extreme allegorists *on the basis of its allegorical significance* (e.g. *Migr.* 89–93, esp. 92; *Spec.* 1.6, 1.305, *QG* 3.46–47). For Philo, “[a]llegory explains circumcision, but does not explain it away” (Barclay 1998, 540; see also Leonhardt-Balzer 2007, 40–41). The assertion in Rom 2:25 would also have been accepted by Pharisaic interpreters (Boyarin 1994, 92–93).

keeper is “*simply an oxymoron*” because “*being circumcised is part of the Law!*”¹⁴⁶ However, the situation was more complex amongst Paul’s contemporaries. There were, in fact *debates* among second-temple Jews over the question of whether Gentiles who wished to be connected to the Jewish community must also be circumcised.

In his *Questions and Answers on Exodus* (2.2) Philo cites Exod 22:21 (LXX 22:20)—which reads, “You shall not oppress a sojourner [προσήλυτος]”—and then seeks to explain why Moses gives the following reason for his command: “For you were sojourners in the land of Egypt.” The normal meaning of προσήλυτος for Philo is a Gentile who has converted to the national Jewish way of life and theological outlook (e.g. *Spec.* 1.51). The use of the term προσήλυτος in Exod 22:21, however, is exegetically interesting for Philo, since it applies the same term to *Israelites*. Philo is seeking to discern the connection between the situation of the present-day “proselyte,” who should not be “oppressed” by Israelites, and that of the Israelites themselves when they dwelt as resident aliens in Egypt. He finds the connection, somewhat surprisingly, in the physically uncircumcised yet spiritually circumcised state of both kinds of people. The Israelites lived in self-restraint and endurance and took refuge in God; this state could be reckoned as circumcision for them, even though they were physically uncircumcised. Similarly, Philo argues, “the sojourner is not the person who is circumcised in his foreskin, but the person [who is circumcised in] his desires and sensual pleasures and the other passions of his soul”; i.e. who worships the “One God and Father of all” and is a “newcomer” (ἐπιηλύτης) to “the laws and customs.” There is a kind of προσήλυτος, according to Philo, who keeps the Law, yet is physically uncircumcised. Like the Israelites in Egypt, this kind of physically uncircumcised “proselyte” should be regarded as circumcised.

There has been some disagreement about the nature and purpose of Philo’s argument. McEleney earlier interpreted the text to mean that Philo is arguing that circumcision should not be required of proselytes.¹⁴⁷ Nolland, on the other hand, claims that Philo could *not* have been arguing against physical circumcision for proselytes because elsewhere (e.g. *Migr.* 89–93) he argues that physical

¹⁴⁶ Boyarin 1994, 96, emphasis original.

¹⁴⁷ McEleney 1974, 329.

circumcision is necessary for Jews. According to Nolland, Philo is simply exploring the deeper allegorical meaning of the traditional Jewish concept of the proselyte.¹⁴⁸ Yet this understanding of Philo's purpose is inadequate. The issue of circumcision itself is clearly at the forefront of Philo's mind. Even though the text which Philo is discussing (Exod 22:21 [LXX 22:20]) does not mention circumcision at all, Philo begins his answer with a lengthy explanation of the nature of circumcision. We can only presume that he does this because circumcision was a point of debate in his time—otherwise, why should he bring up the issue at all?¹⁴⁹

The confusion can be resolved somewhat when we remember that Philo is here engaging in scriptural exegesis and interpretation. It is true that in the minds of many Jews, a "proselyte" was somebody who had become a Jew by circumcision.¹⁵⁰ Yet Philo is grappling with the meaning of the word προσήλυτος as it appears *in the text before him*. His solution is that the term προσήλυτος here does not mean what his readers might think—i.e. the one who is circumcised in his foreskin—but rather that it refers to the one who cuts off his pagan passions, believes in the God of Israel, and keeps the Law, even if that person—like the Israelites in Egypt—is physically uncircumcised. Of course, Philo's exegetical activity has practical implications. As Watson points out, Philo is ultimately advocating "a broader and more inclusive usage that would extend the scriptural term to include male adherents of the synagogue who have not as yet submitted to circumcision and who may never do so."¹⁵¹ In other words, Philo is arguing that the uncircumcised yet Law-keeping synagogue adherent should be reckoned as circumcised, and so should be treated in the same way as one treats circumcised Israelites.

Josephus's account of King Izates of Adiabene (*A.J.* 20.34–50) also offers some evidence of the existence of debates about the necessity of circumcision. The account

¹⁴⁸ Nolland 1981, 174–179.

¹⁴⁹ Watson 2007b, 77. Borgen (1980, 87–88) argues that, since Philo elsewhere uses the word προσήλυτος to mean "full proselyte," and that proselytes were normally expected to be circumcised, Philo's position must be that "bodily circumcision was not the requirement for entering the Jewish community, but was one of the commandments which they had to obey upon receiving status as a Jew" (88) (cf. Borgen 1982, 39). However, Philo does *not* explicitly prescribe circumcision for proselytes; indeed the whole force of his argument only works if we presume that the "proselytes" of whom he speaks are not circumcised and will not be required to submit to circumcision.

¹⁵⁰ Cohen 1999, 169; McEleney 1974, 323.

¹⁵¹ Watson 2007b, 77.

is often cited as an example of the conversion of a Gentile to being a “true Jew” by means of physical circumcision.¹⁵² While this is clearly Josephus’s own opinion, his account also proves that other Jewish teachers did *not* share his opinion concerning the necessity for Gentiles to be circumcised in order to be true Law-keepers.¹⁵³ The two sides of the dispute are represented by the two Jewish teachers. The first position is represented by Ananias the merchant, who had “taught” (verb διδάσκειν) Izates “to worship God as was the custom of the Jews” (τὸν θεὸν σέβειν ὡς Ἰουδαίοις πάτριον; *A.J.* 20.34). For Ananias, full conversion through circumcision is not required to please God, provided one decides “to be committed [ζηλοῦν] to the customs [πάτρια] of the Jews” (*A.J.* 20.41). This term πάτρια almost certainly refers to key aspects of the Law of Moses other than circumcision, such as purification, prayers, avoidance of adultery, avoidance of idolatry and Sabbath-keeping.¹⁵⁴ The second position is represented by Eleazar, a stricter Jew who urges circumcision upon Izates because Moses specifically commands it (*A.J.* 20.44). Josephus clearly favours the stricter position. He tells the story in a way that causes his reader to question the motivations of Ananias (*A.J.* 20.47), and recounts in heightened prose God’s blessing and protection on Izates because of his pious decision to obey Eleazar (*A.J.* 20.48–49).¹⁵⁵ Yet the existence of such rhetoric is itself evidence that the issue was not settled in Josephus’s time. There was clearly a live debate over whether uncircumcised Gentiles could truly be said to be keeping the Law of Moses.¹⁵⁶

Paul’s figure of the uncircumcised Law-keeper would not, therefore, have been “astonishing” to his contemporaries.¹⁵⁷ Strict Pharisees may have disagreed with

¹⁵² E.g. Barclay 1996, 403, 409; Cohen 1999, 151; Dunn 2005, 313; Nolland 1981, 192–194; Schwartz 2007, 14.

¹⁵³ Donaldson 2007, 480–481; McEleney 1974, 328; Watson 2007b, 78.

¹⁵⁴ Josephus can speak of τοῦ νόμου τὰ πάτρια (*B.J.* 1.108), and he uses the expression ὁ πατριὸς νόμος to refer to purity rules (*A.J.* 11.109, 12.145), prayers (*A.J.* 11.231, 12.300), avoidance of adultery (*A.J.* 7.131), avoidance of idolatry (*A.J.* 18.263, *B.J.* 1.650, 1.653), and Sabbath-keeping (*A.J.* 16.163). Particular πάτρια associated directly with the Law include Sabbath-keeping (*A.J.* 14.63) and avoidance of idolatry (*B.J.* 2.195).

¹⁵⁵ Segal 1990, 100. Segal notes, however, that Josephus’s views are still not at the extreme end of the spectrum (cf. *Vita* 113).

¹⁵⁶ Segal (1990) sees Ananias’s view as a “rational and defensible position within Judaism” (99); cf. Nanos 2010, 133–134. See also Aletti (1988, 55–56), who agrees that Paul’s statements reflect an issue current amongst his Jewish contemporaries.

¹⁵⁷ Pace Barclay 1998, 545.

Paul, but they would have been aware that this kind of view, as exemplified by the positions of Philo and Ananias, existed. Paul is, in fact, using a scripturally derived and generally accepted truth (Rom 2:25) to take a particular position in an intra-Jewish debate (Rom 2:26). From the premise that circumcision can become uncircumcision through Law-breaking (v. 25) Paul infers (οὐν) the converse: that an uncircumcised synagogue adherent could be “reckoned as circumcised,” provided he kept the Law (v. 26).

This “reckoning” (verb λογίζεσθαι) in Rom 2:26 is thus best understood as a *human* activity (as in Rom 2:3, 3:28, 6:11, 8:18, 8:36, 14:14) rather than a *divine* activity (as in Rom 4 and Rom 9:8). Paul envisages that those in the synagogue who agree with his argument will adopt a position (similar to that of Philo in *QE* 2.2) which treats Gentile synagogue adherents as if they were Jews. In other words, Paul is arguing that Jews should “reckon” Law-keeping Gentile synagogue adherents as “circumcised.” The future tense of the verb here is simply a standard element of the syntax (i.e. it is the apodosis of a third class condition) and does not necessarily imply an eschatological context.¹⁵⁸ In fact, to see a reference here to *divine* vindication by virtue of a conjectured parallel between the phrase “reckoned as circumcised” (Rom 2:26) and “reckoned as righteousness” (Gen 15:6, cf. numerous references in Rom 4) would create a contradiction in Paul’s overall argument—for Paul specifically states that God reckons righteousness *regardless* of circumcision (Rom 4:9–12).¹⁵⁹

(c) *The radical consequences (v. 27)*

And the natural “uncircumcision” who keeps the Law would judge you who, having the letter and circumcision, are a transgressor of the Law.
(Rom 2:27)

καὶ κρινεῖ ἡ ἐκ φύσεως ἀκροβυστία τὸν νόμον τελοῦσα σὲ
τὸν διὰ γράμματος καὶ περιτομῆς παραβάτην νόμου.

¹⁵⁸ Paul commonly uses this construction (i.e. ἐὰν + subjunctive mood for protasis / future indicative for apodosis) to describe non-eschatological scenarios; cf. Rom 7:3, 12:20; 1 Cor 8:10, 14:23, etc. For the third class condition more generally see Wallace 1996, 696–699. Cf. Jewett 2007, 233–234.

¹⁵⁹ Nygren 1952, 134. *Pace* e.g. Cranfield 1975, 1.173–174; Schreiner 1998, 141; Wright 1996, 136.

In verse 27, Paul pushes the consequences of his argument even further. Indeed, by the end of verse 27, the mainstream view of Jewish identity and vocation has been entirely reversed. Instead of Jews teaching Gentiles by virtue of their possession and superior knowledge of the Law of Moses, the Law-keeping Gentile synagogue adherent is said to “judge” (verb κρίνειν) the Law-breaking Jewish synagogue teacher!

A number of commentators see the word κρίνειν as a reference to the eschatological judgment of sinful Jews by righteous pagans.¹⁶⁰ However, in Romans 2–3, eschatological judgment is depicted as an exclusively divine activity.¹⁶¹ Hence, like the word λογίζεσθαι in v. 26, this “judgment” in v. 27 is best understood as a pre-eschatological¹⁶² activity, which Paul envisages as a possibility in the synagogue context.¹⁶³ It is not difficult to imagine, for example, a flurry of condemnation by Gentile synagogue adherents following the notorious incident of the Jewish teachers who duped the Roman noblewoman (Josephus, *A.J.* 18.81–84, see above). Furthermore, the synagogue-based human “judgment” which Paul envisages in 2:27 may be used as a rhetorical counterpoint to the judgment described in 2:1, 3, which is probably referring to a synagogue-attending Jew judging the unrighteousness of the Gentile world.

Hence the category of the Gentile synagogue adherent enables us to understand Paul’s argument in Rom 2:25–27 about an uncircumcised Law-keeper judging a circumcised Law-breaker. The effect of Paul’s argument is to undermine further the understanding of Jewish identity found in the synagogue, especially amongst its teachers. By using the figure of the Gentile synagogue adherent, Paul is turning the mainstream understanding of Jewish identity and Jewish vocation on its head and exposing its contradictions. God’s command to Israel in Deut 4:6 to “observe” (verb φυλάσσειν) the “regulations” (δικαιώματα) of the Law is supposed to be the basis for her vocation as a wise nation among the other nations who will “hear all these

¹⁶⁰ E.g. Campbell 2009, 565; Jewett 2007, 234; Käsemann 1980, 73–74; Wilckens 1978–82, 1.155–156; cf. Matt 12:41–42; Luke 11:31.

¹⁶¹ E.g. Rom 2:16; 3:6.

¹⁶² The future tense does not indicate an eschatological scenario; it is merely continuing the apodosis of the third class condition begun in verse 26; see n. 158.

¹⁶³ Cf. Paul’s prohibition of illegitimate human “judgment” in the church (Rom 14:3–4, 10, 13).

regulations.” However, if possession and knowledge of the Law does not lead straightforwardly to obedience and to Jewish instruction of Gentiles, then the absurd situation could (and perhaps sometimes did) arise where a Gentile synagogue adherent who himself “observed” (verb φυλάσσειν) the “regulations” (δικαιώματα) of the Law would have a more legitimate claim to Jewish identity than a highly knowledgeable and respected Jewish Law-teacher who did not! This, in turn, supports Paul’s contention in Rom 2:28–29 that true Jewish identity is not to be understood in the terms of the mainstream Jewish community, but must be understood in another way.

4.4. Jewish identity redefined (Romans 2:28–29)

Romans 2:28–29 may now be understood as the conclusion of a coherent argument, set in the mainstream Jewish synagogue, which seeks to make a definite statement about *Jewish* (rather than simply Christian) identity.

Many commentators claim that Paul in Rom 2:29 applies the designations Ἰουδαῖος and περιτομή indiscriminately to *all* Christ-believers.¹⁶⁴ This common understanding is usually based on a reading that regards the Law-observant ἀκροβυστία in Rom 2:26–27 as a Gentile Christ-believer.¹⁶⁵ We have already shown, however, that this uncircumcised Law-keeper is best understood as a Gentile synagogue adherent. This result already undermines much of the basis for the “universal Christian” interpretation of Rom 2:29. There are, moreover, a number of other significant problems with the universal Christian interpretation.

¹⁶⁴ E.g. Cranfield 1975, 1.176; Dunn 1988, 1.125; Jewett 2007, 236; Käsemann 1971, 144; Moo 1996, 175; Schmidt 1966, 53–55; see also Barclay 1998, 546; Boyarin 1994, 94–95; Das 2003, 182–184; Schreiner 1998, 141–145; Watson 2007b, 215; Wright 1996, 133–139.

¹⁶⁵ E.g. Gathercole 2002a, 47–49. Conversely, commentators who see the uncircumcised Law-keeper of Romans 2:26–27 as a righteous Gentile or synagogue adherent tend to see the “Jew” of Romans 2:29 as an Israelite with a truly circumcised heart (e.g. Fitzmyer 1993, 322–323; Schmithals 1988, 99–101).

Firstly, such a thorough redefinition of the terms Ἰουδαῖος and περιτομή would be entirely novel and unique in first century Jewish thought. Most commentators acknowledge this novelty, but nevertheless allow it to stand in all its starkness.¹⁶⁶

Secondly, as we noted at the start of this chapter, the “universal Christian” interpretation of Rom 2:29 creates an awkward break in the flow of Paul’s argument into the next two verses. In Rom 3:1, Paul asks, “Then what is the advantage of the Jew? Or what is the value [ὠφέλεια] of circumcision?” The connective οὖν in Rom 3:1 requires us to read Paul’s question as one which logically arises from his statement in Rom 2:29. Paul is not raising a new topic by this question; rather he is continuing his discussion of the “value” of Jewishness, a topic that he raised in Rom 2:25 by use of the word ὠφελεῖν. If, in Rom 2:29, Paul has just redefined the words “Jew” and “circumcision” to denote all Christ-believers (as the aforementioned commentators suggest), then we would expect his radical verbal redefinition to inform his answer. In this case, as Dodd has famously pointed out, Rom 3:2 should read, “None whatever!”¹⁶⁷—because in this understanding, uncircumcised Christ-believing Gentiles have all the status and benefits of circumcised Christ-believing Jews, whereas ethnic Jews are not really Jews at all. Yet Paul’s answer in Rom 3:2 is “Much in every way!” and is followed by an affirmation of Jewish epistemological advantage and vocation which recalls the benefits and the role claimed by Jews in Rom 2:17–20! The “advantage” of Jews, says Paul in Rom 3:2, is that they are “entrusted with the oracles of God”—implying that he agrees in some way with his interlocutor that Jews have a special revelation (cf. “rely on the Law...know [his] will,” Rom 2:17–18) from God (cf. “boast in God,” Rom 2:17) which gives them a certain responsibility (cf. “guide to the blind,” etc., Rom 2:19–20). In other words, the supposedly all-embracing Christian universalism in Rom 2:28–29 creates an anomaly in the flow of Paul’s discussion of Jewish distinctiveness; a distinctiveness which he introduces in Rom 2:17 and continues to expound in Rom 3:1–2. Barclay, for example, admits that Paul’s answer in Rom 3:2 is a “genuine surprise to the faithful reader of Rom 2.” He suggests that Rom 3:1–8 “introduces a counterpoint which stands in tension with

¹⁶⁶ E.g. Paul “thoroughly redefines the terms ‘Jew’ and ‘circumcision’ in a way which preserves their honorific status but cancels their normal denotation” (Barclay 1998, 546); Paul uses the term “Jew” in a “special limited sense” (Cranfield 1975, 1.176).

¹⁶⁷ Dodd 1932, 43.

the previous direction of Paul's thought" and thus creates a "dialectic" in Pauline theology.¹⁶⁸ However, the text itself appears as a continuous and tightly connected argument which flows from Rom 2 to Rom 3 with no indication that Paul is introducing an antithetical perspective in 3:2.¹⁶⁹

A third problem with the universal Christian interpretation is that Paul never uses the term Ἰουδαῖος to refer to Gentile Christ-believers anywhere else in his extant letters.¹⁷⁰ A similar claim may be made of περιτομή: Paul rarely, if ever, uses the term περιτομή to refer to Gentile Christ-believers in his extant letters; the apparent exceptions are either not exceptions at all,¹⁷¹ or may be explained by contextual factors which do not apply to Rom 2:29.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁸ Barclay 1998, 546.

¹⁶⁹ This point is made forcefully by Elliott (1990, 191–204), who demonstrates the coherence of Rom 2 and 3 by assuming that Rom 2:17–29 is not an argument for universal sinfulness, but rather is "Paul's attempt to circumscribe the real privileges of the Jew" (202).

¹⁷⁰ See p. 46.

¹⁷¹ E.g. in Phil 3:3, Paul claims that "we are the circumcision" (ἡμεῖς ... ἐσμὲν ἡ περιτομή). This, however, may simply be a claim that Paul and Timothy (as Jewish teachers of Gentiles) are the genuine περιτομή, a claim which Paul is making in this context in order to urge the Philippians to follow his own apostolic teaching. Paul is not, in this understanding, using the term περιτομή in order to ascribe Jewish identity directly to his Christ-believing Gentile addressees (*pace* e.g. Fee 1995, 298–299; Hansen 2009, 220; O'Brien 1991, 358–364; Witherington 2011, 190). Rather, he is using the term in order to claim a status for himself and Timothy as true (Jewish) *teachers* of Gentiles (cf. Col 4:11), in direct opposition to rival Jewish teachers, whom he has just labelled κατατομή (Phil 3:2; so e.g. Robinson 2008, 170–177). There are a number of reasons to adopt this interpretation.

Firstly, this understanding fits with the particular terms Paul chooses to describe the activities of the "circumcision" in Phil 3:3. Paul claims that he and Timothy, as the circumcision, are "those who serve by the Spirit of God" (οἱ πνεύματι θεοῦ λατρεύοντες). Paul uses the λατρ- word-group elsewhere to refer to the *distinct* privileges of Israelites (Rom 9:4) and to his own special apostolic role (Rom 1:9, cf. 2 Tim 1:3). These parallels suggest that the "serving in the spirit" here refers to the activities of Paul and Timothy as Christ-believing Jewish missionaries. Paul also claims in Phil 3:3 that the true περιτομή are "those who boast in Christ Jesus" (οἱ ... καυχώμενοι ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ). Paul frequently uses this phrase or an equivalent to refer to his own apostolic ministry (e.g. Rom 15:17, 1 Cor 15:31, 2 Cor 11:10, Gal 6:14). Indeed, he uses an equivalent phrase in the previous chapter of Philippians itself to refer to his apostolic ministry (Phil 2:16). Thus "boasting in Christ Jesus" may be seen as a reference to Paul's (and Timothy's) legitimate pride in their ministry, proclaiming Christ to Gentiles, in opposition to the illegitimate "boast" of his Jewish opponents who are also seeking to teach Gentiles (cf. Rom 2:17–23; Gal 6:13; 2 Cor 10:15–17; 11:12, 16, 18). There is no need to assume, of course, that Paul must thereby be *excluding* the Gentile Philippians entirely from any possibility of "worshipping in the Spirit" or "boasting in Christ" (*pace* e.g. O'Brien 1991, 359). We are simply suggesting that Paul is referring *at this point* to the *special* sense of Israel's "worship" and the special vocational sense of the term "boast," in order to secure the Philippians' confidence in him and Timothy as teachers, and to exclude his Jewish opponents from the right to be received in Philippi. The possibility of *Gentiles* "worshipping" and "boasting" is simply not the issue at this point.

Secondly, the interpretation also fits into the general pattern of Paul's self-references in the letter as a whole. Although Paul is clearly in close partnership with his readers (e.g. Phil 1:5, 29–30), and

Finally, if the “heart circumcision” (περιτομή καρδίας) of Rom 2:29 is understood to apply to physically uncircumcised Christ-believers, then this would be a radical and unconventional reading of the various passages in the Old Testament which mention the idea of circumcision or Law-obedience according to the “heart” (Deut 10:16, 30:6; Jer 4:4, 9:26 [LXX 9:25], 31:33 [LXX 38:33]; Isa 51:7; cf. *Jub.* 1.23).¹⁷³ In these passages, the Scriptures are not speaking of Gentiles, but of Israel.

In summary, if the terms Ἰουδαῖος and περιτομή in Rom 2:29 are intended to refer to all Christ-believers, then there are multiple problems in relating this verse to its various contexts. On this reading, Rom 2:29 does not fit within the immediate context of Rom 2:17–29, nor does it fit within the argument of Rom 2–3, nor does it

encourages them to imitate certain aspects of his attitude and conduct (e.g. Phil 3:17), he also asserts and defends his own distinct vocation (Dodd 1999, 180–183). This is particularly evident in Phil 2:16–17, where he describes his distinct vocation in terms of a Jew-Gentile dynamic reminiscent of his self-description in the outer frame of Romans (see p. 108). Although Paul himself is absent (Phil 2:12, 24), he is hoping to send Timothy as his genuine representative—and perhaps even his replacement in the face of his impending death (Phil 2:19, 23; Holloway 2008). In the face of a potential threat from opponents, then, Paul wishes to emphasize that the Philippians should listen to the teaching and example represented by Jews such as himself *and* Timothy.¹⁷¹ Therefore he insists that “we” (i.e. Paul and Timothy), not their potential rivals, are the περιτομή —i.e. the Jews to whom Gentiles should pay attention.

Thirdly, this understanding also helps us to make sense of Paul’s subsequent discussion. Paul is not claiming that his Jewish identity has been replaced by his Christ-believing identity; he is claiming that his Jewish identity has been re-evaluated in light of his Christ-believing identity. Paul’s Jewish identity is thus neither a source of eschatological “confidence” (Phil 3:4–7) nor a means of eschatological “righteousness” (Phil 3:8–9). Thus Paul’s ministry as a Jew, in contrast to the ministry of his (real or potential) Jewish opponents, involves urging his Gentile hearers to strive after Christ in order that they may find themselves righteous “in him” (Phil 3:9–14, cf. Rom 9:30–31). Paul wishes his Gentile addressees to imitate him in *this* respect—not to become Jews, but to re-evaluate their own identity and “citizenship” in light of the cross and resurrection of Christ (Phil 3:15–21).

There are, in fact, parallels between this passage and his claim to be an “Israelite” in 2 Cor 11. Paul first denounces his Jewish opponents as “deceitful workers” (ἐργάται δόλιοι, 2 Cor 11:13; cf. κακοὶ ἐργάται, Phil 3:2), and then claims the right to use terms of Jewish identity to describe his own apostolic ministry (2 Cor 11:22), without necessarily insisting that these terms of Jewish identity must also apply to his addressees. It is at least reasonable, then, to suggest that Paul is adopting a similar strategy in Phil 3:2–3.

See also Nanos (2009), who argues that the common traditional interpretation of Phil 3:2—which assumes that Paul is reversing a general Jewish predilection to label Gentiles as “dogs”—has little foundation in the sources.

¹⁷² E.g. Col 2:11, which occurs in a context where various aspects of Christ’s existence—his “fullness,” his circumcision, his burial and his resurrection—are applied metaphorically to Gentiles (Col 2:9–13). The Colossians are urged to look to Christ as the sole location of various benefits. They are not, however, urged to consider themselves as “true Jews” in distinction from ethnic Jews, or to act in a way that assumes that human distinctions are obsolete (cf. 3:11 with 3:22–4:1; *pace* Boyarin 1994, 27).

¹⁷³ Hays 1989, 44–45. Wright (1996, 135–136) notes a similar anomaly in relation to the probable allusion to Ezek 36:24–28.

correspond to first-century Jewish usage of the terms, nor does it match the word usage in the rest of Paul’s letters, nor is it a straightforward reading of the Jewish Scriptures.

However, our own interpretation of Rom 2:17–27 as a contest over Jewish identity has opened the way for us to understand Rom 2:28–29 in an entirely different light. We will show that Paul’s aim here is not to dispense with the distinct nature of Jewish identity, but rather to *redefine* Jewish identity so that the distinct privilege and vocation of Jews are realized *outside* the mainstream synagogue. As we have seen, the uncircumcised Law-keeper of Rom 2:26–27 is not a Christ-believer, but a Gentile synagogue adherent whose presence plays an important, deconstructive role in Paul’s overall argument about Jewish identity and Jewish vocation. Paul’s conclusion in Rom 2:28–29, therefore, is not that uncircumcised Christ-believers are “really” circumcised Jews, but rather that Jewish identity itself finds a distinct and special place *apart from* the mainstream Jewish community. This is an important, albeit preliminary, result for Paul’s overall argument in Romans. It will have important implications for Paul’s subsequent argument about the relationship between Jewish identity and Christ-believing identity, and about the relationship between his Jewish identity and his own apostolic ministry. Nevertheless, at this point, Paul is not making any direct claims about Christ-believing identity *per se*.

4.4.1. Jewish identity: Not in the mainstream synagogue

For [it] is not [a matter of] the public Jew,
neither [is it a matter of] the public, fleshly circumcision (Rom 2:28)

οὐ γὰρ ὁ ἐν τῷ φανερῷ Ἰουδαῖός ἐστιν
οὐδὲ ἡ ἐν τῷ φανερῷ ἐν σαρκὶ περιτομή,

Paul recalls the two key terms denoting Jewish identity—“Jew” and “circumcision”—and states that neither of them is to be understood as being “public” (ἐν τῷ φανερῷ).¹⁷⁴ There is an instructive parallel here with Matt 6.¹⁷⁵ Matthew 6:5 speaks of those who pray “in the synagogues” (ἐν ταῖς συναγωγαῖς) and on the street corners, with the result that they are “publicly visible” (verb φαίνειν) to people (τοῖς

¹⁷⁴ For this translation of the phrase see Jewett 2007, 219, 235.

¹⁷⁵ Schweizer 1974.

ἀνθρώποις). By contrast, Jesus' followers are to pray ἐν τῷ κρυπτῷ, i.e. in a private space (Matt 6:6), which is the same phrase Paul uses in Rom 2:29.¹⁷⁶ The phrase ἐν τῷ φανερῷ, therefore, is best understood as a reference to the synagogue, which is the social location of the mainstream—or “public”—understanding of Jewish identity.¹⁷⁷

Paul adds a further modifier to the term “circumcision”: the phrase “in flesh” (ἐν σαρκί). While he clearly intends a reference to physical circumcision here,¹⁷⁸ Paul is not simply repudiating physical circumcision as a marker of Jewish identity altogether.¹⁷⁹ Rather, he is making a statement which needs to be read in light of the previous phrase (ἐν τῷ φανερῷ) and also in light of his argument so far. For Paul, physical circumcision is valuable, but only insofar as it is accompanied by a right response to divine revelation (cf. Rom 2:25, 3:1–2). The mainstream, “public” Jewish Law-teachers had, as a whole, failed to keep the Law and thus failed in their divine vocation (Rom 2:24). In Rom 2:28, then, Paul is not denouncing physical circumcision *per se*, but rather is contesting the understanding of the *value* of physical circumcision which was associated with the mainstream Jewish community. This interpretation of Rom 2:28 is supported by Paul's precise phrasing: he does not simply reject “circumcision in flesh,” but rather he targets “the circumcision which is public and in flesh” (ἡ ἐν τῷ φανερῷ ἐν σαρκὶ περιτομή).

4.4.2. Jewish identity: On the margins

After stating that the meaning of Jewish identity is not to be found in the mainstream Jewish community, Paul states where true Jewish identity is to be found:

¹⁷⁶ Schweizer 1974, 120; cf. the use of the phrase ἐν κρυπτῷ in John 7:4, 10 to mean “not publicly.” John 18:20 also speaks of the synagogue and temple as public places, as opposed to the places ἐν κρυπτῷ.

¹⁷⁷ This conclusion is supported by Esler's (2003, 102–107) observation that the synagogue would have been understood as a “public space,” as opposed to the private meetings of Christ-believers.

¹⁷⁸ Jewett 2007, 235.

¹⁷⁹ Pace Boyarin 1994, 78–81.

But [it is a matter of] the “Jew” in secret,
and circumcision [is a matter] of the heart, (Rom 2:29)

ἀλλ’ ὁ ἐν τῷ κρυπτῷ Ἰουδαῖος,
καὶ περιτομὴ καρδίας

There is a direct contrast between the terms Paul has used to describe the mainstream Jewish community in v. 28—a Jew “in public” and circumcision “in flesh”—and the terms uses to describe true Jewishness in v. 29—a Jew “in secret” and circumcision “of the heart.” These latter two terms remind Paul’s readers of his previous references to God’s concern with the “heart” (καρδία, Rom 2:5) and the “secrets” (κρυπτὰ) of people (Rom 2:16). They are, moreover, familiar motifs in the prophetic Scriptures more broadly. The prophets often announced judgment on Israelites for their lack of personal repentance and heartfelt obedience.¹⁸⁰ We have already seen that Jer 9:25–26 [LXX 24–25], which contrasts “flesh”-circumcision and “heart”-circumcision, is particularly important for Paul’s discussion here. The general context of this allusion is also instructive for understanding Paul’s reference to the Jew “in secret.” In Jeremiah 9, the prophet laments over Israel and wishes to leave it entirely because of its transgression against God’s Law (vv. 2–3 [LXX 1–2]). He counsels the reader, too, not to trust in any of the members of the Israelite community (vv. 4–5 [LXX 3–4]). These people may appear to be acting legitimately, but internally they are full of enmity (v. 8 [LXX 7]). God will bring a future time of judgment where all of these unacknowledged and seemingly hidden sins will be exposed and avenged (vv. 9, 15–16 [LXX 8, 14–15]). The wise man, then, should not “boast” in any of the things that might otherwise have been esteemed by the Israelite community—wisdom, strength, or wealth—but only that he “knows” the Lord (vv. 23–24 [LXX 22–23], cf. Rom 2:19–20).¹⁸¹

¹⁸⁰ Biblical references to heart-circumcision are found in Deut 10:16, 30:6; Ezek 44:7, 9; Jer 9:24–26 [LXX 9:23–25] (cf., e.g., *Jub* 1.23; *Odes Sol.* 11.1–3) (Frey 2007, 313). Waters (2006, 252–253) argues that Paul’s reference to circumcision in Rom 2:29 is using the language of eschatological restoration drawn from Deut 30.

¹⁸¹ In Jer 11, too, the prophet stands against the people of Israel (vv. 14–19), and pleads to the God who tests “minds and hearts” (v. 20).

Paul's use of the terms "heart" and "secret," then, is quite comprehensible in terms of these prophetic scriptural motifs.¹⁸² Paul is not using the idea of heart-circumcision to cancel the normal denotation of the terms "Jew" and "circumcision" or to extend these ideas to incorporate all uncircumcised Christ-believing Gentiles. Rather, much like Jeremiah, Paul is seeking to show that true Jewish identity is to be found on the margins of the present mainstream Jewish community. A Jew is not defined by his proximity to the centre of the "public" synagogue, but by the kind of heart-circumcision associated with prophetic expectation, which may in fact involve rejection and dishonour.

in spirit not letter, (Rom 2:29)

ἐν πνεύματι οὐ γράμματι,

In Rom 2:29, Paul claims that Jewish identity is "in spirit" (ἐν πνεύματι), not "in letter" (γράμματι). Paul's apparent disparagement of the concept of "writing" has itself been the subject of a vast array of scholarly writing.¹⁸³ Some scholars emphasize the socio-theological nature of the distinction, maintaining that it denotes a contrast between two different theological stances and / or social situations.¹⁸⁴ Others emphasize the hermeneutical nature of the distinction, maintaining that it denotes two different modes of reading the Law.¹⁸⁵ These discussions usually focus on 2 Cor 3, since this passage develops the motif in much greater detail than does Rom 2:29. However, we should not be too quick to import conclusions concerning 2 Cor 3 (or Rom 7:6, for that matter) into our exegesis of Rom 2:29. 2 Corinthians 3 is an explicitly Christological passage, while Rom 2:17–29 is not. We should, therefore, seek to understand the letter / spirit contrast in Rom 2:29 primarily with reference

¹⁸² Although Paul may also be hinting at his later contrast between the "flesh" as the realm of sin and death and the "spirit" as the realm of blessing and obedience to God through Christ (cf. Rom 7:5–6, 8:3–4), this contrast is not yet explicit.

¹⁸³ An exhaustive list of such scholarship is impossible here. For a history of early understandings and modern scholarship prior to the mid-1990s see Hafemann 1995 (1–29). See also the bibliographies in the works cited below.

¹⁸⁴ E.g. the work of the Spirit in the apocalyptic community as opposed to the strict Law-observance of the Pharisees (Segal 1990, 151–152); or the superior experience of Spirit-empowered Christian community (Hays 1989, 122–153, esp. 149–153; Westerholm 1984, 235); or the superior experience of Spirit-empowered Law-obedience (Hafemann 1995, 171).

¹⁸⁵ E.g. the term "Spirit" denotes an "allegorical" reading against a "literal" reading (Boyarín 1994, 86–97); or it denotes special exegesis based on revelations from God's Spirit, as at Qumran (Lim 1997, 116, 169–172).

to the Jewish themes which are explicit in this passage. Otherwise, we may force the distinction to carry more theological weight than it can bear.

In Rom 2:17–29 as a whole, Paul is seeking to demonstrate the insufficiency of the kind of Law-based synagogue teaching which was paradigmatic for Jewish identity in the mainstream Jewish community. Paul has just argued in Rom 2:25–27 that a physically uncircumcised Gentile synagogue adherent who kept the regulations of the Law in all other respects would have more right to be regarded as a Jew than a circumcised synagogue-based Law-teacher who, though keeping the “letter” of the Law by being circumcised, was breaking the Law in other important respects. In Rom 2:29, Paul states that this point arises from a particular way of reading the Jewish Scriptures. Jewish identity must ultimately be understood, not just with reference to the “letter” of the Law, but with reference to its “spirit.” Paul is not, as Boyarin claims, allegorizing Jewish distinctiveness and identity “out of existence.”¹⁸⁶ He is just reminding his readers that the simplistic, “literal” understanding of circumcision and thus of Jewish identity—an understanding which he has already exposed as one of the (possibly unconscious) presuppositions of the mainstream Jewish community—is inadequate.

4.4.3. Jewish honour: Not from people, but from God

whose praise is not from people but from God. (Rom 2:29)

οὗ ὁ ἔπαινος οὐκ ἐξ ἀνθρώπων ἀλλ’ ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ.

The final clause in Rom 2:29 describes the source of the Jewish teacher’s “praise” (ἔπαινος). Scholars have had considerable difficulty in discerning Paul’s purpose in referring to “praise” at this point in his argument.¹⁸⁷ However, the concept of

¹⁸⁶ Boyarin 1994, 152, cf. 7–8.

¹⁸⁷ Various unpersuasive parallels have been suggested. Fridrichsen (1927) suggests that Paul is alluding to a general Stoic sentiment; but this is not specific enough to explain why Paul would use it here to describe Jewish identity. A number of interpreters suggest that Paul is engaging in a complex etymological wordplay: the term Ἰουδαίος is derived from Ἰουδα which in Hebrew is יְהוּדָה, which in Gen 49:8 MT is related to the word יְהוּדָה (יְהוּדָה) which in the LXX is translated using the verb αἰνεῖν, which is in turn related to the word for “praise” (ἔπαινος) in Rom 2:29 (so e.g. Barrett 1991, 58; Cranfield 1975, 1.175; Dunn 1999, 181). However, it is unlikely that Paul would have been expecting his Roman readers to recognize such a convoluted foreign-language pun (Barclay 1998, 547; Käsemann 1980, 77).

“praise” is quite understandable within the Law-teaching synagogue context which, as we have been arguing, is the setting for Rom 2:17–29.

The ideal synagogue teacher receives “praise from people.” He is acknowledged as a paradigm of Jewish identity; he is thus lauded by his fellow-Jews and by Gentile synagogue adherents for the marvels of wisdom which he derives from the Law. The ideal of Israel’s Law-teachers being “praised” (using the ἐπαιν- word-group) is found in a number of other Jewish texts. The author of the prologue to Ben Sira, for example, claims that his grandfather’s text will demonstrate the universal wisdom of Israel’s Scriptures which will inevitably lead to Israel being “praised” (verb ἐπαινέϊν) for “instruction” (παιδεία) and “wisdom” (σοφία, Sir Prol 3). Ben Sira himself speaks of the great Jewish heroes of the past who will receive “praise” (ἔπαινος), both from the “congregation” and also from other “peoples,” on account of their great wisdom:

There are those who have left a name, so that praises [ἔπαινοι] may be recounted (Sir 44:8).

Peoples [λαοί] will recount their wisdom, and the congregation proclaims their praise [ἔπαινος] (Sir 44:15).

The *Letter of Aristeas* also uses the ἐπαιν- word-group to describe learned Jews who receive “praise” from others because of their superior Law-based wisdom. It describes an idealized feast in which a delegation of Jews provides detailed instruction on a wide range of matters to the Greek King Ptolemy II. The key-word ἐπαινέϊν is repeatedly used to describe the action of the pagan King as he shows his approval for the wisdom and learning of these Jews (*Ep. Arist.* 189, 195, 206, 208, 213, 225, 234, 240, 246, 247, 265, 291). The feast ends with the Jews receiving “loud and joyful applause” for their wisdom (*Ep. Arist.* 293–294) which they have derived from the Law of Moses (*Ep. Arist.* 312). The pattern of Jewish identity is clear here: God’s gift of the Law to Israel provides Jewish teachers with exceptional wisdom, which enables them to instruct others, including Gentiles, who in turn “praise” (verb ἐπαινέϊν) the Jewish teachers.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁸ Cf. Deut 26:16–19, which also refers to “regulations” (δικαιώματα, Rom 2:26); the verb “observe” (φυλάσσειν, Rom 2:26); and the word “boast” (καύχημα; cf. Rom 2:17, 23) with reference to Israel’s exalted position among the nations.

Paul, however, contests and redefines the element of “praise” in the mainstream understanding of Jewish identity. He implies that this public, human verdict on the Jewish Law-teacher is not, in fact, endorsed by the God in whom he boasts (cf. Rom 2:17). God approves of an alternative view of Jewish identity and Jewish vocation—a view which may well result in rejection and loss of honour in the mainstream Jewish community.¹⁸⁹ Elsewhere Paul develops the theme of “praise from God” (ἔπαινος ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ) in terms of his own vocation and that of other Jewish gospel workers such as Apollos (1 Cor 4:1–6). Paul, in his ministry as a steward of God, only looks for “praise from God,” (1 Cor 4:5) not from any kind of “human tribunal” (4:3).¹⁹⁰

Thus Paul’s final clause supports his overall contention that Jewish identity and Jewish vocation is not to be understood in terms of the mainstream Jewish community which values the possession of the Law as divine wisdom and which seeks to honour God through Law-teaching and exemplary obedience. Jewish identity and Jewish vocation, for Paul, must be understood in different terms; terms which may not result in public human “praise” in the synagogue, but which are nevertheless endorsed by God himself.

4.5. Summary: Paul’s contest over Jewish identity

We began this chapter by noting that Rom 2:17–29 is in need of thorough re-evaluation. Some interpreters read the passage as a clever rhetorical ploy to show that the designations “Jew” and “circumcision” no longer apply to ethnic Jews, but rather pertain to all Christ-believers, whether Jew or Gentile, who are the true inheritors of salvation. Other interpreters read the passage as a synagogue sermon advocating a Law-based soteriological schema that is alien to the rest of Paul’s thought. We have demonstrated, however, that the passage should not be read primarily in terms of soteriology at all. Rather, Rom 2:17–29 is a discussion of *Jewish identity* which focuses on the question of *Jewish vocation*. In Rom 2:17–29, Paul is *contesting* and *redefining* the distinct nature of Jewish identity, and thus of Jewish vocation. Paul is seeking here to undermine the view of Jewish vocation prevalent in the mainstream Jewish community—a vocation which sought to model and embody

¹⁸⁹ Barclay 1998, 546–550.

¹⁹⁰ Barclay 1998, 548.

a way of life built on the Law of Moses as a witness to God's truth and which found its paradigmatic expression in the figure of the synagogue Law-teacher. Paul is also seeking to pave the way for an alternative view of Jewish vocation—a vocation which is built on the conviction that the gospel of Christ is the fulfilment of Israel's Law, and which found its paradigmatic expression in Paul's gospel-preaching ministry.

In Rom 2:17–20, Paul describes the mainstream understanding of Jewish identity and Jewish vocation, which is represented by the exemplary synagogue Law-teacher. For the mainstream Jewish community, Israel's privilege consists in its possession of the Law, which is seen as a divine revelation. The Law enables Jews who know the Law both to be obedient to God's moral will and also to teach others, including Gentiles.

In Rom 2:21–27, however, Paul turns on his interlocutor and begins to deconstruct this view of Jewish identity. His deconstruction consists of two arguments (vv. 21–24 and 25–27 respectively).

In Rom 2:21–24, Paul charges his Law-teaching interlocutor with a series of serious crimes. These crimes are not intended as a blanket condemnation of the regular practices of every individual Jew. Rather, they are a reminder of particularly notorious crimes by Jewish teachers. Paul is thereby seeking to undermine the confidence of his readers in the mainstream understanding of Jewish identity and Jewish vocation. The charges demonstrate that being knowledgeable in the Law, even to the point of becoming an influential and respected teacher, does not guarantee upright behaviour. In fact, Paul demonstrates that the mainstream understanding of Jewish vocation—centred on the preaching of the Law—has had the *opposite* effect to that which had been intended. Instead of leading to God being glorified in the nations, it had led to God's name being blasphemed in the nations.

In Rom 2:25–27, Paul introduces a Law-keeping Gentile into his argument. This Law-keeping Gentile is not a righteous pagan or a Gentile Christ-believer, but rather is a synagogue adherent, who plays a specific role in Paul's deconstruction of Jewish identity. Paul begins with the widely accepted premise that circumcision can become uncircumcision through Law-breaking. He then infers the converse—that an

uncircumcised synagogue adherent could be “reckoned as circumcised,” provided he kept the Law. Finally, he concludes that a Gentile synagogue adherent who keeps the Law has more of a claim to Jewish identity than a circumcised Jew who breaks the Law. By using the figure of the Gentile synagogue adherent, Paul has turned the mainstream understanding of Jewish identity and Jewish vocation on its head and exposed its contradictions.

In Rom 2:28–29, Paul begins to reconstruct an alternative view of Jewish identity. Contrary to most interpreters, we have argued Paul is not here applying the designations Ἰουδαῖος and περιτομή indiscriminately to all Christ-believers. Rather, Paul is making a specific claim about Jewish identity. Paul’s claim is that Jewish identity and Jewish vocation must be understood, not in terms of the mainstream, “public” understanding which found its paradigmatic expression in physically circumcised Law-teachers who were “praised” in the synagogue, but rather in terms of prophetic expectations concerning marginal figures. By engaging and arguing with the teachers in the synagogue, Paul is in the process of *contesting* and *redefining* what it means for Jews to be Jews. Paul’s argument in Rom 2:17–29 does not “deal directly with salvation.”¹⁹¹ Rather, Paul’s argument deals directly with issues of Jewish identity and corresponding Jewish vocation.

Romans 2:17–29, therefore, may be treated as a coherent argument in its own right. Admittedly, Paul’s predominant posture in Rom 2:17–29 is negative. He spends most of this pericope *deconstructing* the view of Jewish identity in the mainstream Jewish community, and only gives brief hints of his alternative view. Thus Paul’s argument here, while self-contained, is also a preparation for future developments in his letter.

There are a number of indications that the Jewish Law-teacher in Rom 2:17–29 operates as a foil for Paul’s presentation of his own Jewish vocation as apostle to the Gentiles in the rest of Romans. In contrast to the Law-teacher who preaches the Law’s commandments as moral principles (Rom 2:17–22), Paul uses vivid first-person imagery to teach his Gentile readers that the “good, holy and righteous” commandment of the Law (Rom 7:12) has another purpose: to highlight human sin (Rom 7:13) and thus to testify to the gospel of Christ (Rom 7:24–8:4; cf. Rom 3:19–

¹⁹¹ Pace Sanders 1983, 132.

21).¹⁹² In contrast to the negative Jew-Gentile dynamic in which Jewish Law-preaching only results in God being “dishonoured” and “blasphemed” among the nations (Rom 2:23–24), Paul describes a positive eschatological Jew-Gentile dynamic in which Israel’s declaration of God’s “mercy” leads to God being “glorified” among the nations (Rom 15:9). In contrast to his interlocutor’s claim to “boast in God” (καυχᾶσθαι ἐν θεῷ, Rom 2:17) and to “boast in the Law” (ἐν νόμῳ καυχᾶσθαι, Rom 2:23), Paul’s gospel-preaching ministry enables him to claim: “I have a boast *in Christ Jesus* concerning the things pertaining to God” (ἔχω ... καύχησιν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ τὰ πρὸς τὸν θεόν; Rom 15:17).¹⁹³

Paul’s most detailed discussion of Jewish identity and Jewish vocation and its relationship to his own vocation as apostle to the nations, however, occurs in Rom 9–11. It is to these chapters that we now turn.

¹⁹² This interpretation of Rom 7:7–25 focuses on the nature of the Jewish Law as a witness to the gospel of Christ. We are not here making any claims about the existential implications of the passage. That is, we are not entering into the question of whether Rom 7:7–25 only pertains to Paul’s pre-Christian experience or whether it is also wholly or partially descriptive of his present experience. For representatives of the former position, see Chester (2003, 183–195) and Seifrid (1992), who argue that Paul is reflecting on his pre-Christian existence from his new Christian perspective. For representatives of the latter position, see Cranfield (1975, 1.341–342) and Dunn (1998b, 472–477).

¹⁹³ The idea that Paul’s apostolic vocation provides him with a legitimate “boast,” sometimes in direct opposition to Jewish rivals, is also a common theme in the Corinthian correspondence (1 Cor 9:15–16; 15:31; 2 Cor 1:12, 14; 7:4; 8:24; 9:2–3; 10:8, 13, 15, 17; 11:10, 12, 16, 17, 18, 30; 12:1, 5, 6, 9; cf. 1 Thess 2:19). In 2 Cor 10:8, Paul links his “boast” with an allusion to Jeremiah’s ministry (cf. Jer 1:10), and in 1 Cor 1:31 and 2 Cor 10:17 he supports the legitimacy of his own “boast” with a citation of Jer 9:24 [LXX 9:23]. This passage in Jeremiah, as we have seen, underlies a number of the concepts in Rom 2:17–29. See also the significance of Jeremiah for Paul’s apostolic self-description in the outer frame of Romans (ch. 3, p. 101).

Chapter 5: Paul's Fulfilment of Israel's Vocation (Romans 9–11)

*"I know, I know. We are the chosen people.
But once in a while, can't you choose someone else?"*

Tevye (to God), *Fiddler on the Roof*.¹

*I myself am an Israelite,
from the seed of Abraham,
tribe of Benjamin.*

The Apostle Paul.²

5.1. Paul's vocation: The framework for Romans 9–11

For Paul, Jewishness was a divine occupation.³ Paul, as a Jew, was fulfilling a distinct and pre-eminent role in God's worldwide eschatological purposes.⁴ Paul's apostolic mission to the Gentiles, in other words, was not merely *influenced* by his Jewish past; it *was* his expression of Jewishness. This view of Jewishness was, however, forged in the midst of controversy. Paul was well aware that many other Jews did not share his vision of Jewishness. Despite the existence of Paul's apostolic mission, there remained a mainstream Jewish community—an "Israel"—whose own view of Israel's vocation remained trenchantly opposed to Paul's. We have already seen how Paul disputed and contested this mainstream view of Jewish identity.⁵ Did Paul conclude, then, that these two visions of Jewish identity were ultimately irreconcilable?

¹ Stein 1971. For a detailed bibliography, see p. 255ff.

² Rom 11:1.

³ Ch. 2, pp. 43–82.

⁴ Ch. 3, pp. 83–131.

⁵ Ch. 4, pp. 132–189.

In Rom 9–11, Paul returns to discuss his non-Christ-believing kin, “Israel,” and his own relationship with them. When we examine the argument of Rom 9–11, we see that it is not just about Israel. It is also, quite fundamentally, about *Paul*. The aim of this chapter is to show that *Paul’s apostolic mission* plays a decisive role in his argument about Israel. Paul presents his own apostolic vocation, in various ways, as a contrast to, a fulfilment of, and a means of hope for Israel’s role in God’s worldwide purposes. Paul, in other words, is using the fundamentally Jewish nature of his apostolic mission to show that his own apostolic ministry fulfils the vocation of Israel.

5.1.1. The prominence of Paul’s persona in Rom 9–11

It has often been noted, but not always sufficiently appreciated, that Paul himself is one of the key subjects in the argument of Rom 9–11. Paul’s own authorial persona, which is so prominent in his opening self-description as apostle to the Gentiles in 1:1–15,⁶ is relatively underdeveloped in 1:16–8:39, but makes a striking reappearance in chapters 9–11.⁷ For example, first-person singular authorial self-references are a ubiquitous feature both of Paul’s introduction (17x in 1:1–15) and of his exposition in chapters 9–11 (26x) but are far less frequent in 1:16–8:39 (only 8x).⁸ Various other features of Rom 9–11 demonstrate that Paul is employing his characteristic epistolary style here far more than in 1:16–8:39: the oath-like assurance (9:1),⁹ the testimonial as a form of recommendation (10:2),¹⁰ and the frequent use of the first-person λέγω to introduce content (9:1; 10:18, 10:19, 11:1, 11, 13).¹¹ This marked reintroduction of Paul’s authorial persona serves to bind Rom 9–11 tightly with the themes of Rom 1:1–15 in which, as we have seen, Paul describes his own mission as an eschatological Jew-Gentile dynamic.¹² In particular, the reader is reminded of Paul’s opening self-designation as ἀπόστολος (1:1, 5; cf.

⁶ See ch. 3, p. 84.

⁷ The following observations are largely based on those of Dahl (1977, 139–141); Stowers (1994, 291–293); Niebuhr (1992, 158–160); Kim (2000, 97–103); cf. Gadenz (2009, 185).

⁸ The self-references in Rom 7:7–25 are not direct authorial self-designations, but are designed to vividly illustrate the effect and ultimate purpose of the Law (see ch. 4, p. 188).

⁹ Cf. 2 Cor 1:12, 1:23, 11:10; Gal 1:20; Phil 1:8.

¹⁰ Cf. 2 Cor 8:3, Gal 4:15; also Col 4:13.

¹¹ This occurs only 2x in Rom 1:16–8:39 (i.e. in 3:5, 6:19).

¹² See ch. 3, pp. 83–131; cf. Stowers 1994, 291–293.

10:15; 11:13), which along with *δοῦλος* emphasizes his identity as an Israelite who has been entrusted with a proclamatory mission to bring God's salvation to the nations.

Paul's own identity, however, is not merely a prominent *feature* of Rom 9–11; it also forms the *framework* for his argument. Although a number of interpreters prefer to start a new section at 9:30 rather than 10:1 on the basis of linguistic and thematic connections between 9:30–33 and 10:1–4,¹³ macro-syntactic considerations show that the traditional chapter divisions accurately reflect the structure of the text.¹⁴ Thus the three most emphatic Pauline self-references in Rom 9–11 (9:1–3, 10:1–2, 11:1) form the opening of the three major sections of his argument (Rom 9, Rom 10, Rom 11). These three self-references also correspond closely to the *propositiones* (9:6, 10:4, 11:1–2) of the three subsections.¹⁵

The significance of Paul's own vocation in the argument of Rom 9–11 has been remarked upon by a number of scholars and interpreted in various ways. Munck believes that Paul is claiming an absolutely decisive eschatological significance for his own apostolic vocation: Paul's mission to the Gentiles will indirectly achieve God's planned eschatological salvation of Israel (e.g. Rom 11:13–14), in contrast to the direct mission of the other apostles to the Jews (cf. Gal 2:7–9) which had failed because of Israel's unbelief (Rom 10:16–21).¹⁶ Anthony Guerra points out the practical implications of Paul's presentation of his own mission as the eschatological fulfilment of God's purposes for the salvation of both Jew and Gentile: it will enable Paul to garner further support for his mission to Spain (Rom 15:24, 28).¹⁷ Watson notes how Paul's self-references serve his purpose to create a common Christ-believing identity in order to unite the church of Jewish and Gentile believers (cf. Rom 14:1–15:6): by identifying in the strongest possible way with his Christ-believing Jewish readers, Paul demonstrates that his understanding of Jewish

¹³ E.g. Gadenz 2009, 30–33, 83.

¹⁴ Siegert 1985, 112–119. The linguistic and thematic connections between 9:30–33 and chapter 10 are best understood as a bridge or fulcrum between the two units (9:1–33 and 10:1–21), not as an indication that 9:30 is the beginning of a new section (Wilk 2010, 248–253).

¹⁵ Theobald 2009, 147–149. Theobald thus views “die ‘autobiographischen’ Passagen in Röm 9–11 als Orientierungsmarken der Argumentation” (the heading of pp. 147–173).

¹⁶ Munck 1959, 42–49; 1967.

¹⁷ Guerra 1990.

identity, which he is about to expound from the Scriptures, is genuine in every respect.¹⁸ Wright emphasizes those aspects of Paul's vocation which contribute to the salvation-historical "story" of Israel: the renewal of Israel's covenant in the Messiah, the incorporation of Gentiles into this renewed covenant, and the return of unbelieving Jews to covenant faithfulness by way of jealous envy.¹⁹ Barclay, on the other hand, points out that Paul is placing his vocation within an apocalyptically redefined story of Israel, in which the grace of Christ creates a radically new account of Israel's calling, stumbling and destiny that is not so easily accommodating of linear salvation-historical themes.²⁰ Karl-Wilhelm Niebuhr's work is probably the most extensive exegetical investigation to date of the significance of Paul's own Jewish identity for his argument in Romans 9–11. Niebuhr argues that Paul sees his own ministry, as the "Heidenapostel aus Israel," as a pivotal element in the outworking of God's plans for the salvation of both Gentile and Jew in Christ.²¹

In the course of the following investigation, we will draw upon a number of these insights. We will go beyond these observations, however, by considering the way in which Paul's vocation is directly connected with—indeed, is ultimately the fulfilment of—Israel's own vocation.

5.1.2. Tensions concerning Israel's vocation in Rom 9–11

Our investigation so far has disclosed a number of significant tensions in Paul's understanding of Jewish identity. In large part, these tensions have arisen from Paul's statements concerning the negative function of the Law-revelation in God's global purposes. This negative function comes to expression explicitly, for example, in Rom 3:19–20. The Law "speaks" to one particular group of people, "to those in the Law" (τοῖς ἐν τῷ νόμῳ)—i.e. Israel. However, because Israel is like the rest of humanity, subject to sin, the Law-revelation to Israel does not lead straightforwardly to ethical conduct or to salvation for Israel. Rather, the Law's initial function is to expose Israel's sin. By doing so, the Law-revelation to Israel fulfils a further global purpose (ἵνα), which is to hold the "entire world" (πᾶς ὁ κόσμος) accountable to

¹⁸ Watson 2007b, 303–308.

¹⁹ Wright 2002, 624.

²⁰ Barclay 2002, 147–153.

²¹ Niebuhr 1992, 136–178.

God, by providing “all flesh” (πᾶσα σὰρξ) with the “recognition of sin” (ἐπίγνωσις ἁμαρτίας; cf. 4:15; 5:13, 20; 7:9). By bringing this condemnation to Israel first and then to the world, the Law ultimately “testifies” to the world, through Israel, about the righteousness of God through faith in Christ Jesus and his atoning death (Rom 3:21–26).²² This negative role for Israel’s Law thus results in a positive outcome with respect to God’s global purposes. However, it also creates significant problems for Israel itself.

Firstly, it raises questions about Israel’s own *salvation*. Paul has stated that the gospel brings salvation “for the Jew first [πρῶτον]” (Rom 1:16), and that the Jews’ “first [πρῶτον]” advantage consists in being entrusted with God’s “oracles” (λόγια), i.e. the Law.²³ If, however, God gave his words to Israel in order to condemn them, how can Israel be said to possess any real advantage?²⁴

Secondly, it raises questions about Israel’s wider divine *vocation*. Paul has presented his own mission, alongside that of others,²⁵ as the fulfilment of positive eschatological expectations for Israel’s pre-eminent place among the nations. However, Paul views the present role of most Israelites in God’s purposes in an entirely negative light. While Paul’s mission to the nations fulfils prophetic expectations concerning the glorification of God’s “name” (ὄνομα, Rom 1:5; cf. e.g. Isa 42:10 LXX, 59:19, 60:9, 66:19 LXX), the only obvious way in which the mainstream Jewish community has fulfilled prophetic expectations is by their *disobedience* to the Law leading to God’s “name” (ὄνομα) being *despised* in the nations (Rom 2:24, cf. Isa 52:5).

We shall see that these tensions concerning Israel’s salvation and Israel’s divine vocation underlie Paul’s entire argument in Rom 9–11. Stanley Stowers’s treatment of Rom 9–11 provides valuable insights into the importance of the latter issue—i.e.

²² Ware (2011) points out that a similar logic can be discerned in Ps 143:2 [LXX 144:2], which Rom 3:20 is almost certainly echoing.

²³ See ch. 2, pp. 55–60; ch. 4, pp. 147–149. Also cf. Zeller 1973, 144–145.

²⁴ This may also raise further questions about the efficacy of *any* revelation from God, including the gospel itself. Indeed, it calls God’s very character (his faithfulness, integrity, reliability and righteousness) into question (Grieb 2010, 391–392; Johnson 1995; Munck 1967, 34–35; Oropeza 2007, 57–58).

²⁵ Note the plural in Rom 1:5; cf. 10:8.

Israel's divine vocation, her role in God's purposes.²⁶ However, Stowers claims that Paul has no deep concerns concerning the former issue—i.e. Israel's salvation. Stowers points to the ambiguity and qualifications in Paul's discussion of Israel's soteriological status, and argues that Paul is merely setting a “trap” for his Gentile readers to lure them into a false sense of arrogance, which he then destroys in 11:13.²⁷ However, Paul's repeated descriptions of the condemnatory role of Israel's Law in Rom 1–8 suggest that his concern for Israel's salvation in Rom 9–11 is not merely rhetorical.²⁸ Unlike Stowers, we will proceed on the assumption that Paul's stated anxieties for Israel's salvation (e.g. Rom 10:1) are expressions of genuine grief. Nevertheless, our investigation remains indebted to Stowers's insight that Israel's role in God's global purposes—i.e. her divine vocation—is one of Paul's key concerns in Rom 9–11. Rather than seeking to discount the issue of Israel's salvation, we will seek to integrate it with Paul's discussion of Israel's vocation.

The fact that there is a complex relationship between Israel's salvation and Israel's divine vocation can be seen, for example, when we consider some of the key terms Paul chooses to describe Israel in Rom 9–11. The terms “election,” “call” and “gift,” both in Paul's letters and in the Scriptures more generally, can be used *both* to imply divine salvation and *also* to describe divine commissions to perform particular tasks. Depending on the context, there may be either vocational or soteriological connotations (or both) associated with terms such as “election” (ἐκλογή; Rom 9:11; 11:5, 7, 28),²⁹ “calling” (verb καλεῖν / noun κλήσις; Rom 9:7, 12, 24–26; 11:29),³⁰ and “gift” (χάρισμα); Rom 11:5–6, 29).³¹ Paul uses all these terms—election, calling, gifts—at the conclusion of his argument (Rom 11:28–32). Paul's concluding remarks describe a complex interaction between Israel's salvation and her role in God's purposes. Paul first claims that God has achieved his gospel purposes for Gentiles

²⁶ See ch. 1, p. 30.

²⁷ Stowers 1994, 298–299.

²⁸ *Pace* Stowers 1994, 129–134, 189–193.

²⁹ For vocational uses of ἐκλέγεσθαι / ἐκλεκτός with respect to the Isaianic “Servant” see e.g. Isa 41:8–9, 42:1, 49:2–7 (Muthunayagom 2000, 2, 29, 31; Vriezen 1953, 64–72). For the pervasive but complex relationship between Israel's distinct election and her divinely appointed role towards the rest of the world see Kaminsky 2007; 2011; Kaminsky and Stewart 2006; Levenson 1996 (154–156).

³⁰ For vocational uses of καλεῖν with respect to the Isaianic “Servant” see Isa 42:6, 49:1, 49:6. See also κλητός in Rom 1:1 (cf. p. 89).

³¹ For vocational uses of χάρις / χάρισμα in Romans see Rom 1:5, 11; 12:3, 6; 15:15.

even through Israel’s “enmity” (Rom 11:28a), then reiterates God’s commitment to Israel in terms of election (ἐκλογή, Rom 11:28b), and finally declares that the “gifts and calling [τὰ χαρίσματα καὶ ἡ κλήσις] of God are irrevocable” (Rom 11:29).³²

This sense of tension with respect to Israel’s place and role in God’s purposes is not, however, restricted to Paul’s use of individual terms or to the concluding section of his argument. As we shall see, these tensions are fundamental to Paul’s entire argument in Rom 9–11.

5.1.3. Paul’s first-person resolution of these tensions

Our contention in this chapter is that Paul uses his *own vocation* as the key to resolving the tensions concerning Israel’s place and role in God’s purposes. Romans 9–11 is often described as a succession of internally coherent arguments about Israel.³³ Certainly, Paul’s references to Israel in the third-person are prominent and significant features of his argument. However, as we shall see, it is Paul’s *first-person* self-references which bind the various arguments together into an overarching, coherent line of reasoning. In our own discussion, then, we will concentrate on Paul’s *first-person* statements, which will highlight the significance of Paul’s self-understanding as apostle to the nations. Before proceeding, we will briefly summarize our argument:

In Rom 9:1–5, Paul recalls in a condensed form the intimate yet profoundly dissonant and presently *conflicted* relationship between his own vocation and the vocation of Israel as a whole. The special gift of the Law to Israel was always intended by God to testify to the universal significance of Christ—which is, of course, the subject-matter of Paul’s gospel. The majority of Paul’s Jewish contemporaries, however, still understand their Jewish identity in terms of the paradigmatic Law-teacher of Rom 2:17–29.³⁴ Thus they have not only failed to attain salvation themselves, they have also failed to come to terms with Paul’s gospel-centred

³² Cf. Cranfield 1975, 2.581–582.

³³ E.g. Grindheim (2005) posits that Paul understands Israel’s election in terms of the scriptural concept of the “reversal of values” (33–34). Israel’s identity is first deconstructed (9:6–29) and then reconstructed (11:1–32), which enables her also to be an “instrument” for the salvation of the nations (136–168).

³⁴ See ch. 4, pp. 132–189.

redefinition of Jewish vocation. Since Paul's own mission is fundamentally Jewish, he needs the backing of the Jewish community. Israel's vocational failure, therefore, threatens Paul's apostolic mission at its deepest level. This is why Paul expresses such profound grief and anguish.

Paul begins Rom 10 by reminding his readers of his anguished identification with Israel (Rom 10:1), and then proceeds deliberately to contrast his own vocation with that of Israel, presenting them as *competing* vocations. Paul claims that his apostolic ministry is an alternative fulfilment of Israel's vocation. Paul, along with others, reads the Law as a testimony to Christ and so "preaches" the "message of faith" (Rom 10:8). Thus Paul's apostolic ministry of "preaching" and "evangelism" achieves scriptural expectations concerning Israel's eschatological role toward the nations (Rom 10:14–18). Israel as a whole, on the other hand, is still reading the Law in a way which emphasises "doing" (Rom 10:5) and, in fact, is only fulfilling scriptural expectations concerning Israel's continued stubbornness and rebellion (Rom 10:19–21).

In Rom 11, however, the previously antithetical vocations of Paul and Israel begin to *converge*. Paul himself, in his vocation as apostle to the nations, is nevertheless still an Israelite (Rom 11:1). Furthermore, Israel's own "failure" is also part of her divine vocation, since it plays a key role in Paul's own gospel-preaching ministry to the nations (Rom 11:11–12). Thus Paul conducts his own apostolic mission with a view to the salvation of Israelites (Rom 11:13–14), and expects that Israel's salvation will play a key role in God's global, eschatological purposes (Rom 11:15).

5.2. Paul and Israel: Conflicting vocations (Romans 9:1–5)

There is a conceptual gap in Rom 9:1–5 which needs to be filled by anyone who wishes to interpret the passage. This gap appears in the fault line between verses 3 and 4. In verses 1–3, Paul identifies painfully and personally with the plight of his fellow Jews using a series of first-person statements, revealing to his readers that he is in deep personal anguish for his Israelite "brothers." In verses 4–5, however, Paul describes these very same brothers as possessors of substantial divine privileges. The gap consists in the lack of an explicit connection between these two concepts.

Most interpreters immediately fill the gap with the concept of Jewish “unbelief.”³⁵ In this view, Paul’s sorrow arises out of deep sympathy for the soteriological plight of his kinsfolk, combined with a profound concern for the faithfulness of God to his salvific promises more generally. Although the Jews are God’s chosen people and have received substantial divine privileges, the vast majority of them have not taken the crucial step of believing in Christ. This means not only that God’s chosen people are not enjoying the benefits of salvation, but also that God’s faithfulness to any of his promises (including his promises to Gentile Christ-believers) is brought into question. Although we are by no means denying that Paul considered the unbelief of his fellow Jews to have had soteriological and theological implications,³⁶ we also need to recognize that it is an assumption about the text, not a statement in the text.³⁷ Paul himself does not explicitly mention Jewish unbelief as the reason for his grief at this point in his argument.

We will here suggest and defend an alternative proposal for the connection between Paul’s expression of grief and his enumeration of Israel’s benefits. Our proposal is based on the claim, which we have been maintaining throughout this dissertation, that Paul’s Jewish identity is intimately connected with his apostolic ministry. Paul is not simply speaking here as an Israelite with a special sympathy for his fellow Jews. Nor is he simply speaking here as an apostle with a special interest in God’s salvation of the Gentiles. Rather, Paul is speaking here as *both of these simultaneously*. Paul’s grief is the grief of *an Israelite whose Jewish identity found its primary expression in his apostolic ministry* (cf. Rom 11:1, 13). Our proposal, then, is that Paul’s anguish arises from the fact that his own apostolic ministry, which is his way of being Jewish, is fundamentally threatened by the fact that so many of his fellow Jews do not share his view of Jewish identity and vocation. It is Israel’s *vocational* failure, then, which threatens Paul’s apostolic mission at its deepest level and gives him a reason for such grief and anguish.

³⁵ E.g. Cranfield 1975, 2.451; Moo 1996, 555; Munck 1967, 33; Wright 2002, 627.

³⁶ See above, pp. 194–196.

³⁷ Reasoner 2010, 79–80.

5.2.1. *The apostolic identification with Israel (Rom 9:1–3)*

I am speaking the truth in Christ; I am not lying,
my conscience confirming my testimony in the Holy Spirit, (Rom 9:1)

Ἀλήθειαν λέγω ἐν Χριστῷ, οὐ ψεύδομαι,
συμμαρτυρούσης μοι τῆς συνειδήσεώς μου ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ,

Paul begins Rom 9 with a series of oath-like formulae in which he asserts his authority and sincerity (cf. 2 Cor 11:10, 31; Gal 1:20).³⁸ He is not merely giving his readers a glimpse into his psychological state or employing a rhetorical flourish, since he qualifies his affirmations of truthfulness with the highly charged phrases “in Christ” and “in the Holy Spirit.” While these phrases might be seen as echoing Paul’s statements about general Christian reality,³⁹ we must remember that they also recall Paul’s particular vocational self-designations in Rom 1:1–5. They remind the reader that Paul is *still* speaking in his capacity as Servant and apostle of “Christ” Jesus (1:1) who is declaring the eschatological gospel through the “Spirit of Holiness” (1:4–5, cf. 15:19).

that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. (Rom 9:2)

ὅτι λύπη μοί ἐστιν μεγάλη καὶ ἀδιάλειπτος ὀδύνη τῆ καρδία μου

Paul is afflicted with “sorrow” (λύπη) and “anguish” (ὀδύνη) concerning Israel. Paul’s opening self-description as the Isaianic Servant of the Lord (Rom 1:1)⁴⁰ already implies that he should be deeply enmeshed in Israel’s fate.⁴¹ The Servant is not only a “light to the nations,” embodying Israel’s vocation, but is also a “covenant to the people” (Isa 42:6), in his person and work guaranteeing God’s particular concern for Israel. Isaiah 49 also speaks about a dual vocation for the Servant: not only to bring God’s salvation to the ends of the earth, but also to restore Israel (Isa 49:6). According to the Vision of Isaiah (35:10, 51:11), λύπη and ὀδύνη will “flee” at

³⁸ Jewett 2007, 557–558.

³⁹ Both Christ (Rom 8:31–39, esp. v. 39) and the Spirit (πνεῦμα is used 21 times in Rom 8) play a key role in Rom 8 (Niebuhr 1992, 160–161).

⁴⁰ See ch. 3, pp. 87–100.

⁴¹ Cf. Kim 2002, 110–115.

the eschaton.⁴² Hence Paul's own λύπη and ὀδύνη imply that God's eschatological purposes for Israel, and thus for the Servant, remain unfulfilled.

Paul's expression of anguish here (9:2), and his later prayer for Israel's salvation (10:1), also find parallels in the Jewish penitential prayer tradition.⁴³ In this tradition, a representative Israelite, drawing on the Deuteronomic schema of curse and restoration (cf. Deut 30:1–10), confesses and repents of Israel's sin in expectation of future deliverance. Paul's "great sorrow" (λύπη ... μεγάλη) and "unceasing anguish" (ἀδιάλειπτος ὀδύνη) in his "heart" (Rom 9:2) are comparable with the emotions of the representative penitent confessor, e.g. the "greatly sorrowful soul" (ἡ ψυχὴ ἡ λυπούμενη ἐπὶ τὸ μέγεθος; Bar 2:18; cf. Bar 3:1, Dan 9:3). They are also comparable with other similar prayers lamenting God's judgment displayed in the captivity of Israel (e.g. ὀδύνη in Tob 3:1 and Lam 1:13–14). In the penitential prayer tradition, the leader prays as an Israelite, implicating himself in Israel's sin (e.g. Pr Azar 5–8 [LXX/*Theod.* Dan 3:28–31]; Dan 9:5–15; Bar 1:15–2:12; cf. Tob 3:3–5). If Paul is intentionally alluding to the penitential prayer tradition, then his allusion would help to reinforce the strong note of identification with Israel which is clearly implied by his highly charged emotional language. We shall see further parallels between Paul's attitude and the penitential prayer tradition when we come to investigate Rom 10:1.⁴⁴

For I have vowed that I myself might be anathema from Christ
for the sake of my brothers, my kinsfolk according to the flesh. (Rom 9:3)

ἡ νόμιμον γὰρ ἀνάθεμα εἶναι αὐτὸς ἐγὼ ἀπὸ τοῦ Χριστοῦ
ὑπὲρ τῶν ἀδελφῶν μου τῶν συγγενῶν μου κατὰ σάρκα

There are a number of interpretative questions concerning individual elements of Rom 9:3. Does the verb εὔχεσθαι refer to a wish,⁴⁵ a prayer⁴⁶ or an oath of

⁴² Jewett 2007, 559.

⁴³ This tradition is represented, for example, in Pr Azar 3–22 (LXX/*Theod.* Dan 3:26–45); Dan 9:4–19; Bar 1:15–3:8; cf. Tob 3:1–6 (Gadenz 2009, 57–63).

⁴⁴ See p. 210.

⁴⁵ See e.g. Barrett 1991, 165.

⁴⁶ Cf. 2 Cor 13:7, 9. See e.g. Cranfield 1975, 2.456–457; Moo 1996, 558 n. 16.

extraordinary commitment?⁴⁷ Does the imperfect tense of this verb signal a “hypothetical” action,⁴⁸ or should it be read in its more usual sense as indicating a real past action?⁴⁹ Must the preposition ὑπέρ imply a vicarious sacrifice in which Paul desires to incur God’s judgment *instead* of Israel,⁵⁰ or does it merely indicate that Paul is acting in some more general way “for the sake of” Israel (cf. 10:1)?⁵¹ Finally, what is the significance of the possible allusion to Moses’ prayer to God on behalf of Israel (Exod 32:32)?⁵²

Regardless of which of the various possible readings we choose, it is clear that Paul is seeking to express his exceptional personal commitment to Israel’s future. Since each of the possible readings supports our overall case that Paul is deeply enmeshed in issues concerning Israel’s future, we will not examine each alternative in detail. We will simply offer what we consider to be the most likely interpretation: Paul is speaking here of an oath of extraordinary commitment in which he has bound his own future to that of Israel.⁵³ Paul’s oath effectively “forces” God’s hand in favour of Israel. If God does *not* bring about his purposes for Israel, then God’s own apostle must be abandoned to a state of “anathema from Christ.” Paul is acting much like Moses, who “declines to be part of a future which does not include Israel also.”⁵⁴ Paul

⁴⁷ The most common meaning of the verb in the LXX is “to swear an oath”: see e.g. Gen 28:20, 31:13; Lev 27:2, 8; Deut 12:11, 17; 2 Sam 15:7–8; 1 Es 4:43–46; 2 Macc 3:35, 9:13; Ps 76:11 (LXX 75:12); Ecc 5:4–5 (LXX 5:3–4); Sir 18:23; Jon 2:9 (LXX 2:10). The word is often used of individual Israelites who take upon themselves an exceptional obligation, task or vocation in order to express and enact an extraordinary dedication to God: e.g. The Nazirite in Num 6:1–21 (9x) / 1 Sam 1:11; also Num 30:3–4; Deut 23:21–23 (LXX 23:22–24). Cf. the portrayal of Paul paying for the fulfilment of a Nazirite “vow” (εὐχή) in Acts 21:23–24. For an argument that Rom 9:3 is referring to this kind of oath, see Betz (2002, 80–82).

⁴⁸ Wallace (1996, 552) classes this among the exceedingly rare “special uses” of the imperfect. For the “hypothetical” interpretation of this verse see e.g. Cranfield 1975, 2.455–457. Barrett (1991, 165), following Moule (1959, 9), calls it the “desiderative imperfect,” which “seems to soften a remark, and make it more vague or more diffident or polite . . . *I could almost pray to be accursed.*”

⁴⁹ E.g. Betz 2002, 80–82.

⁵⁰ Cf. e.g. Rom 5:6–8, 8:32, 14:15. See e.g. Moo 1996, 558; Niebuhr 1992, 161–163.

⁵¹ Abasciano 2005, 99–101; Cranfield 1975, 2.458–459. The preposition is used elsewhere by Paul to describe the beneficiaries of appeals to God (e.g. Rom 10:1, 15:30; 2 Cor 1:11, 9:14; Phil 1:4) or personal concern (e.g. 1 Cor 12:25); in these cases the emphasis is on solidarity, not substitution.

⁵² This parallel is noted by most interpreters (e.g. Calvin c. 1849, 338; Cranfield 1975, 2.454–457; Jewett 2007, 560–561; Munck 1967, 29–30; Wright 1991, 238). Abasciano (2005, 45–146) offers an extended treatment of the significance of the allusion for Paul’s argument.

⁵³ For the likely meaning of the verb as “to swear an oath,” see n. 47.

⁵⁴ Moberly 1983, 57. This is the straightforward meaning of Moses’ statement, “If [you will] not [forgive their sin], blot me out of your book that you have written” (Exod 32:32). Abasciano (Abasciano 2005, 99–100) points out that most Pauline interpreters wrongly assume that Moses and

is thus communicating to his readers that he, as apostle to the nations, is as committed to Israel's future as he is to his own future. Of course, Paul is not just putting his individual salvation on the line. Paul's entire divine vocation as apostle is threatened by Israel's potential failure. As it was for Moses, so it is for Paul: Paul's divine vocation cannot stand intact unless God fulfils his purposes for Israel as a whole.

5.2.2. Israel's purpose in light of the apostolic vocation (Rom 9:4–5)

We have already mentioned the crucial gap between Rom 9:3 and Rom 9:4. We have suggested that the gap should be filled by considering the close connection Paul sees between Israel's special vocation as recipients of the Law and Paul's vocation as apostle, preaching the gospel of Christ to all people. A brief glance back into the earlier chapters of Romans shows that Paul has already presented a Law-gospel dynamic to his readers.⁵⁵ For Paul, the primary advantage of the "Jew" is being entrusted with the "oracles of God" (τὰ λόγια τοῦ Θεοῦ, Rom 3:1–2);⁵⁶ Jews are thus fundamentally the "people of the Law" (see the phrase τοῖς ἐν τῷ νόμῳ, Rom 3:19).⁵⁷ Furthermore, Paul has described a teleological relationship between the operation of this Law amongst Jews and the subject-matter of his gospel, i.e. Christ. It is through the *failure* of Jews to keep the Law that the Law testifies to Christ. There is, then, an important connection between God's purposes for one particular people—Israel—and his purposes for all humanity—often expressed by Paul through his use of the keyword "all" (πᾶς). Although "all" are under sin (Rom 3:9, 23), Jewish sin fulfils a particular role in God's purposes because it occurs in the context of the Law (cf. ἐν νόμῳ, Rom 2:12). The Law speaks in particular to Jews—i.e. those "in the Law" (ἐν τῷ νόμῳ, Rom 3:19). Yet the purpose of the Law's speech to Jews is not to provide them with a means of salvation, but rather to achieve God's wider purpose of holding "all the world" (πᾶς ὁ κόσμος) accountable to himself (Rom 3:19). God's immediate purpose for giving the Law to Israel, then, is not justification, but

Paul are offering their own destruction vicariously, as an *alternative* to Israel's destruction. Rather, Paul, like Moses, "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" (100, emphasis mine).

⁵⁵ Harink 2007, 375–379.

⁵⁶ Abasciano 2005, 121.

⁵⁷ Cf. pp. 55–60.

“recognition of sin” by “all flesh” (πᾶσα σὰρξ, Rom 3:20), which in turn “testifies” (Rom 3:21) to the righteousness of God through the faith of Jesus Christ “to all who believe” (εἰς πάντας τοὺς πιστεύοντας, Rom 3:22 and ff.).⁵⁸ Hence Paul has already described Jews as a particular people who have received a special divine revelation in the Law and who thus stand in a (complex) teleological relationship to the gospel that he preaches to “all” people.⁵⁹

This pattern also appears in Rom 9:4–5. Here, as we will now see, Paul describes “Israelites”⁶⁰ as people who have received a special divine revelation in the Law and who stand in a teleological relationship to the subject-matter of his own gospel—Christ, God over “all” (ἐπὶ πάντων).

Although many of the privileges described in Rom 9:4 are predicated elsewhere of Gentile Christ-believers,⁶¹ Paul here depicts them as applying originally, especially, distinctly and irrevocably to the people of “Israel” who are described in the Scriptures as the recipients of God’s Law. Four terms in particular (δόξα, διαθήκαι, νομοθεσία and λατρεία) allude to scriptural passages which describe the privileges that accrue to Israelites through their possession of the Law. The terms “glory,” “covenant,” “lawgiving,” and “(cultic) service,” or their cognates, are especially prominent in the account of the giving of the Law through Moses in Exodus.⁶² The Law was given to Moses at Sinai in order to establish Israel’s ongoing relationship with God and was to be taught to Israel by the cultic ministers.⁶³ The δόξα is almost

⁵⁸ Cf. Rom 4:15, Gal 3:19. The Law’s function within God’s overall gracious purposes is condemnatory, because the Law turns generalized, unidentifiable sin into an explicit transgression (παράβασις) of actual commandments (Dunn 1988, 1.215); cf. also Rom 7:6–25, where Paul himself graphically illustrates such a process in terms of a particular commandment, “do not covet.” Cf. Rom 10:4, where Paul speaks of Christ as the ultimate teleological ground for the giving of the Law to Israel (p. 212).

⁵⁹ Cf. the use of τέλος (2 Cor 3:13) to describe the negative effects of the old covenant in 2 Cor 3, which implies a (previously hidden) purpose for “that which was being abolished.”

⁶⁰ Although Paul switches from the term “Jew” to the term “Israelite,” he is clearly still referring to ethnic Jews, i.e. those whom he has just referred to as his “brothers” and “kinsfolk according to the flesh” (Rom 9:3). For the difference between “Jew” and “Israel[ite],” see ch. 2, pp. 60–64.

⁶¹ E.g. “sonship” (υἰοθεσία, Rom 8:15, 23), “glory” (δόξα, Rom 5:2; 8:18, 21); “cultic service” (λατρεία, Rom 12:1); and “promises” (ἐπαγγελία, Rom 4:16).

⁶² E.g. Exod 3:12; 23:24–25; 24:8, 12, 16–17; see further Abasciano 2005, 115–134. Combinations of these words also appear together in other scriptural contexts describing cultic worship based on the Law, e.g. Mal 2:4–7, Sir 45:6–17.

⁶³ E.g. Lev 10:11, Deut 33:10, 2 Kgs 17:27, Mal 2:7; cf. Sir 45:17.

certainly a reference to the כְּבוֹד, the “glory” of the Lord, which appeared when the Law was given to Moses and continued to dwell among Israel through the ministry of the tabernacle / temple.⁶⁴ The διαθήκαι⁶⁵ describe various solemn relationships of obligation between God and Israel as described in the Law⁶⁶ or between God and specific cultic ministers who enact and teach the Law.⁶⁷ The word νομοθεσία is probably used here rather than the more usual νόμος in order to emphasize the divine origin of the Law and its fundamental place in Israel’s worship.⁶⁸ The λατρεία describes the activity of cultic service itself, which has its origins in the giving of the Law to Moses.⁶⁹

The privileges which Paul lists cannot be relegated merely to Israel’s past as a theocratic state, since they form the basis for Paul’s present anguished identification with Israel (9:1–3). However, they cannot be accorded “full soteriological significance” either.⁷⁰ Paul has already implied that Israel is *not* experiencing salvation, despite the possession of these privileges.⁷¹ This ambiguity about Israel is, of course, simply a continuation of the ambiguity in Paul’s earlier statements about the Law. Paul has affirmed the reality and value of the Jews’ possession of God’s word in the Law (e.g. Rom 3:1–2); but he has also argued that because of human sin, the Law does not lead to ethical conduct or to salvation in any straightforward

⁶⁴ Exod 24:16–17, Exod 40:34–35, 1 Kgs 8:11. See further Abasciano 2005, 124–127; Bell 2005, 204; Stowers 1994, 130–131.

⁶⁵ Some important manuscripts (e.g. P⁴⁶ B D F G 1852 / 1154) have the singular διαθήκη, but this is almost certainly an early scribal modification due to the predominance of singular nouns in the remainder of the list and the predominance of the singular διαθήκη in the biblical tradition (Jewett 2007, 555).

⁶⁶ E.g. Exod 19:5, 31:16.

⁶⁷ E.g. Num 25:12–13, Neh 13:29, Jer 33:21 and esp. Mal 2:4–7; cf. the plural in Sir 45:17.

⁶⁸ Cf. the cognate verb νομοθετεῖν in Exod 24:12, which describes the original giving of the Law on stone tablets (Watson 2004, 282). Bell (2005, 206) also notes that νομοθεσία rhymes with νόθεσία.

⁶⁹ E.g. Exod 12:25–26; 13:5; Josh 22:27; 1 Chr 28:13 (Bell 2005, 206–207).

⁷⁰ To use the phraseology of Bell (2005, 201).

⁷¹ This ambiguity is comparable with Paul’s use of the words “glory” and “covenants” in 2 Cor 3. While the ministry of Moses certainly possesses a kind of “glory” (2 Cor 3:7, 9, 10, 11) and can be described as a “covenant” (2 Cor 3:14), yet it cannot be relied upon for salvation, since its role is to bring hardening (2 Cor 3:14), death (2 Cor 3:7) and condemnation (2 Cor 3:9), which has a further purpose, leading to a greater kind of “glory” (2 Cor 3:8, 9, 10, 11) and a new “covenant” (2 Cor 3:6) in Christ (Longenecker 2007, 33).

manner. In fact, Paul argues, the Law serves a specifically *condemnatory* function for Jews (e.g. Rom 3:19–20, 4:15, 5:20, 7:9).⁷²

Paul, however, is not content here simply to describe Israel as the possessors of an ambiguous *Law*. He also describes Israel in terms of her teleological relationship to his own *gospel*. By repeating the relative pronoun ὧν twice in v. 5 (after also using it at the beginning of v. 4), Paul adds particular emphasis to the final two items in this list of privileges.⁷³ This emphasis, along with the exalted terms of the doxological statement at the end of the verse, suggests that the final two privileges should be read as the climax of the entire list. For Paul, Israel’s past is grounded in the “Fathers” (ὧν οἱ πατέρες),⁷⁴ and Israel’s existence culminates in the coming of Christ (ἐξ ὧν ὁ Χριστός), who is—or is at least intimately related to—“God over all” (ἐπὶ πάντων θεός).⁷⁵

As we have already seen, the word “Fathers” belongs to a cluster of closely related terms—“Fathers,” “seed” and “Abraham”—which for Paul often signify the place of Israel in God’s global purposes.⁷⁶ Abraham’s fatherhood “according to the flesh” (cf. Rom 4:1) often has a particular *vocational* significance in that the circumcision of one particular people achieves God’s purposes to extend his blessing to the rest of the world. When Paul refers to the “Fathers” of Israel, as he does here, he is often bringing the *vocational* dimension of Jewish identity into the foreground (cf. Rom 15:8–9).⁷⁷

In the second clause of Rom 9:5, Paul explicitly and climactically refers to Israel’s unique role in God’s global purposes: “from whom” (ἐξ ὧν, i.e. from the Israelites), is “the Christ.” Interpreters often view “Christ” here simply as the final element in the

⁷² Thus Israel’s possession of the Law is more than “slightly problematic” for Paul, *pace* Bell (2005, 206). It is in fact the key contributing factor to Israel’s overall problem!

⁷³ Jewett 2007, 566.

⁷⁴ Cf. the word “promises” (ἐπαγγελία, Rom 9:4), which elsewhere in Paul often refers to God’s particular promises to the Fathers, especially Abraham (Rom 4:13–22, 15:8; cf. Gal 3:16–29; 4:23, 28) (Cranfield 1975, 2.464; cf. Abasciano 2005, 135; Bell 2005, 207).

⁷⁵ For the issue of whether Christ is identified with God in Rom 9:5, see Metzger (1973).

⁷⁶ See ch. 2, pp. 67–75.

⁷⁷ At the same time, of course, Paul’s readers cannot escape the *soteriological* significance of Israel’s descent from the Fathers (cf. Rom 11:28) (Abasciano 2005, 136–137).

list of Israel's privileges. However, Paul's statements here are emphatic and expansive. This fits with Paul's general presentation of Christ as the goal and fulfilment of Israel's existence. From the opening of his letter onwards, Paul has presented the coming of Christ, and his own proclamation of Christ, as the culmination of God's global eschatological purposes through Israel (e.g. Rom 1:1–5). Here he reiterates this controlling motif in the strongest possible terms. The key to understanding Israel's role in God's purposes is Christ himself. Whether or not Paul is directly identifying Christ with God,⁷⁸ he is certainly claiming that the entire call, history and epistemological privilege of Israel must be understood in relation to Paul's own proclamation: the "gospel of God" (cf. Rom 1:1) which announces "Jesus Christ" as the one who is seed of David "according to the flesh" (κατὰ σάρκα, cf. Rom 1:3) and yet is "over all" (ἐπὶ πάντων, Rom 9:5).⁷⁹

By the end of Rom 9:5, therefore, the reader has learned that Paul is in anguish, that he is deeply committed to Israel's eschatological future, and that his own universal gospel for "all" (πᾶς) is directly related to Israel's special privileges. The logic of Paul's personal stake in Israel's future will gradually become clearer in his subsequent argument. Paul's description of Israel in Rom 9:4–5, in fact, anticipates his subsequent description of his own ministry as preacher of Christ to the nations. Paul invokes "Christ" both as the fulfilment of Israel's Law "for *all* who believe" (παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι, Rom 10:4), and also as the subject of his own preaching to "all": Christ is the "message" (ῥῆμα) which Paul and others "preach" (Rom 10:6–8); so that "*all* who believe" (πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων) in him will be saved (Rom 10:4, 11). Furthermore, in the climactic statement of Rom 11:1, Paul speaks of himself as "Israelite" (cf. Rom 9:4) and "seed of Abraham" (cf. the "Fathers" in Rom 9:5).⁸⁰ Thus Paul's choice of terms to describe Israel here in Rom 9:4–5 anticipates his description of his own vocation as the fulfilment of Israel's special role in God's global purposes.

⁷⁸ Metzger (1973) argues that this is indeed the case.

⁷⁹ Cf. Harink (2010, 306–311), who writes approvingly of Agamben's (2005) interpretative method: "In the messianic now-time the figures and patterns of Israel's Scriptures are taken up and become 'legible' or recognizable for what they are, anticipations or types of the Messiah" (306).

⁸⁰ See pp. 229–237. See also the significance of the "seed of Abraham" in Rom 9:7–8.

5.3. Paul and Israel: Competing vocations (Romans 10)

There are two conspicuous features of Rom 10 which, although they are rarely emphasized, are fundamental for its interpretation.

Firstly, Paul makes a great deal of the concept of *human speech* in Rom 10. This is a strikingly new feature in his argument so far in Romans. Although Paul has discussed the theme of human “faith” in positive terms and at great length (Rom 1:1–17; 3:21–31; ch. 4; 5:1–2; 9:30–33), his discussion of human speech has so far been limited to rhetorical devices, brief descriptions of his own ministry (Rom 1:8–9, 15; 9:3), negative portrayals of sinful speech (Rom 1:29–30; 2:1; 3:13–14), denunciations of misguided Jewish speech to synagogue adherents (Rom 2:19–22), and the resultant blasphemy of Gentiles (Rom 2:24).⁸¹ In fact, Paul has claimed that the purpose of the Law is to *stop* all human speech (lit. to “close every mouth”) and thus to hold the world accountable to God (Rom 3:19). Thereafter, human speech almost disappears.⁸² Romans 10, however, is replete with explicit portrayals of human speech. There are verbs describing testimony (μαρτυρεῖν, v. 2), preaching (κηρύσσειν, vv. 8, 14, 15), confession (ὁμολογεῖν, vv. 9, 10), “calling upon” God (ἐπικαλεῖν, vv. 12, 13, 14),⁸³ and “evangelism” (εὐαγγελίζεσθαι, v. 15; cf. εὐαγγέλιον, v. 16). There is a “message” (ῥῆμα, vv. 8, 17, 18) spoken by believers and preachers, and the gospel is described as a “report” which is “heard” (ἀκοή / ἀκούειν vv. 14, 16, 17, 18). In Rom 10, Paul also makes much of the scriptural term “mouth” (στόμα) placing it in parallel with the “heart” as an instrument of salvation (vv. 8, 9, 10). Thus, while earlier in Romans, Paul states that sin has produced false speech (Rom 1:29–30; 2:1; 2:19–22; 3:13–14), and that the Law’s condemnation has silenced all speech (Rom 3:19–20), now in Rom 10, he claims that belief and salvation are intertwined with true speech.

⁸¹ The “boast” (καυχ-) word-group might also imply an element of human speech; but Paul is using the word primarily to describe an *attitude* of pride or confidence (Rom 2:17, 23; 3:27; 4:2; 5:2–3, 11; 15:17).

⁸² The only unambiguous reference to human speech is the Spirit-inspired cry to God, “Abba, Father” (Rom 8:15), which may be inaudible (cf. v. 26). In Rom 9:6–33, words pertaining to speech are attributed only to God or to scriptural testimony.

⁸³ Cf. καλεῖν in Rom 9:7, 12, 24–26; an activity which is entirely God’s prerogative.

There is a second conspicuous feature of Rom 10, which is related to the first: Paul makes a great deal of his *own speech* in this chapter. He does this through a series of significant first-person references and other carefully chosen terms. He uses the first-person singular indicative of μαρτυρεῖν to describe his own “testimony” concerning Israel (v. 2). Furthermore, he uses the first-person *plural* indicative of κηρύσσειν to describe his (and others’) apostolic preaching (v. 8), and subsequently uses a number of further third-person plural verbs which recall his (and others’) apostolic speaking ministry: the third-person plural indicative of κηρύσσειν (v. 15; cf. the singular participle in v. 14), the third-person plural passive subjunctive of ἀποστέλλειν (v. 15), and a plural participle of εὐαγγελίζεσθαι (v. 15). Paul also refers to people believing “our report” (τῆ ἀκοῇ ἡμῶν, v. 16), which he identifies with his own apostolic message: i.e. the “message of Christ” (ῥῆμα Χριστοῦ) that leads to “faith” (πίστις, v. 17; cf. v. 8).

These features of Rom 10 are important for understanding the meaning and purpose of the chapter. In fact, we shall argue that in Rom 10, Paul is presenting his own apostolic “speaking” ministry as an *alternative fulfilment* of Israel’s vocation. This alternative vocation is directly related to Paul’s redefined understanding of Jewish identity (cf. Rom 2:17–29),⁸⁴ and arises from an alternative reading of the Law of Moses. Paul has already claimed that there are two possible ways for Israel to read the Law—“from works” (ἐξ ἔργων), and “from faith” (ἐκ πίστεως, Rom 9:32; cf. 3:27). This antithesis remains a fundamental feature of Rom 10. In Rom 10, Paul discusses two very different understandings of the nature and purpose of the Law. Many Israelites—i.e. those in the mainstream Jewish community—read the Law primarily in terms of human activity and “righteousness” (Rom 10:5, cf. Rom 3:20). Other Israelites, however, including Paul, read the Law, in light of prophetic texts, as a witness to faith in Christ (Rom 10:6–8; cf. Rom 3:21–22). Paul’s reading of the Law is not primarily oriented to “works”; rather it is primarily oriented to faith in Christ and consequently to apostolic *speech* (Rom 10:8).

⁸⁴ See ch. 4, pp. 132–189.

A number of interpreters of Rom 10 have explored the significance of Paul's hermeneutical antithesis with respect to Israel's *salvation*.⁸⁵ We will show, however, that there is also a significant *vocational* dimension in Paul's antithesis here. In Rom 10:1–4, we will see that Paul claims that Israel is ignorant of her own role in God's worldwide purposes, which can only be discerned in light of the gospel of Christ. In Rom 10:5–13, we will see that Paul shows that his own expansive apostolic preaching ministry results from a correct reading of the Law of Moses and the Prophets. Thus Paul's reference to his own "preaching" in Rom 10:8 after his Christ-oriented exposition of Deuteronomy is climactic rather than parenthetical. In Rom 10:14–18, we will see that Paul demonstrates that the apostolic preaching ministry is a fulfilment of scriptural expectations concerning Israel's eschatological role in God's purposes. The theme of Rom 10:14–18 is thus not "Israel's failure," as many interpreters suppose, but rather "Paul's success." In Rom 10:19–21, we will see how Paul returns to the theme of Israel's failure and demonstrates that the mainstream Jewish community's attitude to the Law and to the nations is described in scriptural texts which speak about Israel's sin and rebellion. This, of course, highlights further the conflict between Paul and Israel, a conflict which is only resolved in Rom 11.

5.3.1. Israel's failed vocation (Rom 10:1–4)

Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God is for their salvation. (Rom 10:1)

Ἀδελφοί, ἡ μὲν εὐδοκία τῆς ἐμῆς καρδίας καὶ ἡ δέησις πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν εἰς σωτηρίαν.

In Rom 10:1, Paul's authorial persona returns to prominence.⁸⁶ Paul's prayer here, which is "for them" (ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν), could conceivably have followed directly from his

⁸⁵ E.g. Watson (2004, 329–341; cf. 2007b, 330–331).

⁸⁶ Romans 9:6a acts as a summary of Paul's claim about the negative role of the Law in God's global purposes (cf. Rom 3:1–5, 3:19–20, 5:20). Although the *people* constituted by God's word (i.e. the Law and promises) have "failed" through their disobedience, God's word *itself* has not failed. In fact, in light of the Scriptures and their fulfilment in Christ, one can see that the "failure" of Israel constitutes the *success* of God's word: Israel's failure does not thwart God's purposes, but rather fulfils them. In Rom 9:6b–33, Paul supports his claim by direct hermeneutical engagement, through an ordered selection of citations from Genesis (vv. 6b–13), Exodus (vv. 14–23) and the Prophets (vv. 24–33). Paul attributes the Israelites' lack of salvation not simply to their *adherence* to the Law (Rom 9:31a), but also to their ongoing *failure to keep* the Law to which they adhere, which places them under God's judgment (Rom 9:31b, cf. Rom 2:4–5). It is not simply that Israel chose the wrong path to achieve righteousness, but that they failed to achieve righteousness even in terms of their chosen path (Watson 2004, 333; Westerholm 1996, 227–231).

statement of commitment “for my brothers” (ὑπὲρ τῶν ἀδελφῶν μου, Rom 9:3). Romans 9:1–3 and 10:1 are also connected by their common link with the Jewish penitential prayer tradition.⁸⁷ This tradition describes a situation where Israel has sinned grievously against God and is in danger of judgment or even annihilation (cf. Rom 9:6–33),⁸⁸ and where a representative Israelite confesses the sin of Israel and begs God to turn away from his justifiable wrath against his people.⁸⁹ The term δέησις (Rom 10:1) and its cognate δέεσθαι are often used in these contexts,⁹⁰ and σωτηρία (Rom 10:1) or an equivalent term is the desired outcome.⁹¹ Thus the reappearance of first-person statements in Rom 10:1 not only signals the beginning of a new section,⁹² it also reminds Paul’s readers of his ongoing personal stake in Israel’s future. We should expect, then, that Paul will now explain the nature of his connection with Israel, and how it relates to Israel’s own future in God’s purposes. As we shall see, Paul does indeed speak of a kind of relationship between himself and Israel throughout Rom 10. Nevertheless, the nature of this relationship is not at all straightforward. In short, Paul argues in Rom 10 that his own apostolic ministry fulfils Israel’s role in God’s global purposes, despite the fact that Israel as a whole has failed in this role.

⁸⁷ Gadenz 2009, 57–63. For the similarities between Rom 9:2 and the penitential prayer tradition, see p. 200.

⁸⁸ The hermeneutics of Rom 9 exhibit many traits of “prophetic criticism”: Paul prioritizes God’s glory over assurances to Israel; he sees no guarantee of salvation simply in physical descent; and at times he highlights Israel’s judgment rather than her salvation as the basis for God’s glorification (Evans 1999, 120–127). For further discussions of the nature and purpose of Paul’s scriptural interpretation in Rom 9:6–33, see e.g. Abasciano 2011, 174–176, 193–200; Gaventa 2010, 257–261; Hofius 1990; Wagner 2002, 43–157; Watson 2004, 323–333; Westerholm 1996, 224–236.

⁸⁹ The penitential prayer tradition provides a helpful corrective to Sanders’s notion of “covenantal nomism” which stresses continuity and confidence in the relationship between God and Israel. The penitential prayer tradition focuses on “prolonged discontinuity as punishment for sin” and has deep roots in the prophetic critique (Scott 1993a, 201; against Sanders 1977, 419–428; see also Watson 2004, 462–463). Floyd (2007, 54–55, 78) provides evidence for a well-developed practice of penitential prayer in the first century. Romans 2:1–16 also echoes elements of this tradition (Werline 2009, 168–169).

⁹⁰ E.g. Dan 9:17, 18, 20, 23 LXX; Dan 9:13, 17, 23 *Theod.*; Bar 2:8, 14; see also Exod 32:11, 31; Deut 9:18, 25; 1 Kgs 8:33, 47, 52.

⁹¹ E.g. Bar 4:22, 24, 29.

⁹² See p. 192.

For I testify about them
that they have divine jealous passion, (Rom 10:2a)

μαρτυρῶ γὰρ αὐτοῖς
ὅτι ζῆλον θεοῦ ἔχουσιν

The grounds (γάρ) for Paul’s prayer is his testimony concerning Israel’s possession of “divine jealous passion” (ζῆλος θεοῦ, Rom 10:2). As we have already seen, the term ζῆλος denotes a passionate commitment to preserving Israel’s purity as God’s holy, Law-keeping people, and can thus be regarded as a kind of divine vocation.⁹³ Paul’s testimony about Israel’s commitment to this divine vocation seems initially to suggest that it might provide hope for Israel’s salvation. However, Paul immediately claims that Israel’s ζῆλος is in fact fundamentally misguided (Rom 10:2b–3). Israel’s ζῆλος is “not according to recognition” (οὐ κατ’ ἐπίγνωσιν). The reappearance of the word ἐπίγνωσις suggests that Paul is recalling his prior use of the same word in Rom 3:20, where he attributed the worldwide “recognition of sin” (ἐπίγνωσις ἁμαρτίας) by “all flesh” (πᾶσα σὰρξ) to the instrumentality of Israel’s (particular) Law.⁹⁴ This suggestion is confirmed by further linguistic parallels between Rom 3:20–22a and 10:2–4:

Rom 3:20–22a

διὰ γὰρ νόμου ἐπίγνωσις ἁμαρτίας.
Νυνὶ δὲ χωρὶς νόμου
δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ πεφανέρωται
μαρτυρουμένη
ὑπὸ τοῦ νόμου καὶ τῶν προφητῶν,
δικαιοσύνη δὲ θεοῦ
διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ
εἰς πάντας τοὺς πιστεύοντας.

Rom 10:2–4

ἀλλ’ οὐ κατ’ ἐπίγνωσιν.
ἀγνοοῦντες γὰρ
τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην
καὶ τὴν ἰδίαν [δικαιοσύνην]
ζητοῦντες στήσαι,
τῇ δικαιοσύνῃ τοῦ θεοῦ
οὐχ ὑπετάγησαν.
τέλος γὰρ νόμου Χριστὸς
εἰς δικαιοσύνην παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι.

⁹³ See pp. 76–79.

⁹⁴ See p. 193.

The Jews' ζῆλος entails viewing the Law as a means to establish their "own righteousness." But the Law's purpose is not ultimately to establish Jewish righteousness. Rather, the Law's purpose is to provide "recognition" of sin to all the world (Rom 10:2, 3:20; cf. 7:7) and thus to testify to the "righteousness of God" (Rom 10:3, 3:21; cf. 7:24–8:1), which, as Paul has already asserted, is through the faith of "Jesus Christ" for "all" who "believe" (Rom 3:22). In this way, "Christ" is the τέλος⁹⁵ of the Law for all who "believe" (Rom 10:4). As we have already seen, Paul understands Jewish identity to be fundamentally defined by the possession of and communal engagement with the Law of Moses.⁹⁶ A statement about the τέλος of the Law is, therefore, simultaneously a statement about the τέλος of Israel who received the Law (cf. Rom 9:4–5). Paul is not asserting here that faith in Christ is a new Christian pattern of religion corresponding to the Jewish "covenantal nomism."⁹⁷ Rather, he is asserting that the subject of his gospel—worldwide righteousness through faith in Christ—is the ultimate "teleological" ground for the giving of the Law to Israel. In light of this divine purpose, the Jewish ζῆλος can be seen as a tragic

⁹⁵ Translation of this term is notoriously difficult; the difficulty is exacerbated by the fact that the English terms themselves (e.g. "end" or "goal") usually require further explanation. Some interpreters read the "Law" here primarily in terms of its role as a set of regulations or principles for righteousness and life. The key question, then, is how Christ may be seen either as the "end" of these principles (e.g. Käsemann 1980, 279–283; Sanders 1983, 38–40; Schreiner 1998, 544–548; Watson 2004, 332–333) or as the "goal" / "fulfilment" of these principles (e.g. Badenas 1985, 141–143; Cranfield 1975, 2.515–520; Hays 1989, 208 n. 83; Hooker 2003, 132–133; Jewett 2007, 619), or as both (e.g. Barrett 1991, 184; Moo 1996, 636–643). We, however, prompted by the close parallels between Rom 3:20–22 and Rom 10:2–4, also wish to draw attention to the role of the "Law" as a text which, along with the Prophets, paradoxically "testifies" to the gospel of Christ (cf. Rom 3:21). The Law "speaks" to Israel (Rom 3:19a), yet Israel (as a whole) fails to keep the Law. When the world witnesses this failure, it gains "recognition of sin" (cf. Rom 3:19b–20), which in turn leads to faith in Christ. Thus the righteousness of God is both "apart from Law" and also "testified to by the Law and the Prophets" (Rom 3:21). Since Paul describes the Law as having a dual aspect in Rom 3:21, it is not unreasonable to read the term τέλος in Rom 10:4 in terms of this dual significance: i.e. it may be understood both as "end" and as "goal." On the one hand, since "justification" / "righteousness" is "apart from law" (cf. Rom 3:20–21a), Christ may be seen as bringing to an "end" the Law's role as a set of commandments pertaining to eschatological "life" (cf. Rom 10:5, so e.g. Watson 2004, 332–333). On the other hand, since the Law has a role in God's worldwide purposes—to testify to righteousness by faith in Christ (cf. Rom 3:21b–22)—Christ may rightly be understood in teleological terms as the "goal" of the Law. Christ thus "fulfils" the Law, but not in simple salvation-historical terms (*pace* Badenas 1985, 141–143, who notes the parallel with Rom 3:21b but not 3:21a). Paul is claiming in Rom 10:4 that Christ brings about an "end" to the "righteousness that is by the Law" (cf. Rom 10:5); but at the same time, he is claiming that the ultimate "goal" of Israel's Law is to testify paradoxically, through Israel's failure, to the universal gospel of righteousness through faith in Christ (cf. Rom 10:6–8ff—see our subsequent exegesis).

⁹⁶ See pp. 55–60.

⁹⁷ *Pace* e.g. Hooker 2003.

misreading of the Law,⁹⁸ and thus a tragic misunderstanding of Israel’s role in God’s global purposes. Israelites should cease reading the Law as a means for attaining righteousness, and instead read the Law according to “recognition”—i.e. recognizing their own sin and believing in Christ. As Paul now goes on to demonstrate, this contrast between two different ways of reading the Law has profound implications, not only for Israel’s present soteriological status, but also for Israel’s divine vocation in relation to the rest of the world.⁹⁹

5.3.2. The apostolic preaching vocation (Rom 10:5–13)

In Rom 10:8, at the end of his modified quotation from Deut 30, Paul refers to his own preaching ministry using a first-person plural verb:

But what does it [the righteousness from faith] say?
 “The message is near you
 in your mouth and in your heart,”
 —that is, the message of faith that we preach. (Rom 10:8)

ἀλλὰ τί λέγει;
 ἐγγύς σου τὸ ῥῆμά ἐστιν
 ἐν τῷ στόματί σου καὶ ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ σου,
 τοῦτ’ ἐστὶν τὸ ῥῆμα τῆς πίστεως ὃ κηρύσσομεν.

Paul claims that the Law ultimately points, not to the requirement for human activity, but to the existence of a “message” (ῥῆμα). The “message” to which the Law testifies is in fact the message of “faith.” It is, furthermore, a message which must be spoken. This “message” is not only in the “heart”; it is also in the “mouth.” In fact, it is the message which Paul and others “preach” (Rom 10:8b). This first-person verb of speech is often viewed by interpreters simply as a parenthetical explanation of the nature of “faith.”¹⁰⁰ However, it is far more significant than this.¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ Cf. Smiles 2002, 293–297.

⁹⁹ Because Stowers (1994, 306–312) restricts the term “righteousness of God” to the redemption of Gentiles, he claims that Rom 10:2–4 is only about Israel’s failure in their vocation to preach the gospel to Gentiles, not about their lack of salvation. We, however, are arguing that the issues of Rom 10:2–4 have relevance *both* for Israel’s salvation *and* for their vocation.

¹⁰⁰ E.g. Jewett (2007) claims that the first-person plural verb shows that faith is “essentially interactive” (629).

¹⁰¹ Cf. Wright (2002): “For the first time, Paul’s apostolic vocation becomes part of the actual argument of chaps. 9–11; this will grow through 10:14–18, and play a crucial role in 11:13–14.” (664)

The verb κηρύσσειν and its cognates are used elsewhere frequently by Paul to describe his proclamation of the crucified and risen Christ to the nations.¹⁰² In Romans itself, the only other instance of this verb occurs in the passage concerning the Jew in the synagogue who “preaches” the Law to Gentile synagogue adherents (Rom 2:21).¹⁰³ There are a number of parallels between Rom 2:21 and Rom 10:8. In both cases, the Law is seen as a revelation from God given especially to Jews (cf. Rom 2:20). In both cases, it is Jews who are preaching. In both cases, the Law has a place in the preaching. In Rom 2:21, however, the result of the *direct* preaching of the Law is disastrous: Jewish sin leads to Gentile blasphemy (Rom 2:24). In Rom 10:8, on the other hand, the preaching of the “message of faith,” a message which speaks *from* the Law and *through* the Law in light of its fulfilment in Christ, brings salvation. Paul is thus claiming that his own view of Jewish identity, which is based on a right understanding of the Law, brings with it a successful Jewish vocation and role towards the nations.

Paul’s reference to his own “preaching” in fact forms a fitting climax to his exposition of the meaning of the Law in Rom 10:5–8. We have already seen that Rom 10:2b–4 elaborates on the claims of Rom 3:20–22. In these verses, Paul highlights a duality in the relationship between the “Law” and the “righteousness of God”: on the one hand, the righteousness of God is revealed *apart from* Law; on the other hand, the Law and the Prophets *testify* to the righteousness of God (cf. v. 21). In Rom 10:5–8, Paul shows that these two aspects of the relationship between God’s righteousness and the Law are in fact grounded in two different modes of reading the Law itself.¹⁰⁴ The mainstream Jewish community understands the Law according to “doing” (Rom 10:5). They see the Law primarily as a text which prescribes human actions which define a person’s “righteousness” and thus a person’s “life.” This is certainly an understandable way to read the Law, as shown by the citation from Lev 18:5.¹⁰⁵ In fact, it was God’s *plan* for Israel to read the Law this way.¹⁰⁶ However, this way of

¹⁰² Cf. 1 Cor 1:21, 23; 2:4; 9:27; 15:11, 12, 14; 2 Cor 1:19, 4:5, 11:4; Gal 2:2; 1 Thess 2:9; cf. 1 Tim 2:7; 2 Tim 1:11, 4:17; Tit 1:3.

¹⁰³ See ch. 4, pp. 149–163.

¹⁰⁴ Watson 2004, 71–77.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. e.g., Deut 4:1, 8:1; Ezek 18:5–9; *Pss. Sol.* 14:3; *CD* 3.14–16 (Gathercole 2004, 132–133, 135–137; Watson 2004, 320–323).

¹⁰⁶ Cf. Westerholm 1996, 232.

reading the Law was not ultimately designed to achieve a soteriological goal for Israel—“righteousness”—but rather to achieve an epistemological goal—“recognition of sin” (Rom 3:20). On the other hand, when the Law is read alongside the Prophets as a testimony to faith in Christ, as it is in Paul’s communities, then it is fulfilled (cf. Rom 10:4). The “righteousness by faith” can now “speak” using the words of the Law with a newly realized intention (Rom 10:6–8; cf. Deut 30:12–13). By referring to his own “preaching” of the message, then, Paul is demonstrating that his own reading of the Law leads to a successful divine vocation to preach to the nations.

In Rom 10:9–10, Paul elaborates further on the scriptural testimony to the twofold locus of the message: “in the mouth” and “in the heart” (cf. Rom 10:8). He shows that this reference is not merely an incidental hendiadys, but rather is a significant pointer to a twofold means of receiving the message of salvation (Rom 10:9–10). Paul expounds his understanding of salvation in terms *both* of believing *and* of speaking. Salvation comes through *confession* of Jesus as Lord *alongside* faith in God’s resurrecting power—in contrast to any human attempt at resurrection (cf. Rom 10:7). Thus believing and speaking are, for Paul, two sides of the same soteriological coin. “Speech” is thus a fundamental mode of Israel’s response to the Law. In fact, the idea of the “mouth” as a locus of eschatological salvation is a significant motif in at least two other scriptural contexts from which Paul cites in Rom 9–11. The Song of Moses in Deut 32 (v. 21 is cited in Rom 10:19) makes much of Israel’s “mouth” (στόμα).¹⁰⁷ It is introduced as a song which is to appear on the “mouth” of Israel and Israel’s “seed” (Deut 31:19, 21). All Israel is thus commanded to take on the prophetic role of Moses, whose “mouth” speaks to the entire creation (Deut 32:1; cf. Deut 18:18). The content of Israel’s prophetic song is God’s salvation, a salvation that he achieves in spite of—indeed, because of—Israel’s own failure to keep the Law. The goal of the song is to bring the nations to rejoice in God’s salvific power, alongside Israel (Deut 32:43 LXX, cited in Rom 15:10; cf. the “one mouth” of Rom 15:6).¹⁰⁸ The eschatological “covenant” of Isa 59:21 (cited in Rom 11:27a), also

¹⁰⁷ Wagner 2002, 193. For the importance of Deut 29–32 for Jewish expectations concerning Israel’s eschatological restoration, see Scott 1993b, 650.

¹⁰⁸ McConville (2002, 450) and Watson (2004, 450–452) discuss the textual variants associated with Deut 32:43 (4QDeut^a, MT, LXX). In Rom 15:10 Paul has cited the LXX version, and his argument appears to rely on its particular wording (Hays 1989, 72; Waters 2006, 223–225).

employs these concepts and terminology. In light of Israel's flagrant Law-breaking and their subsequent unfitness to achieve God's purposes in the world, God himself saves Israel (Isa 59:15–16) and places his "words" (ῥήματα) on Israel's "mouth" and on the "mouth" of their "seed" forever (Isa 59:21).¹⁰⁹

In Rom 10:11–13, Paul begins to spell out the global implications of his understanding of the purpose of Israel's Law using the keyword "all" (πᾶς). These global implications are, of course, directly relevant to Paul's own expansive gospel-preaching ministry to "all" the nations (cf. Rom 1:5). In Rom 10:11, Paul cites Isa 28:16 again (cf. Rom 9:33), but this time he deliberately adds the word "all" (πᾶς).¹¹⁰ By doing so, Paul reminds his readers not only that salvation comes from "faith" (in Christ), but also that this salvation is universally applicable.¹¹¹ In Rom 10:12–13, Paul describes salvation further in terms of *human speech*, introducing a new key word, "call upon" (verb ἐπικαλεῖν). In verse 12, he states that salvation is available to everyone, both Jew and Greek, who "calls upon" the Lord. In verse 13, he substantiates his claim with a quotation from Joel 2:32 (LXX 3:5). The prophetic book of Joel describes a universal judgment involving the entire creation (Joel 2:30), in which Israel is helpless (e.g. Joel 2:11) and the nations are also gathered for judgment (Joel 3:1–3). In this context, Paul draws upon the full weight of the universal significance of the word πᾶς, showing that in the face of such judgment, Israel and the nations stand together in their need to "call upon" the "name of the Lord" for salvation.

Thus Romans 10:5–13 as a whole demonstrates that God's revelation in the Law is ultimately intended to bring about faith *and* speech. Since the Law is now to be seen as a testimony to a "message" of righteousness by faith rather than as a means of achieving righteousness by "doing," the right response to the Law is to believe *and* to speak. This speech takes various forms. Paul's readers "confess" the contents of the message ("Jesus as Lord"), *all* people (Jew and Gentile) must "call upon" the name of the Lord, and Paul himself (and others) "preach" the message. The remainder of the

¹⁰⁹ A role for restored Israelites to declare God's glory to the nations themselves is also described in Tob 13:3–6. Tobit envisages that this role belongs in the future, as an eschatological activity to be undertaken once the restoration of Israel has occurred (van Unnik 1993, 111–115).

¹¹⁰ Wagner 2002, 169–170.

¹¹¹ This is a relatively common prophetic motif (e.g. Isa 45:22, cf. the following citation from Joel).

argument of Rom 10 shows that Paul’s apostolic ministry achieves this intended goal, whereas the mainstream Jewish community is still holding on to the Law’s penultimate goal.

5.3.3. The apostolic fulfilment of Israel’s vocation (Rom 10:14–18)

Many interpreters claim that in Rom 10:14–18, Paul is speaking about Israel’s particularly stubborn unresponsiveness to the Christian mission to Jews.¹¹² On this basis, the passage is often understood to be an assertion of Israel’s “responsibility” which provides a counterbalance to the strong predestinarianism of Rom 9.¹¹³ This interpretation, however, fails to take into account the flow of Paul’s argument here. As we have just seen, in Rom 10:11–13 Paul has emphasized the need for “everyone” (πᾶς) to “believe” and to “call upon” (verb ἐπικαλεῖν) the name of the Lord for salvation. At the start of Rom 10:14, Paul uses the connective οὖν and repeats the verb ἐπικαλεῖν, implying that the subject of his discourse remains the same as it was in the previous verse. There is no indication that Paul has suddenly switched in verse 14 to discuss the belief or unbelief of “Israel.” Later in verse 19, Paul *does* indicate that he is changing subjects by explicitly naming “Israel” as the subject of his discourse.¹¹⁴ In verses 14–18, however, the subject of the verb “call upon”—and thus of the verbs “believe” and “hear”—is the same as it was in verse 13: “all people” (πᾶς).

This observation is quite understandable in light of our examination of Rom 9–11 so far. We have been arguing that Israel’s *salvation* is not the only issue here. Paul is claiming that his own view of Jewish identity, a view which is based on a right

¹¹² Many commentators argue that Paul approved of this Jewish mission or was involved in it directly (Barrett 1991, 189–191; Cranfield 1975, 2.533–537; Jewett 2007, 634–644; Sanday and Headlam 1902, 298; Sandnes 1991, 154–171; Wagner 2002, 170–186). Munck (1959, 43–44; 1967, 89–99), on the other hand, argues that Paul views the direct preaching of the early Christian apostolate to Jews as a complete failure. According to Munck, Paul is claiming here that where these missionaries failed in their mission to the Jews, Paul will succeed, because he will bring about the salvation of Israel indirectly through his preaching to the Gentiles.

¹¹³ Barrett (1982), for example, summarizes a reading of Rom 9–10 that is still common: “The unbelief of Israel may be looked at from two points of view, that of divine election and that of human choice, and Paul looks at it first from the one and then from the other.” (136)

¹¹⁴ Gadenz (2009, 138–139 n. 13, 159–160), following Bell (1994, 96), explains some of these discrepancies by positing that Rom 10:14–18 *initially* refers to “people in general,” but Rom 10:19 reveals that the *application* Paul has had in mind all along is to Israel. This seems to be a rather convoluted explanation of Paul’s argumentative strategy, however, especially when a more straightforward explanation is available (see n. 115).

understanding of the Law, also entails a successful Jewish *vocation*: which is expressed in a “preaching” role towards the nations (cf. Rom 10:8). This will help us to understand the purpose of Paul’s argument here in Rom 10:14–18. Building on the interpretations of Wright and Watson (and, earlier, Calvin),¹¹⁵ we shall demonstrate that Paul is here describing the place of the *Gentile* mission (in which he himself plays a key role) in God’s worldwide purposes. Although Paul only uses one first-person reference in this passage (“our” in the citation the end of verse 16), he nevertheless chooses words throughout the passage which elsewhere characterize his own apostolic ministry. Just a few verses earlier (v. 8), Paul has described himself as being among those who “preach” (verb κηρύσσειν) the “message” (ῥῆμα) of “faith” (πίστις)—words which all make a reappearance in vv. 14–18. Paul has also described himself as an “apostle” (ἀπόστολος, Rom 1:1; cf. 1:5, 11:13)—and in v. 15 he uses the cognate verb ἀποστέλλειν. Furthermore, the text Paul chooses to cite in v. 15 (Isa 52:7a) contains the highly significant Isaianic verb εὐαγγελίζεσθαι, a word which Paul uses elsewhere to speak of own ministry (cf. Rom 1:15, 15:20).¹¹⁶

We will now look more closely at vv. 14–15a:

How, then, can they call upon one whom they have not believed?
 And how can they believe one of whom they have not heard?
 And how can they hear without preaching?
 And how can they preach unless they are sent? (Rom 10:14–15a)

Πῶς οὖν ἐπικαλέσονται εἰς ὃν οὐκ ἐπίστευσαν;
 πῶς δὲ πιστεύσωσιν οὗ οὐκ ἤκουσαν;
 πῶς δὲ ἀκούσωσιν χωρὶς κηρύσσοντος;
 πῶς δὲ κηρύξωσιν ἐὰν μὴ ἀποσταλῶσιν;

Paul’s compact argument in Rom 10:14–15 relies on the claims he has already established in the previous verses (Rom 10:5–13). Salvation for Gentiles as well as for Jews comes through faith and speaking, not through “doing” (Rom 10:5–8). The faith has a specific object (Rom 10:11) and the corresponding speech has a specific

¹¹⁵ Calvin c. 1849, 396–404; Watson 2007b, 331–333; Wright 2002, 667.

¹¹⁶ The word εὐαγγελίζεσθαι also emphasizes the antithesis between Paul and the mainstream Jewish community by highlighting the fact that the Scriptures look forward to gospel-preachers, rather than Law-preachers.

cognitive content, i.e. they must call on “the name of the Lord” (Rom 10:13). The “name of the Lord” is, in fact, “Jesus,” whom God raised from the dead (Rom 10:9).¹¹⁷ The Gentiles must therefore be provided with an opportunity to hear the gospel—i.e. the message that Jesus is Lord and that God raised him from the dead—so that they can believe it *and* confess it. This implies that somebody must *preach* the gospel to the Gentiles. But since the gospel of Christ is the eschatological fulfilment of the Law (cf. Rom 9:4–5, 10:4), the preachers must be *sent* from among that group of people who have God’s word in the Law (i.e. Israel, cf. Rom 3:2, 9:4–5) to the nations. Paul is thus arguing that the Christ-believing Jewish “apostolic” mission to the nations is an integral part of God’s plans for Israel.

Just as it is written:

“How beautiful are the feet of those who evangelize the good [news]!”

But not all have obeyed the gospel.

For Isaiah says:

“Lord, who has believed our report?” (Rom 10:15b–16)

καθὼς γέγραπται·

ὡς ὠραῖοι οἱ πόδες τῶν εὐαγγελιζομένων [τὰ] ἀγαθὰ.

Ἄλλ’ οὐ πάντες ὑπήκουσαν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ.

Ἡσαΐας γὰρ λέγει·

κύριε, τίς ἐπίστευσεν τῇ ἀκοῇ ἡμῶν;

In Rom 10:15–16, Paul cites two Isaianic texts in support of his claim about his apostolic mission (Isa 52:7a and 53:1). As we have already seen, Paul regards this part of Isaiah as a significant source both for understanding his own apostolic ministry and also for understanding Israel’s role in God’s purposes. Paul has already introduced himself in terms which recall the Isaianic “Servant” (δοῦλος, Rom 1:1; cf. Isa 49:1–7).¹¹⁸ In Rom 2:24, he has cited Isa 52:5 in order to show that the failed ministry of the mainstream Jewish “preacher” (ὁ κηρύσσων, cf. 2:21) was part of God’s purpose as revealed in the Scriptures.¹¹⁹ Later, in Rom 15:21, Paul will cite Isa 52:15 to show that his own expansive apostolic mission is informed by scriptural

¹¹⁷ Davis (1996, 129–131) argues that this is part of the evidence for a developed view of God which enabled early Christians to claim Jesus “as the high point of revelation and as the object of invocation.” (181)

¹¹⁸ See ch. 3, pp. 87–100.

¹¹⁹ See ch. 4, pp. 163–164.

passages concerning the Isaianic Servant.¹²⁰ The two citations from Isa 52–53 in Rom 10:15–16, then, cannot be regarded as incidental proof-texting,¹²¹ but rather must be interpreted as specific examples of Paul’s more general disposition to understand his own Gentile mission in terms of the Isaianic “Servant of the Lord.”

Paul’s reading of these Isaianic texts is not, however, entirely straightforward. In its own immediate context, Isa 52:7 is speaking about a person who preaches the gospel of salvation *to* Zion. How, then, can Paul use this text to describe a Jewish mission to the nations? An initial answer is suggested by the fact that Paul uses an anonymous citation formula for Isa 52:7—“it is written” (Rom 10:15), in contrast with the more specific citation formula he uses for Isa 53:1—“Isaiah says” (Rom 10:16). This indicates that the citation of Isa 52:7 in Rom 10:15 may be less strictly contextualized, which implies that we might look a little further afield within the original context of the citation for its significance.¹²² In fact, when we examine Isa 52–53 more closely, we find that this passage as a whole has a strong interest in Israel’s role within God’s worldwide purposes; an interest which is highly relevant for Paul’s presentation of his gospel and the Gentile mission.

Initially, Isaiah 52 depicts God using Israel to bring glory to his own name among the nations *without* Israel “speaking” to the nations at all. Isaiah 52:5 describes Israel’s sin and exile which has dishonoured God’s name among the nations (cf. Rom 2:24). In Isa 52:7, an “evangelist” comes to Zion, announcing to Zion a “report” (ἀκοή) about salvation, peace and God’s sovereignty. God’s salvation of Zion will have a positive effect on the nations when the nations “see” it (Isa 52:10). Isaiah 52:15, furthermore, speaks of God’s “Servant” who enables many nations (and kings) to “see” and “understand” God’s salvation—even though they have not “heard” it because it has not been “told” to them. At this point, then, the “report” has not been communicated directly to the nations.¹²³ God’s soteriological actions for Israel have only been “seen” by the nations, who are looking on from a distance.

¹²⁰ There may also be an allusion to Isa 52:11 in the use of the word ἀφοίξειν in Rom 1:1 (see p. 101).

¹²¹ Pace Shum 2002, 223–225.

¹²² Watson (2004, 44–45) applies the same principle to Rom 1:17.

¹²³ This is presumably because Israel has separated themselves from the nations (Isa 52:11–12). Interestingly, the call for Israel to be pure and to separate from unclean things and people (Isa 52:11), which is elsewhere applied by Paul to Christians (2 Cor 6:17), is not mentioned here in Romans. This

There is, however, an abrupt change in this state of affairs at the beginning of Isa 53. Suddenly there is a new group of people described using the first-person plural, “we,”¹²⁴ who are questioning the effectiveness of their “report” (ἀκοή).¹²⁵ The “report” concerns the Servant who is suffering for their sins (Isa 53:1–6). This report is spoken to others outside the group, but the group questions whether any of these others has “believed” it (τίς ἐπίστευσεν τῇ ἀκοῇ ἡμῶν, cited in Rom 10:16). A good case can be made that the speakers of the report, i.e. the group referred to by the first-person plural in 53:1–6, is Israel.¹²⁶ This would imply that the recipients of the report are to be identified with the “many nations” of Isa 52:15. Previously, these nations had only “seen” the “revelation” of the Lord’s power (Isa 52:10) without “hearing” it (note the verb ἀκούειν in Isa 52:15). But now, they have heard Israel’s ἀκοή about the “revelation” of God’s “power” displayed in the suffering Servant (53:1).

This brief survey of the contents of Isa 52–53 enables us to understand the nature and function of Paul’s reference to Isa 52:7. Paul is not citing Isa 52:7 verbatim. Rather, he is using Isa 53:1 (cited in Rom 10:16) to modify the sense of his citation from Isa 52:7 (Rom 10:15).¹²⁷ In Isa 52:7, a single “preacher” is sent to Zion with a “report” (ἀκοή) of peace. However, Isaiah 53:1 describes the response of the *nations* to the *plural* Israelites’ ἀκοή—an ἀκοή which concerns the revelation of the suffering Servant. Paul has made three significant changes to Isa 52:7,¹²⁸ each of which brings the verse into closer conformity with Isa 53:1. Firstly, he omits the

is understandable, since it would be a confusing reference in a context where Paul is claiming that Israel’s zeal for the Law is ignorant (Rom 10:2) and is later urging tolerance and unity with respect to food and other observances (Rom 14, e.g. vv. 14, 17).

¹²⁴ In Isaiah 53:1–6, first-person plural verbs and pronouns occur 14x at the level of the discourse within a short space, then abruptly disappear again. In the LXX of Isaiah, the previous first-person plural reference at the level of discourse occurs in Isa 45:15, and the next reference occurs in Isa 59:11.

¹²⁵ The MT לְשִׁמְעוּנוּ אֲנִי can mean either “[to] what we have heard” (cf. Isa 37:7) or “[to] what we have spoken” (cf. Isa 28:9). The LXX τῇ ἀκοῇ ἡμῶν is subject to a similar ambiguity (cf. e.g. Isa 6:9, 52:7).

¹²⁶ Muthunayagom 2000, 135–136.

¹²⁷ A similar recontextualizing of a citation from Isa 52 occurs in Rom 15:21, where Paul cites Isa 52:15 to affirm the fact that those who have *not* heard or been told will now come to see and understand precisely *through* Paul’s “evangelism,” i.e. preaching of Christ (cf. Rom 15:20) (Wagner 2002, 332–336).

¹²⁸ Wagner 2002, 173–174. Wagner argues that the other differences from the LXX can be explained by the theory that Paul’s base text was not the LXX itself, but a Greek version influenced by a proto-Masoretic text (170–173).

“mountains,” thus removing the implication that the preacher is coming *to* Zion from the surrounding region. Secondly, he omits the reference to the ἀκοή of “peace,” facilitating his exclusive identification of the ἀκοή with the “word of Christ,” whom he identifies as the ultimate referent of the ἀκοή in Isa 53:1 (see Rom 10:17). Finally, he changes the singular herald into *plural* gospel preachers, thus identifying the gospel preachers with the “we” of Isa 53:1—i.e. Israel whose ἀκοή about the Servant goes to the nations—and also with the group of gospel preachers among whom he himself is included (Rom 10:8, cf. 1:5). Paul does not, therefore, present himself as an utterly unique figure in salvation history.¹²⁹ Rather, he presents his Gentile mission as part of the fulfilment of the *plural* Israelites’ role towards the nations. Paul is, in other words, a *representative* of Israel’s eschatological vocation to the nations.

Romans 10:16 also deals with a possible Jewish objection to Paul’s presentation of the Gentile mission in terms of the Isaianic vision: Should not the universal *hearing* of the gospel lead to universal Gentile *obedience* (note the connection between ἀκούειν / ἀκοή and ὑπακούειν)? As we have seen, the term “obedience” (ὑπακοή) in the outer frame of Romans (Rom 1:5, 15:18) is an allusion to the eschatological obedience of the nations to Israel and her God, a theme which is particularly prominent in Isaiah 60–61.¹³⁰ A straightforward reading of Isaiah 60–61 would seem to suggest that the “sending” of somebody to “preach” and “evangelize” (note the key words ἀποστέλλειν, κηρύσσειν and εὐαγγελίζεσθαι in both Rom 10:15 and Isa 61:1)¹³¹ will be associated with the universal “obedience” of the nations in the form of subservience to Zion (e.g. Isa 60:12; 61:9, 11). This has not happened: how, then, can Paul claim that his apostolic mission is fulfilling Isaiah’s vision for Israel? Paul answers this implied question by showing that Isa 53:1 speaks of a more fundamental form of Gentile obedience, an obedience which describes the aim of the apostolic mission perfectly. The Gentile obedience which Isa 53:1 expects is not political subservience to Zion, but rather “faith” in the “report” about the suffering Servant—i.e. the “obedience of faith” (Rom 1:5). As Isaiah himself declares, this

¹²⁹ *Contra* Munck 1959, 42–49; 1967, 123–125.

¹³⁰ See ch. 3, pp. 105, 126.

¹³¹ Evans 1999, 115–117.

“report” is strange and surprising and therefore will not be believed by all. Thus Paul’s preaching, the “message of faith” (Rom 10:8) which is not believed by all, is indeed the fulfilment of the Isaianic vision.

Paul underscores the fact that the apostolic mission is the fulfilment of the Scriptures in his summary statement in Rom 10:17. “Faith,” unlike “doing,” requires a “report” with specific cognitive content. This “report” is in fact the “message of Christ,” which is of course identical with the “message of faith” which Paul himself proclaims (Rom 10:8):

Hence faith [comes] from a report
And the report [comes about] through the message of Christ. (Rom 10:17)

ἄρα ἡ πίστις ἐξ ἀκοῆς,
ἡ δὲ ἀκοὴ διὰ ῥήματος Χριστοῦ.

In verse 18, Paul anticipates and eliminates a possible (incorrect) inference that might be drawn from his argument so far. Paul has claimed that the Scriptures do not envision his gospel being universally “believed” or “obeyed” (verbs ὑπακοῦειν and πιστεῦειν, Rom 10:16). However, this does not at all imply that Paul’s gospel will not be universally “heard” (verb ἀκούειν; Rom 10:18). Paul cites Ps 19:4 (LXX 18:5) to show that his extensive apostolic mission is envisioned in the Scriptures:

But I ask: Have they not heard? On the contrary!
“To all the earth their voice goes out,
and to the ends of the inhabited world their words.” (Rom 10:18)

ἀλλὰ λέγω, μὴ οὐκ ἤκουσαν; μενοῦνγε·
εἰς πᾶσαν τὴν γῆν ἐξῆλθεν ὁ φθόγγος αὐτῶν
καὶ εἰς τὰ πέρατα τῆς οἰκουμένης τὰ ῥήματα αὐτῶν.

The citation appears to be a non-sequitur, since the Psalm is not, at first glance, about missionaries.¹³² Psalm 19 (LXX 18) in its canonical form consists of three distinct sections. The first section (from which Paul takes his citation) describes the universal declaration of God’s glory throughout all the earth by the “heavens” (Ps 19:1–6 [LXX 18:2–7]). The second section describes the perfect nature of God’s

¹³² Wright (2002, 668–669) offers a tentative explanation in terms of the universal function of the “Law” in Ps 19. Our own explanation will take Wright’s observation as a starting point, but will arrive at a different conclusion.

revelation in the “Law” (Ps 19:7–11 [LXX 18:8–12]). The third section is a plea that the words and thoughts of the psalmist’s “heart” and “mouth” would be acceptable to God (Ps 19:12–14 [LXX 18:13–15]). How can this Psalm bear witness to the universal nature of the apostolic mission?

A starting-point for understanding Paul’s use of Psalm 19 (LXX 18) is the fact that it implicitly correlates Israel’s Law with universal revelation. Verses 1–6 (LXX 2–7) are concerned with the general wisdom available to all through the “heavens,” while verses 7–12 (LXX 8–13) are concerned with the superiority of the special “wisdom” available to Israel in the Law. In the Psalm itself, these two sections are juxtaposed but not obviously related.¹³³ Nevertheless, in works such as Ben Sira, wisdom and Law are correlated more explicitly. Israel’s deliberate practice of special wisdom—i.e. the “fear of the Lord” or the practice of the “Law”—undergirds and sustains the created order itself and gives wisdom to *all* who seek it from Israelite teachers (e.g. Sir 24:1–34, esp. vv. 33–34 in the light of v. 23).¹³⁴ Paul has already implied the existence of this kind of Law-wisdom correlation in the mainstream Jewish community (Rom 2:17–20), and is probably assuming that it would also inform his readers’ understanding of this Psalm. The Psalm would have been read as teaching that the superior nature of God’s revelation in the Law to an Israelite (Ps 19:7–11 [LXX 18:8–12]) enables and informs the revelation of God’s glory throughout the world (Ps 19:1–6 [LXX 18:2–7]).

The fact that Paul has just explicitly reintroduced “Christ” into his argument (Rom 10:17), however, is the key for understanding Paul’s use of the psalm. Paul has said two things about Christ in Rom 10. Firstly, Christ is the τέλος of the Law, so that Paul’s preaching uses the Law primarily as a testimony to Christ (Rom 10:4, cf. Rom 9:4–5). Secondly, Christ has been raised from the dead by God and is located in “heaven” (Rom 10:6–7, 9). These prior references to Christ show how Paul can read Ps 19:1–6 (LXX 18:2–7) in terms of his gospel preaching. The ῥῆμα[τα] of the “heavens” (Ps 19:2, 4 [LXX 18:3, 5]) is, in fact, the ῥῆμα of Christ (Rom 10:17) who is in “heaven” (Rom 10:6).¹³⁵ The “Law” of Ps 19 (LXX 18) which brings about general

¹³³ Goldingay 2006, 284–286.

¹³⁴ Goering 2009, 129–186, esp. 177–179.

¹³⁵ cf. 1 Cor 15:47, Phil 3:20, 1 Thess 1:10.

wisdom for all is, in fact, the Law of Rom 10:6–8, which testifies to the ῥῆμα of faith which Paul preaches (Rom 10:8), which is the ῥῆμα of Christ that is indeed “heard” by all, even if it is not believed by all (Rom 10:16–17).¹³⁶

Paul, of course, has a global mission to bring about worldwide “hearing.” Paul, along with others, has a mission to “all the nations” (Rom 1:5). Paul himself can even say that he has already “fulfilled the gospel” by preaching in the key places of the Eastern circle (Rom 15:19), and that his ambition is to evangelize in further unreached areas (Rom 15:20). The aorist forms of ἀκούειν and ἐξέρχασθαι in Rom 10:18, then, are not implying that the “hearing” and the “going out” of the message are entirely past events from Paul’s point of view.¹³⁷ Rather, Paul is claiming that his present mission, which is in fact part of a worldwide missionary movement with global implications, is testified to by the Scriptures.

Paul has thus shown that the Gentile mission in which he is involved is, in fact, the fulfilment of Israel’s vocation. Israel is the people entrusted with God’s word in the Law (Rom 9:4, cf. Rom 3:2). The purpose of this Law is to testify to the “message of faith” in Christ (Rom 10:4–8). This message has a cognitive content which requires a response of faith *and* speech (Rom 10:9–10). This is true for all people, including those outside Israel (Rom 10:11–13). Hence Israelites, who are entrusted with God’s word, must preach to non-Israelites (Rom 10:14–15). The Scriptures predict that this preaching of Christ will be universal, even though not all will believe it (Rom 10:16–18). The apostolic mission is therefore the true vocation of Israel.

Indeed, Paul’s emphasis on the “message of Christ” in Rom 10:17 is commensurate with his expansive and climactic description of Christ as the one who brings about the universal rule and blessing of God which is indeed the teleological ground for Israel’s being (Rom 9:5). Through the apostolic mission, Christ himself is proclaimed as the goal of Israel’s existence (Rom 9:5), the τέλος of Israel’s Law (Rom 10:4), and the one who has been raised, not by Israel’s initiative, but God’s (Rom 10:6–9).

¹³⁶ Paul may also have in mind the presence of the humble “mouth” / “heart” response to the Law which he has previously highlighted as the means of salvation and the right way of reading the Law (Ps 19:14 [LXX 18:15], cf. Rom 10:6–8) (Wagner 2002, 186).

¹³⁷ Paul uses the aorist elsewhere to describe events which are testified to in the Scriptures and which are currently, from Paul’s point of view, in progress (e.g. the “hardening,” cf. Rom 11:7–8 with 11:25).

Christ is, therefore, the crucial factor in Israel's vocation—a Christ who must be communicated as such to the world.

5.3.4. The ongoing failure of Israel's vocation (Rom 10:19–21)

In Rom 10:19, Paul returns to address directly the issue of “Israel.” The word “but” (ἀλλά) at the beginning of verse 19 implies that “Israel” is being contrasted with something or someone. The contrast, however, is not with the faith of the Gentiles. Rather, Paul is describing a contrast between *himself* and Israel—a contrast between their respective interpretations of the Law and thus between their respective understandings of their divine vocation.

Paul's interpretation of the Scriptures has created a fundamental hermeneutical problem. If Paul's explanation of the Law and the Prophets as a testimony to faith in Christ and thus as a testimony to the existence of gospel-preaching missionaries is correct, where does that leave the seemingly more straightforward interpretation: that Israel's vocation is to hold fast to the Law with “divine jealous passion” (Rom 10:2), to “do” the Law (Rom 10:5; cf. Lev 18:5; Deut 30:14b!), to preach the Law's wisdom to synagogue adherents (cf. Rom 2:17–20), and to wait for Israel's eschatological restoration followed by the ingathering of the nations? Surely, the Scriptures clearly imply that God's global purposes will be achieved by Israel's “doing” of the Law? How was Israel to know better? In other words, as Paul asks here: “Did Israel not know?” (Rom 10:19a).¹³⁸ The form of the question (μὴ Ἰσραὴλ οὐκ ἔγνω;) presupposes the answer: Israel did indeed know.¹³⁹ Two specific people in Israel's history have already provided Israel with this knowledge: Moses and Isaiah (Rom 10:19b–21).

¹³⁸ Wright 2002, 667, 669.

¹³⁹ Hofius (1989, 176 n. 5) and Wilk (1998, 134) question this grammatically straightforward reading of Paul's question. They argue that the answer must be that “Israel did not know,” since Paul is speaking about Israel's knowledge of (i.e. correct insight into) the *gospel of Christ*. The Israelites have “heard” this gospel, since it has been preached to them (Rom 10:14–18), but they do not “know” it (cf. Rom 10:2–3). Our own interpretation, however, makes better sense of the grammar as it stands. Paul is not asking, “Did Israel not take the gospel to heart?” but rather, “Was Israel not informed of her rebellion in spite of the Gentile mission?” Here, Israel's “knowing” (verb γινώσκειν) is of the same order as the unrighteous Gentiles' “knowing” God in Rom 1:21—the information is publicly available to them, even though they have not taken it to heart.

The testimony of Moses (Rom 10:19b, citing Deut 32:21) comes from the Song of Moses (Deut 32), which Moses commanded Israel to keep perpetually in their “mouth” (Deut 31:19, 21).¹⁴⁰ In this song, Israel’s role in God’s worldwide purposes is to declare her own *disobedience* to the entire creation (Deut 32:1).¹⁴¹ Israel’s role is to be the adulterous nation, the nation who forsakes God, the nation from whom God turns away in favour of others—provoking Israel to envy and anger (verb παραζηλοῦν).

The testimony of Isaiah (Rom 10:20–21, citing Isa 65:1–2) is twofold. On the one hand, Isaiah testifies that God is found by those who do not “seek” him or “ask” for him (Rom 10:20). The “boldness” of Isaiah’s text is not simply that salvation is extended to Gentiles, but that it is extended to people who do not strive for God at all. These “non-seekers” and “non-questioners” should be identified with anybody who, like Paul, reads the Law correctly, and realizes that “righteousness by faith” excludes any questioning or seeking to bring Christ near or to achieve righteousness (Rom 10:6–7).¹⁴² By contrast, Israel as a whole still consists of “seekers”—i.e. they “seek” to establish their own righteousness (Rom 10:3). They are still pursuing the Law, and still failing to keep the Law (Rom 9:31). Thus Israel as a whole, according to the witness of Isaiah, remains a “disobedient and contrary people” (Rom 10:21).¹⁴³

Paul, in Rom 10, has highlighted in quite stark terms the competition between his own vocation and that of Israel as a whole. Paul’s view of the Law has led to the Gentile mission, a mission which fulfils those Scriptures which testify to Israel’s positive role in God’s worldwide purposes. However, the view of the Law in the

¹⁴⁰ Deut 30–34 is a highly significant source for Paul’s understanding of the Law as a witness to the gospel (Bell 1994, 95–103; Hays 1989, 164; Wagner 2002, 198, 201; Watson 2004, 454). Waters (2006, 26–28) separates out Deut 29–30 and 32, and does not admit chapter 31 as evidence because Paul does not cite it directly. Waters’s approach is a helpful corrective to “flat” readings of Deut 30–32, since it highlights the antithetical nature of some of the ideas in the texts. However, Waters is at this point too atomistic and complex, and assumes too readily that Paul would not have read Deut 29–32 together (Lincicum 2008, 51–53).

¹⁴¹ The *universal* relevance of the song is seen by Philo, who portrays it as a song sung in the midst a collected crowd of humanity and ministering angels (e.g. *Virt.* 73). Unlike Paul, however, Philo makes nothing of the theme of Israel’s *rebellion* (Bell 1994, 225–226).

¹⁴² The fact that this can include Jews provides another fleeting glimmer of hope for Israel’s future. Nevertheless, at this point in Paul’s argument, the non-strivers are, as a whole, Gentiles (Rom 9:30, cf. the “foolish” nation of 10:19) (Wagner 2006, 97).

¹⁴³ The phrase “all day long” (ὅλην τὴν ἡμέραν) highlights the continuing nature of the rebellion.

mainstream Jewish community has fulfilled an entirely different set of Scriptures—those which testify to God’s rejection of Israel for her disobedience. By the end of Romans 10, then, Paul and Israel stand in a deeply antithetical relationship, holding on to two seemingly irreconcilable divine vocations.

5.4. Paul and Israel: Converging vocations (Romans 11)

In Rom 11, Paul makes a striking claim. He declares himself, in his capacity as apostle to the Gentiles, to be the answer to his own anguished prayer. This anguished prayer was, as we have seen, precipitated by the situation of his fellow “Israelites” (Rom 9:4). As a whole, Israel had failed to recognize its true role in God’s purposes. Instead, the majority of Israelites were still holding on to an alternative, fundamentally misguided, vocation. Instead of preaching the fulfilment of the Law in the gospel of Christ (Rom 9:4–5, 10:4), Israel was maintaining a passionate commitment to preserve their purity as God’s holy, Law-keeping people (Rom 10:2–3). Since Paul’s apostolic mission was at the same time his vocation as an “Israelite,” this failure by the majority of “Israelites” to back Paul’s mission constituted a threat at the deepest level—a threat, not just to Paul’s own identity, but to God’s eschatological purposes for Israel and the world. Yet it is also as an “Israelite” and “apostle” that Paul now provides himself with a solution to this threat. In Rom 11, Paul makes two prominent first-person references. Paul declares himself both to be an “Israelite” and also to be an “apostle”:

I ask, then: God has not rejected his inheritance, has he? Absolutely not!
For I myself am an Israelite, from the seed of Abraham, tribe of Benjamin. (Rom 11:1)

Λέγω οὖν, μὴ ἀπώσατο ὁ θεὸς τὴν κληρονομίαν¹⁴⁴ αὐτοῦ; μὴ γένοιτο·
καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼ Ἰσραηλίτης εἰμί, ἐκ σπέρματος Ἀβραάμ, φυλῆς Βενιαμίν.

¹⁴⁴ See n. 145.

Inasmuch as I myself am apostle to the Gentiles,
I glorify my ministry,
if, somehow, I may make my flesh envious,
and save some of them. (Rom 11:13b–14)

ἐφ' ὅσον μὲν οὖν εἶμι ἐγὼ ἐθνῶν ἀπόστολος,
τὴν διακονίαν μου δοξάζω,
εἴ πως παραζηλώσω μου τὴν σάρκα
καὶ σώσω τινὰς ἐξ αὐτῶν.

These two first-person references, while describing different aspects of Paul's identity, employ virtually the same emphatic formula: the first-person personal pronoun with a first-person verb of identification. Paul's status as "Israelite" (ἐγὼ Ἰσραηλίτης εἶμι, v. 1) is tightly bound up with his status as "apostle" (εἶμι ἐγὼ ἐθνῶν ἀπόστολος, v. 13). Paul is, emphatically, an Israelite (Rom 11:1); at the same time, he is, emphatically, apostle to the nations (Rom 11:13). This parallel is not merely accidental. In fact, it reflects a fundamental feature of the entire chapter. While in Rom 10 Paul and Israel seemed to have *competing* vocations, in Rom 11, we witness a *convergence* between Paul's vocation and Israel's vocation. Not only is Paul's apostolic vocation the fulfilment of Israel's vocation: even Israel's apparent "failure" is part of God's purposes for her and for the world. As we investigate Rom 11, then, we will see how Paul's own vocation as apostle and the seemingly paradoxical vocation of Israel are finally reconciled.

5.4.1. The apostle as the paradigmatic Israelite (Rom 11:1–2a)

Romans 11:1–2a is a major turning point in Paul's argument:

I ask, then: God has not rejected his inheritance, has he? Absolutely not!
For I myself am an Israelite, from the seed of Abraham, tribe of Benjamin.
God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew. (Rom 11:1–2a)

Λέγω οὖν, μὴ ἀπώσατο ὁ θεὸς τὴν κληρονομίαν¹⁴⁵ αὐτοῦ; μὴ γένοιτο·
καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼ Ἰσραηλίτης εἶμι, ἐκ σπέρματος Ἀβραάμ, φυλῆς Βενιαμίν.
οὐκ ἀπώσατο ὁ θεὸς τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ ὃν προέγνω.

¹⁴⁵ The arguments for accepting τὴν κληρονομίαν (P⁴⁶ F G it^{b,f,g,x}, Goth, Ambrosiaster, Ambrose, Pelagius) over τὸν λαόν are stronger than is commonly recognized. Given (1999, 91–93) argues that Paul originally wrote "inheritance" under the influence of Ps 94:14 [LXX 93:14]. Τὸν λαόν may be explained either as a scribal assimilation to the same word in the preceding verse (Rom 10:21) and the following verse (Rom 11:2) or as an assimilation to 1 Sam 12:22 (or both). A change in the opposite direction is more difficult to explain.

Paul begins by asking the pivotal question: “God has not rejected his inheritance,¹⁴⁶ has he?” The form of the question (μή) expects a negative answer, showing that Paul is finally about to address directly the issue of Israel’s place in God’s purposes which so far has had no adequate answer. Paul’s answer is given in the form of a strong denial formula (μή γένοιτο) followed by an emphatic affirmation of Paul’s Jewish identity: “I myself am also an Israelite, from the seed of Abraham, tribe of Benjamin.”

Why does Paul invoke his own person at this pivotal moment to answer the issue concerning Israel’s salvation? At this point, we need to recall how Paul has previously described himself in his letter. He has introduced himself as God’s “Servant” and “apostle” to the nations, who is fulfilling his role by “evangelism” (Rom 1:1–5, 15–16). Most recently, he has described himself as one who “preaches” along with others (Rom 10:8), and then described the vital importance of “preachers” and “evangelists” who are “sent” (verb ἀποστέλλειν), based on his reading of Israel’s vocation in Isa 52–53 (Rom 10:14–16). This all implies that in Rom 11:1, Paul is drawing attention to his existence, not simply as a *saved* Israelite, but as the *preaching* Israelite, i.e. the apostle to the Gentiles from Israel.¹⁴⁷ Paul is arguing that Israel’s future is guaranteed because *Israel’s divine vocation is in fact being fulfilled by an Israelite.*

(a) *The inadequacy of alternative proposals*

Before we explore the significance of Paul’s vocation for his subsequent argument in Rom 11, we need to examine some alternative understandings of Paul’s self-description in Rom 11:1. As we shall see, none of these alternative understandings accounts adequately for the place of Paul’s self-reference in his argument.

Some interpreters point out the rhetorical effect of Paul’s affirmation of his Israelite identity. It contributes *pathos* and *ethos*,¹⁴⁸ shows Paul’s personal involvement in the

¹⁴⁶ For this reading, see n. 145. By bringing the words “inheritance” (v. 1) and “people” (v. 2) together, Paul reminds his readers that the “people” is God’s “inheritance,” his lasting possession to whom he remains committed (see further Given 1999, 93–94; Wagner 2002, 222–231).

¹⁴⁷ So Barth 2009, 11.72–74 = CD 2/2.268–269; Calvin c. 1849, 409; Cranfield 1975, 2.544, citing Chrysostom among others; Gager 2000, 136–137; Gaston 1987, 142, 148; Gaugler 1952, 2.160–162; Lohse 2003, 305; Cyril of Alexandria on Rom 11:1, who also links Paul’s apostleship with his priesthood (cf. Rom 15:16); cf. Nanos (2010): “It is Israel that has been entrusted with the words of God for the nations ([Rom] 3:2; 10:14–11:12)” (148).

¹⁴⁸ Gadenz 2009, 185.

subject he is about to discuss,¹⁴⁹ indirectly reminds his readers that his viewpoint is authentically Jewish,¹⁵⁰ and creates solidarity with his Jewish readers.¹⁵¹ Some or all of these effects may have been intended by Paul. Nevertheless, the significance of Paul's self-reference cannot be limited to its rhetorical effect, since it occupies a critical place in the logic of the argument itself.¹⁵² Paul's self-reference immediately follows the strong denial formula $\mu\grave{\eta}$ $\gamma\acute{\epsilon}\nu\omicron\iota\tau\omicron$. Paul uses this denial formula in nine other places in Romans. In each instance, immediately after the denial, he gives a justification for the denial in a compact summary form which contains the potential for the entire answer; then he expands the answer in the subsequent argument.¹⁵³ We should expect the same in this case. That is, we should expect that Paul's affirmation of his own Jewish identity is *the* reason, in a nutshell, why God has not rejected his people / inheritance (Rom 11:1–2a), and we should expect that his subsequent argument (Rom 11:2b and ff.) will expand on this claim. Paul, in other words, is affirming here that his own existence as an Israelite is the key to answering the question of Israel's rejection.

Many interpreters claim that Paul is putting himself forward as an initial example of the Jewish-Christian "remnant," an entity which provides a key for hope for the rest of Israel in Paul's subsequent argument.¹⁵⁴ C. K. Barrett, for example, summarizes Paul's logic thus: "God cannot have cast off his people (as a whole), for I myself am both a Jew and a Christian; this proves that Christian Jews may exist."¹⁵⁵ Gadenz, in analysing the rhetoric of Romans 11, argues that Paul's Jewish self-description functions as the first of two proofs which demonstrate the existence of the

¹⁴⁹ Byrne 1996, 330; Dahl 1977, 149; Esler 2003, 293–294; Lübking 1986, 100; Sanday and Headlam 1902, 309; Schmithals 1988, 387.

¹⁵⁰ Dunn 1988, 2.635.

¹⁵¹ Watson 2007b, 304; cf. Zeller 1973, 127.

¹⁵² Cf. Niebuhr 1992, 167–169.

¹⁵³ Campbell 1991, 178–183. The denial formula appears in Rom 3:4a, 3:6a, 3:31b, 6:2a, 6:15b, 7:7b, 7:13b, 9:14b, 11:11b. Compact summary justifications for the denial are provided immediately after each use of the formula: Rom 3:4b, 3:6b, 3:31c, 6:2b, 6:16, 7:7c, 7:13c, 9:15, 11:11c. These justifications are then expanded and explained: 3:4c, 3:7–8, chs. 4–8, 6:3–13, 6:17–23, 7:7d–11, 7:14–23, 9:16–18, 11:12–16.

¹⁵⁴ E.g. Barrett 1991, 192–193; Campbell 2006, 129; Donaldson 1997, 253–254; Frey 2007, 290; Gadenz 2009, 179–184; Harink 2007, 371; Kim 2000, 135–136; Moo 1996, 673–674; Oropeza 2007, 73; Schlier 1977, 322; Siegert 1985, 164; Wilckens 1978–82, 2.237.

¹⁵⁵ Barrett 1991, 192.

“remnant.” The *propositio* (“God has not rejected his people”) is first presented as a question (Rom 11:1a), then partially substantiated through an autobiographical *exemplum* (Rom 11:1b), recast as a statement (Rom 11:2a), and then supported through further examples from Scripture (Rom 11:2b–6). Paul is thus presenting himself as one example of the “remnant.”¹⁵⁶ However, this analysis leaves Paul’s rhetoric in Rom 11:1–2 looking a little clumsy and redundant—the repetition of the *propositio* (Rom 11:2a) after the first “proof” (Rom 11:1b) must in Gadenz’s view be regarded as “an apparently unique feature in the Pauline letters” which is explained by “Paul’s wish to communicate clearly.”¹⁵⁷

Furthermore, the “remnant” motif (i.e. the idea that the *continuity* of a small group of faithful Jews guarantees the continuity of God’s purposes for Israel) cannot alone account for Paul’s subsequent argument, which also uses other motifs to emphasize the radical *reversal* of Israel’s and the world’s state (cf. Rom 11:32). Various terms and concepts which were used in Rom 9–10 primarily to express Israel’s failure or judgment are reused in Rom 11 as the basis for Israel’s hope: not only the remnant (cf. Rom 9:27–29 with Rom 11:3–5), but also God’s freedom to show mercy to whomever he wills (cf. Rom 9:15–23 with 11:30–32) and Israel’s “envy” (cf. Rom 10:19 with Rom 11:11, 14). This suggests that Paul’s emphatic self-description as an “Israelite” in Rom 11:1 has a significance far beyond a simple demonstration of the continuity of Israel as a people via the remnant motif. Paul’s hope in Rom 9–11, in fact, is not ultimately grounded in the continuity of the people of Israel via a *faithful* remnant, but rather in God’s own faithfulness to his global purposes, despite (and even through) Israel’s *unfaithfulness* (e.g. Rom 11:11–12, 15; cf. Rom 3:1–4).¹⁵⁸

Moreover, the idea that Paul is presenting himself to the Christ-believers in Rome as an example of a “faithful Jew” does not adequately take into account Paul’s situation with respect to his readers. Paul is as yet personally unknown to most of his readers (cf. Rom 1:10–15, 15:22–24). It is difficult, therefore, to imagine why he should choose *himself* as the primary, ideal example of a Christ-believing Jew. If Paul were merely trying to demonstrate that the existence of Christ-believing Jews shows that

¹⁵⁶ Gadenz 2009, 179–184.

¹⁵⁷ Gadenz 2009, 180, cf. 204, 230.

¹⁵⁸ See further Barclay 2002, 151–152; Niebuhr 1992, 167–171.

God has not entirely given up on Israel, it would have been far more effective for him to draw his examples from among those Christ-believing Jews who are known personally to his readers (e.g. Rom 16:3–4, 7).

Another proposed explanation for why Paul chooses himself as the ideal example of a saved Israelite is that his own conversion experience makes him a paradigm for Israel's conversion.¹⁵⁹ According to this explanation, Paul's pre-Christian past as a persecutor of the church makes him especially, even uniquely, like "hardened" Israel. In this view, Paul is implying that if he, the quintessential persecutor of the church, can be saved, then so can the rest of Israel who is presently hardened. For this interpretation to be persuasive, however, we are required to assume that Paul's original readers were reasonably familiar with his pre-Christian persecuting activity. This, however, cannot be proved. Paul is at this point personally unknown to his readers. In his letter, he never refers to his pre-Christian past—all explicit statements about Paul's pre-Christian persecuting activity are found elsewhere.¹⁶⁰ Furthermore, even if Paul had some reason to assume that his readers were acquainted with some of the details of his pre-Christian past, it is unlikely that he would have left them to "join the dots" in order to understand this crucial point in his argument without making some explicit reference to it. Hence this explanation, too, is inadequate.

(b) Paul's self-description and Israel's vocation

We have been claiming that Paul is aligning himself with Israel's divine *vocation*. Paul is claiming in Rom 11:1 that Israel's future is guaranteed because through him, Israel's divine vocation is in fact being fulfilled. This is borne out by the three self-references he uses here.

Paul describes himself as an "Israelite." We have already demonstrated that this term indicates that Paul desires his readers to turn to the Scriptures, rather than to the present social situation of Jews, as the locus for understanding the significance of

¹⁵⁹ See, e.g., Bell 2005, 271; Jewett 2007, 653–654; Luther 1961, 305; Munck 1967, 106–107; cf. Barth 1959, 135; Gadenz 2009, 162 n. 99, 204.

¹⁶⁰ Gal 1:13–14, Phil 3:6, 1 Tim 1:13 and in various places in Acts (e.g. 9:4–5, 22:4, 22:7–8, 26:11, 26:14–15).

his Jewish identity.¹⁶¹ We have now argued at length that Paul frequently emphasizes the vocational dimension of Jewish identity in his reading of the Scriptures. In Rom 9–11, he has shown that “Israel” stands in a teleological relationship to “Christ,” in whom there is salvation (Rom 9:4–5). He has drawn his readers’ attention to particular Scriptures which speak of Israel’s role in bringing God’s word to the world, and has applied these Scriptures to the apostolic mission to the Gentiles, of which he is the primary representative (Rom 10:14–18, cf. Rom 10:8). Thus, when Paul speaks positively of his status as “Israelite,” he is speaking of his status as God’s instrument to bring God’s revelation to the world. For Paul, God’s concern for Israel is bound up with God’s choice of Israel to achieve his wider purposes. The fact that it is an *Israelite* who is achieving God’s positive global purposes, therefore, demonstrates that God has not rejected Israel.

Paul also describes himself as “seed of Abraham.” We have already demonstrated that in second-temple Jewish literature this term can connote Israel’s divine vocation, a vocation which arises from her special knowledge of God. Paul himself elsewhere uses the idea of Abraham’s “seed” to imply a special divine vocation for Jews.¹⁶² Although Paul sometimes sees Abraham’s fatherhood / seed as having *soteriological* implications, the motif takes on a special *vocational* significance when it is associated with the particular nation of Israel. In this second sense, the “seed of Abraham” does not refer to all saved people, but rather to the *particular* people whom God chose to achieve his purposes to extend his blessing to the rest of the world.

There is good reason, moreover, to see an allusion here to a particular text from the Scriptures: Isa 41:8–9. As we have already seen, Paul has introduced himself to his readers as the Isaianic “Servant” (δοῦλος, Rom 1:1),¹⁶³ and has just described his own ministry as the fulfilment of Israel’s vocation by alluding to particular passages from Isaiah 52–53 (Rom 10:15–16).¹⁶⁴ The very first reference to the figure of the Servant in the book of Isaiah, Isa 41:8–9, is also a statement of assurance to Israel as a whole, and refers to Israel as the “seed of Abraham”:

¹⁶¹ Ch. 2, pp. 60–64.

¹⁶² Ch. 2, pp. 67–75.

¹⁶³ Ch. 3, pp. 87–100.

¹⁶⁴ Pp. 217–226.

You, Israel, [my] Servant,
 Jacob, whom I have chosen,
 Seed of Abraham, whom I have loved,
 You of whom I have taken hold from the ends of the earth,
 and called from the peaks,
 and spoke to you:
 You are my Servant
 I have chosen you
 and I have not abandoned you.

σὺ δέ Ἰσραηλ δοῦλε¹⁶⁵ [μου]
 Ἰακωβ ὃν ἐξελεξάμην
 σπέρμα Ἀβρααμ ὃν ἠγάπησα
 οὗ ἀντελαβόμην ἀπ’ ἄκρων τῆς γῆς
 καὶ ἐκ τῶν σκοπιῶν αὐτῆς ἐκάλεσά σε
 καὶ εἶπά σοι
 δοῦλος¹⁶⁶ μου εἶ
 ἐξελεξάμην σε
 καὶ οὐκ ἐγκατέλιπόν σε

There are many parallels between this passage and Paul’s statements in Rom 11: the Servant is introduced as “Israel” and “seed of Abraham” (cf. Rom 11:1); he is “chosen” (cf. Rom 11:5, 7, 28) and “called” (cf. Rom 11:29) by God; and he will not be abandoned by God (cf. Rom 11:1–2). Although this Servant will later be given a task in relation to the rest of the world (Isa 42:1–9, 49:1–7), nevertheless, the vocational dimension of the concepts of the “Servant” and the “seed of Abraham” cannot ultimately be separated from their soteriological implications. Paul, then, by alluding to this text, is claiming that if God is using the “Servant” and “seed of Abraham” to bring blessing to the world, then surely he will not abandon the “Servant” himself.

Paul also refers to his membership of the “tribe of Benjamin.” Paul’s reference to a “tribe” highlights his ethnic status, which makes it clear that he is not just speaking of Abraham’s international “fatherhood” of all those who believe, both Jew and Gentile (cf. Rom 4:13, 16, 18). Rather, he is speaking of Abraham’s fatherhood of this one ethnic group, comprising tribes such as Benjamin, who have a particular role to play in bringing about international blessing in God’s purposes. The tribe of

¹⁶⁵ Although the LXX reads παῖς, the other translators read δοῦλε (Ziegler 1939, 272) which is probably closer to Paul’s usage (see ch. 3, p. 93).

¹⁶⁶ Although the LXX reads παῖς, the other translators read δοῦλος (Ziegler 1939, 273); cf. n. 165.

Benjamin occupied a distinguished place in Israel's history.¹⁶⁷ Furthermore, it is likely that Paul is comparing himself here with another famous Benjaminite, Jeremiah (cf. Jer 1:1). Paul has already introduced himself with an allusion to Jeremiah's prophetic / priestly ministry (Rom 1:1).¹⁶⁸ He elsewhere speaks of himself in terms of Jeremiah's commission: Jeremiah was called to be "prophet to the nations" (Jer 1:5, cf. Gal 1:15–16), and was set by God over the nations "to uproot and to tear down and to destroy and to build up and to plant" (Jer 1:10 LXX; cf. 2 Cor 10:8, 13:10). It is quite possible, then, that Paul is comparing his own tumultuous ministry of radical reversal with that of Jeremiah, and perhaps even alluding to Jeremiah's message of eschatological hope for Israel in the midst of present judgment (e.g. Jer 31:31–34 [LXX 38:31–34], cf. 2 Cor 3:6).

Paul's self-description as an Israelite from the seed of Abraham and the tribe of Benjamin, therefore, provides the hinge for Israel's transition from a negative role to a positive role in God's worldwide purposes. In Rom 9–10, Israel is understood as God's negative "instrument of wrath" (Rom 9:22), and the apostolic mission is the means by which God will achieve his positive purposes in the world. But since the apostle is himself an Israelite, then "Israel" must be more than an instrument of wrath. Paul affirms this by restating his initial question (Rom 11:2a). Israel is described, significantly, as a "people" (λαός)¹⁶⁹ who are "foreknown" by God (Rom 11:2a). This concept of "foreknowledge" expresses a positive relationship between God and Israel. It is used elsewhere by Paul to express eschatological confidence (Rom 8:29). The concept of God knowing Israel prior to her call is also used by the LXX to express God's special commitment to people whom he has chosen to achieve

¹⁶⁷ Niebuhr 1992, 106. Benjamin was the tribe which remained loyal to David when the two kingdoms formed (1 Kgs 12:21) (Barth 1983, 82 n. 3). Benjamin was also associated closely with Judah in the return from exile (Ezra 1:5, 4:1, 10:9; Neh 11:4–9). The tribe of Benjamin itself produced some important leaders and preachers: e.g. Jeremiah (Jer 1:1), Mordecai (Est 2:5) and King Saul (1 Sam 9:1, cf. the possible allusion to 1 Sam 12:22 in Rom 11:1–2) (Schunck 1992, 1.672–673; cf. Schlier 1977, 322; Wright 2002, 675).

¹⁶⁸ See ch. 3, p. 101.

¹⁶⁹ The LXX tends to distinguish between Israel as the λαός (עַם) and the Gentiles as ἔθνη (גוֹיִם) (Gadenz 2009, 79). The term λαός was quite rare in first-century "secular" contexts, but it was very common in the LXX (and in citations of or allusions to the LXX) as an ancient and exalted title for God's chosen nation, Israel (Strathmann and Meyer 1967, 29, 32, 35). Cf. Umemoto (1994, 24–25) who discusses Philo's usage. Admittedly, in 2 Cor 6:16 (cf. Tit 2:14), Paul applies a text which speaks about Israel as God's λαός to Gentiles. However, here no ecclesiological point is being made. The topic there is not Gentile inclusion in Israel, but rather God's presence and Christian holiness.

his worldwide purposes, including the Isaianic Servant and the prophet Jeremiah (e.g. Isa 49:1, Jer 1:5).

The fact that Paul presents himself as the paradigmatic Israelite is highly significant for Paul's conception of the nature of Israel's positive divine vocation. As we have seen in our discussion of Rom 10, Paul has described himself as somebody who *believes* and *speaks a message*, in contrast to Israel, who pursues righteousness by "doing" or "works." The fact that *Paul* is the paradigm for Israel's divine vocation implies, therefore, that Israel's hope and her vocation is not to be found in her *works*, but in her possession of God's *word*, which can now truly be seen as an advantage (cf. 3:1–2). The following discussion (Rom 11:2b–33), then, can be understood as Paul's account of how God's word, especially the word preached by Paul himself, provides the basis for hope for Israel's place in God's purposes.

5.4.2. The apostle against Israel (Rom 11:2b–10)

In Rom 11:2b–10, Paul highlights the fact that even the existence of God's word *against Israel* provides some hope for Israel.

Paul gives the example of the prophet Elijah, who speaks a word "against Israel" (κατὰ τοῦ Ἰσραήλ, Rom 11:2b). Paul's description of Elijah initially seems to be a simple return to the prior antithesis between the believing preachers (Rom 10:14–18) and the people of Israel (Rom 10:19–21). Many of the features of the Elijah narrative (1 Kgs [LXX 3 Kgdms] 17–19) suggest its appropriateness as a prefigurement of this antithesis. The narrative describes a confrontation between two opposing conceptions of Israel. The first conception of Israel is based on the hearing and speaking of God's word, and is represented by the prophet. The second conception, set in direct opposition to the first, is based on the social structures of Israel, and is represented by the King. Elijah lives and acts on the margins of Israel, receiving and proclaiming "the message [ῥῆμα] of the Lord" (1 Kgs 17:2, 5, 8, 16, 24; 18:1, 24; 19:9; cf. Rom 10:8). Elijah preaches this ῥῆμα among the Gentiles, bringing blessing (1 Kgs 17:8–24; cf. Rom 10:14–18). Elijah also speaks *against* Israel, condemning Israel for its apostasy (1 Kgs 18; cf. Rom 10:19–21). In a renewed Sinai experience (1 Kgs 19:8–14) Elijah expresses his own anguish about Israel, complaining that Israel has rejected God's word by killing his prophets. Elijah alone

constitutes a “remnant” whom “Israel” is “seeking” to kill also (1 Kgs 19:10, 14; Rom 11:3).¹⁷⁰

Unlike the pattern of Rom 9–10, however, the antithesis between the preacher and Israel is now partially *broken through* by the word of God (χρηματισμός, Rom 11:4) to Elijah. God reveals that his “remnant-keeping” activity extends beyond the prophet to a substantial number of Israelites: seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal (Rom 11:4). Just as the existence of the prophetic word against Israel acts as a sign of hope for the political kingdom of Israel, so in Paul’s time the existence of God’s word against Israel by way of the Israelite apostle guarantees a “remnant” of Israelites (Rom 11:5).¹⁷¹ Paul presumably sees this “remnant” fulfilled in the small yet significant group of his fellow Jews who, by responding to his prophetic condemnation, have come to put their faith in Christ for righteousness and proclaim the gospel alongside him (cf. Rom 10:1–8).

Nevertheless, the “remnant” motif only provides limited hope. In fact, Paul pointedly removes the phrase “in Israel” (ἐν Ἰσραὴλ) from his source text (1 Kgs [LXX 3 Kgdms] 19:18) and replaces it with “for myself” (ἐμαυτῷ, Rom 11:4).¹⁷² In doing so, Paul highlights the *continued* antithesis between God’s freedom to show mercy and Israel’s status as a nation (cf. Rom 9:6–29). The “remnant” which arises from the apostolic word is “chosen” by “grace” and remains fundamentally opposed to those who still understand the Law according to “works” (Rom 11:6, cf. 9:32). The remnant thus continues to be opposed to “Israel,” i.e. the “rest” who are still seeking to achieve righteousness by Law (Rom 11:7, cf. 10:3, 20), failing to attain it (Rom 11:7, cf. 9:31), remain hardened by God himself (Rom 11:7–8, cf. 9:18) and in this way remain in opposition to God’s Messiah, “stumbling” (Rom 11:9, cf. 9:32–33). This return to the antithesis of Rom 9–10 demonstrates that the concept of the “remnant” is of limited value for understanding the way in which Paul’s ministry contributes to Israel’s salvation. The apostolic word *against* Israel is only the beginning of the apostle’s solution to Israel’s “hardening.”

¹⁷⁰ Theobald (2009, 159) points to the parallels between 1 Thess 2:14–16 and Rom 11:3–6. Both passages speak of the killing of the prophets by disobedient Jews, and of a “remnant” which in 1 Thess consists of the Jewish communities in Judea, above all in Jerusalem.

¹⁷¹ Schlier 1977, 322–323.

¹⁷² Stanley 1992, 154–155; 1993, 49–50.

5.4.3. *The apostle and Israel: Complementary vocations (Rom 11:11–14)*

Paul's final significant first-person statement in Rom 9–11 appears in Rom 11:13–14. Paul's reference to "Gentiles" (Rom 11:13, cf. vv. 11–12) and the concept of "envy" (Rom 11:14, cf. v. 11) show that Paul's statements in vv. 13–14 must be understood in light of Rom 11:11–14 as a whole:

I ask then: Did they stumble in order that they might fail? Absolutely not!
But by their failure, salvation [has come about] for the Gentiles,
so provoking them to envy.
Now if their failure is the wealth of the world,
and their loss is the wealth of nations,
how much more their fullness?
I am speaking to you, to Gentiles:
inasmuch as I myself am apostle to the Gentiles,
I glorify my ministry,
if, somehow, I may make my flesh envious,
and save some of them. (Rom 11:13–14)

Λέγω οὖν, μὴ ἔπταισαν ἵνα πέσωσιν; μὴ γένοιτο·
ἀλλὰ τῷ αὐτῶν παραπτώματι ἡ σωτηρία τοῖς ἔθνεσιν
εἰς τὸ παραζηλώσαι αὐτούς.
εἰ δὲ τὸ παράπτωμα αὐτῶν πλοῦτος κόσμος
καὶ τὸ ἥττημα αὐτῶν πλοῦτος ἔθνων,
πόσῳ μᾶλλον τὸ πλήρωμα αὐτῶν.
ὕμῖν δὲ λέγω τοῖς ἔθνεσιν·
ἐφ' ὅσον μὲν οὖν εἰμι ἐγὼ ἐθνῶν ἀπόστολος,
τὴν διακονίαν μου δοξάζω,
εἴ πως παραζηλώσω μου τὴν σάρκα
καὶ σώσω τινὰς ἐξ αὐτῶν.

Rom 11:11–14 is a statement about the complex teleological relationship between Israel's role in God's purposes and Paul's own vocation. This statement, in fact, fulfils and resolves many of the issues which had been raised by prior statements of the relationship between Israel's vocation and Paul's vocation. We saw in Rom 9:1–5 that the gift of the Law to Israel was meant to issue in the worldwide preaching of Christ. We also saw, however, that Paul was in anguish because Israel had failed to recognize or affirm this relationship. In fact, we saw in Rom 10 that Israel had adopted a *competing* vocation. Paul, by preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, was fulfilling Israel's vocation; yet Israel as a whole, by reading the Law in terms of "works" and "doing," had failed to achieve its divine vocation. In Rom 11:11–14, however, Paul sounds a new note: the conflict between Israel's vocation and Paul's

vocation should not be viewed ultimately as a failure. In fact, this conflict is an inevitable part of God's purposes both for Israel and for the world. Paul here does not simply view Israel's failure to read the Law rightly as an *alternative* to his apostolic mission. Rather, he sees this failure, in God's purposes, as inextricably *linked* with his apostolic mission. Israel's failure was part of her role in God's worldwide purposes through Christ; as such, it acts in concert with Paul's own apostolic preaching of the gospel. This gives Paul hope that although Israel's failure was and is quite real, it will not be her final destiny.

In Rom 11:11, Paul begins to clarify how Israel's failure has served God's wider purposes. It is highly significant that Paul employs a purpose clause rather than simply a result clause: he asks whether Israel stumbled "*in order that they might fail*" (ἵνα πέσωσιν)? Paul is not questioning the *reality* of Israel's failure—indeed, Paul later explicitly affirms that Israel has indeed "failed" using the same verb (πίπτειν, Rom 11:22).¹⁷³ Rather, Paul is discussing whether this failure constitutes the ultimate divine *purpose* for Israel's stumbling. He strongly denies that this is the case (μὴ γένοιτο) and then proceeds to explain God's true purpose in Israel's "failure" (παραπτώμα). Paul's argument so far in Romans suggests that Israel's "failure" here should be understood primarily as their transgressions against the Law itself.¹⁷⁴ Paul is thus referring to the *revelatory* effect of Israel's sin, as described in the Scriptures.¹⁷⁵ This revelation works in concert with Paul's own gospel proclamation. On the one hand, as Gentiles read Israel's Scriptures, they see Israel transgressing the Law and are held accountable to God; on the other hand, as they hear Christ proclaimed by the Israelite apostle, they believe in Christ for salvation (cf. Rom 3:19–22). When understood in light of the gospel of Jesus Christ, then, Israel's

¹⁷³ Thus there is no need to suggest fine distinctions between the seriousness of the words πταίειν and πίπτειν: Paul is not here claiming that even though Israel has had a reasonably severe trip-up (πταίειν), nevertheless this will not result in an unrecoverable fall (πίπτειν); *pace* e.g. Cranfield 1975, 2.554–555; Stowers 1994, 313–314.

¹⁷⁴ Cf. esp. Rom 5:20–21. This position is argued compellingly by Harink (2007, 369–372); cf. Hofius (1989, 181–182).

¹⁷⁵ This is to be preferred to other explanations which have less explicit grounding in the text of Romans itself, e.g. that Jewish rejection of Jesus resulted in his salvific death (Barth 2009, 11.83–84 = CD 2/2.279; Cranfield 1975, 2.556), or that Jewish rejection of Paul's gospel caused him to go further afield and preach salvation to the Gentiles (Munck 1959, 44), or that the Jews' failure to respond to the gospel delayed the parousia and opened up more time for him to preach to the Gentiles (Baker 2005, 478–480; Donaldson 1997, 223–230; Gadenz 2009, 307).

disobedience to the Law acts in partnership with the apostle's proclamation of the gospel; through Israel's failure *and* through Paul's success, Israel is testifying to salvation in Christ.¹⁷⁶

Paul then claims that there is a *further* stage in God's purposes (εἰς τό, Rom 11:11): when salvation comes to the Gentiles through the revelation of Israel's failure, Israel in turn is provoked to envy (verb παραζηλοῦν). In Rom 10:19, this same word was used to emphasize Israel's idolatrous apostasy and God's subsequent turning away from Israel to the nations.¹⁷⁷ Here, however, the word has a positive connotation: it becomes a seed of hope for Israel's salvation.¹⁷⁸ In Rom 11:12, Paul explains *how* Israel's envy will lead to her salvation. As Israel's failure to keep the Law is preached to the nations, and the nations are thus driven to put their faith in Christ for salvation, Israel will realize that her failure has indeed achieved God's worldwide purposes, and will desire even more. The Isaianic eschatological vision expected that God's salvation of Israel would result in her becoming a "light" for revelation to the world, attracting the nations to God's glory in Zion (Isa 60:3). Thus the Law would proceed from Zion (Isa 2:2–4), and the "wealth of the nations" (πλοῦτος ἔθνῶν) would be brought to Zion, where Israel would act as priests of the world, distributing God's blessing from Jerusalem to the nations (Isa 60:5, 16; 61:6). When Israel's failure is viewed as acting in concert with Paul's gospel-preaching ministry, it can be seen that Israel's failure actually brings the "wealth of the nations" (πλοῦτος ἔθνῶν, Rom 11:12; cf. 9:23). When Israelites see this, they will be driven to envy, since they will see that they themselves are missing out on the benefits of their prominent place in the fulfilment of God's eschatological purposes.¹⁷⁹ This envy will

¹⁷⁶ Hence "In every way, then, Israel continues (though unknowingly) to receive and bear witness *to the gospel* through her continued hearing of and dedication to the Torah of Moses" (Harink 2007, 377, emphasis original).

¹⁷⁷ Bell 1994, 95–103, 106.

¹⁷⁸ Paul's citation of Deut 32:21 in Rom 10:19b already implied a glimmer of hope for Israel. The song of Moses itself ends with the nations rejoicing alongside Israel (Deut 32:43 LXX, cited by Paul in Rom 15:10) (Bell 2005, 249; Hays 1989, 164; McConville 2002, 440–441; Wagner 2006, 92–93; Watson 2004, 440–442, 464; see p. 215 n. 108 for textual issues associated with this verse). This enables Paul later to use the "envy" motif, which is here a negative description of Israel, as a means for Israel's salvation (Rom 11:11, 14).

¹⁷⁹ It has been suggested that Paul is referring here to Israel's jealous "emulation" of Gentiles: i.e. when Israelites see that the nations are enjoying their soteriological privileges by way of faith in Christ, they will desire those soteriological privileges for themselves, and thus come to faith in Christ (Bell 1994, 165–166; Munck 1959, 43–45). This explanation is certainly part of the answer, since the

ultimately drive them to faith in Christ themselves, in order to regain their pride of place as the bearers of God's revelation. This would be their "fulfilment" (πλήρωμα).¹⁸⁰

In Rom 11:13–14, then, Paul speaks directly to the Gentiles and affirms that his own apostolic ministry to them has a vital role to play in this divine plan to bring salvation to Israel and to restore their own pride of place in God's purposes. Inasmuch as Paul is apostle to the Gentiles, he "glorifies" his own eschatological ministry, in order to bring salvation for other Israelites through envy. Once Paul's own apostolic ministry is brought into the picture, Paul's uncompromising proclamation of Israel's failure is no longer simply a word of condemnation against Israel (cf. Rom 9:30–10:4, 10:19–21). Rather, Israel's failure, which has achieved God's purposes in the world, will finally end in salvation for Israelites.

5.4.4. The apostle and Israel: Corresponding vocations (Rom 11:15–16)

In Rom 11:15, in fact, Paul describes Israel's role towards the world in terms which are reminiscent of the subject of Paul's gospel—Christ himself (cf. 5:10–11).¹⁸¹ Israel's failure to keep the Law and her consequent rejection by God is, in some sense, equivalent to the death of Christ which Paul himself proclaims. This equivalence consists in the fact that both Israel's failure *and* Christ's death are means by which God has brought about his worldwide purposes of "reconciliation." Israel's failure to keep the Law reveals sin and wrath to the world (cf. Rom 3:19) while Christ's death removes sin and wrath (cf. Rom 5:8–9). This means, however, that Israel's future must also, in some sense, be understood in relation to Christ's future. Just as Christ's death resulted in life, so Israel's failure will not be permanent but will also result in "acceptance" and "life from the dead." Thus Israel, *both* in her

gospel of Christ is indeed the power of God for salvation for all who believe, both Jew and Greek (cf. Rom 1:16). However, it fails to explain the ongoing sense of differentiation between Israel and the nations in God's salvific plan (the Jew *first* and *also* the Greek), a pattern which Paul is at pains to emphasize in Rom 11:13–24.

¹⁸⁰ This explanation answers the objection of Baker (2005, 470) that παραζηλοῦν cannot have positive soteriological significance here because it is an entirely negative word in Rom 10:19. In Baker's view, Paul is continuing to describe two antithetical outcomes for his ministry. On the one hand, Paul's ministry will cause "his flesh" to be envious; on the other, some of them will be saved. This ignores, however, the fact that Paul's self-reference in 11:1 constitutes a decisive turning point in his argument, transforming statements about condemnation into statements about hope (see above).

¹⁸¹ Cf. Watson 2007b, 336–337; Wright 1991, 248; 2002, 682–683.

“rejection” (ἀποβολή) and in her “acceptance” (πρόσληψις) has a central role to play in God’s purposes for the world, as revealed in Paul’s gospel (Rom 11:15). Israel always was, and remains, the special and distinct nation, the instrument of the God who gives “life to the dead” for all the other nations of whom Abraham is the father (cf. Rom 4:17). In this way, the strange and tension-laden connection between Israel and Christ which was initially flagged in Rom 9:5 is resolved. Paul’s vocation and Israel’s vocation finally correspond.

5.4.5. The apostle’s vocation and Israel’s salvation

Between Rom 11:14 and Rom 11:15, there seems to be shift of emphasis. In verse 14, Paul describes his own apostolic ministry in the first person, and envisages the salvation of a limited number (τινες) of Israelites. From verse 15 onwards, however, Paul discontinues his first-person language and begins to use heightened eschatological language: he speaks of the “reconciliation of the world”, “life from the dead” (Rom 11:15) and the salvation of “all Israel” (Rom 11:25). This suggests to some interpreters that Paul has abandoned his former emphasis on the significance of his own apostolic mission in favour of an eschatological “mystery” (cf. Rom 11:25) concerning a future divine act by which Israel will be saved.¹⁸² However, the connective particle γάρ between verses 14 and 15 implies that Paul does not view the salvation of Israel occurring apart from his apostolic ministry. Johannes Munck makes this point forcefully. In Munck’s view, Paul sees himself occupying *the* crucial place in God’s eschatological purposes for both Israel and the nations.¹⁸³ The collection for Jerusalem, in particular, is decisive for Israel’s salvation. In Rom 11:13, Paul speaks of glorifying “my ministry” (διακονία[v] μου) and he uses an identical phrase to refer to the collection in Rom 15:31 (cf. v. 25). Through the collection, Munck argues, unbelieving Jews will be confronted with the fulfilment of eschatological expectations concerning the pilgrimage of the nations, and will thus be moved through envy to accept the gospel (cf. Rom 11:13–14).¹⁸⁴

¹⁸² E.g. Moo 1996, 692–696, 713–726.

¹⁸³ Munck 1959, 42–49.

¹⁸⁴ Munck 1959, 301–305; see also Nickle 1966, 129–143.

Munck is correct to maintain that Paul believes his apostolic *mission* to have a decisive eschatological significance in the achievement of God's plans for the world. However, the apostolic mission cannot simply be restricted to Paul's own personal activity. Paul has already referred to his apostolate to the Gentiles as belonging to a plural group of people, not merely to himself (Rom 1:5, 10:8, 10:15).¹⁸⁵ Furthermore, the collection for Jerusalem cannot be ultimately decisive for Paul's hopes for unbelieving Israel: the collection is directed towards the "saints," who are probably Christ-believing Jews rather than unbelievers (Rom 15:25–26, 31; cf. Rom 1:7), and in any case, Paul believes he has further work to do in Spain after he has delivered the collection (Rom 15:24).¹⁸⁶

It is better, then, to view the collection for Jerusalem as a significant symbol of a more fundamental reality. This reality is that through the proclamation of the gospel—both by Paul and by others, both in the present and in the future—Israel's eschatological vocation toward the nations is being fulfilled. This reality can be seen concretely, not only in the collection for Jerusalem, but also in the ongoing communal worship of the Christ-believing communities themselves, as Jews and Gentiles are encouraged together by Israel's Scriptures (Rom 15:4), come to the same mind (Rom 15:5), glorify God together "with one mouth" (ἐν ἑνὶ στόματι, Rom 15:6; cf. 15:8–13), and welcome one another while affirming each other's distinctive identities (Rom 15:7, cf. Rom 14). It is likely that Paul viewed all such results of his gospel preaching as a potential stimulus to Israel's "envy" and thus to the salvation of "all Israel."¹⁸⁷

Paul's assurance for Israel's salvation, then, is not ultimately in his own individual activity, but rather in his divine gospel-preaching vocation. He believes that *both* through Israel's past failure, to which the Law of Moses bears witness, and *also* through the ongoing preaching of the apostolic gospel—by himself and others—God

¹⁸⁵ On Rom 10:15 as a reference to Paul's Gentile mission, see above.

¹⁸⁶ Zeller 1973, 279–284

¹⁸⁷ There are numerous exegetical issues surrounding the identity of "all Israel" and the manner and timing of their salvation, which we do not have space to enter into here. Zoccali (2008, 303–314) surveys the scholarship and argues persuasively that "all Israel" (Rom 11:26) refers to "the complete number of elect from the historical/empirical nation." Paul is describing the process whereby Jews are made envious of the salvation of Gentiles and consequently trust in Christ for their own salvation, without necessarily assuming that this process will occur for every individual Jew or that it will occur all at once at the Parousia.

will achieve his purposes for the world. Paul's assurance concerning Israel's salvation is not based simply in his own personal missionary effort, but in his confidence that God is fulfilling his purposes for "all Israel" through the ongoing Gentile mission, which continues to proclaim the gospel of Christ as the fulfilment of the Law of Moses.

5.5. Summary: Paul's fulfilment of Israel's vocation in Romans 9–11

We have argued that Paul's own apostolic vocation plays a decisive role in the argument of Rom 9–11. Paul's authorial persona is not only a prominent feature of Rom 9–11, it also forms the framework for his entire argument. By concentrating on Paul's first-person statements in Rom 9–11, we have demonstrated that Paul is seeking to use his own vocation as apostle to the Gentiles to resolve the tensions he sees concerning Israel's place in God's global purposes.

At the beginning of Rom 9, Paul identifies deeply with his fellow Jews using a series of first-person statements expressing his grief and sorrow. Paul's grief does not simply arise from his sympathy with Israel's soteriological plight due to her "unbelief." Rather, Paul's concern arises from the fact that the majority of his fellow Jews have failed to come to terms with his own gospel-centred understanding of Israel's divine *vocation*. In Rom 9:1–5, Paul is describing, in compact form, the intimate yet profoundly *conflicted* relationship between Israel's place in God's worldwide purposes and his own divine gospel-preaching vocation. Paul affirms that Israel has been given a gift of divine revelation in the Law, which is indeed a privilege (Rom 9:4). Yet he also maintains that Israel must ultimately be understood from the point of view of the gospel of Christ, which is the fulfilment of God's worldwide purposes *through* Israel and her Law (Rom 9:5). Israel's failure to understand the nature of her own divine vocation, therefore, threatens Paul's gospel-preaching mission at its deepest level.

In Rom 10, Paul presents his own ministry as an alternative fulfilment of Israel's vocation. Paul and Israel here are described as having *competing* vocations. There is a sharp antithesis between two conceptions of Jewish identity, which correspond to two different understandings of the Law of Moses and two different conceptions of Israel's role in God's worldwide purposes. The mainstream Jewish community

understands the Law according to human activity and sees it as their vocation to preserve Israel's purity as God's holy, Law-keeping people. Paul, however, believes that this understanding of Jewish identity does not take into account the true purpose of the Law. The Law's purpose is not to bring about righteousness by works but to convict the world of sin and to bear witness to faith in Christ. Hence the alternative conception of Jewish identity, to which Paul is committed, understands the Law according to its testimony to the gospel message about faith in Christ. Paul's own preaching (Rom 10:8) is the correct and primary response to God's revelation to Israel. In Rom 10:14–18, Paul demonstrates the scriptural necessity for the Gentile mission in which he plays a key role. In Rom 10:19–21, he asserts that the “mainstream” conception of Jewish identity is in fact commensurate with those Scriptures which speak of the rejection of Israel for her disobedience. Where the apostolic mission is enjoying great success, Israel as a whole is still experiencing ongoing failure.

In Rom 11, however, Paul's vocation and Israel's vocation *converge*. Paul's self-description in Rom 11:1 is a decisive turning point in the entire argument of Rom 9–11. Paul describes himself in terms of Israel's *vocation*: he is an “Israelite” and one of the (ethnically defined) “seed of Abraham.” This description of Paul as a paradigmatic Israelite provides the hinge for Israel's transition from a negative role to a positive role in God's worldwide purposes. Paul no longer simply views Israel's failure to read the Law rightly as an *alternative* to his apostolic mission; rather, he sees that this failure, in God's purposes, is inextricably *linked* with his apostolic mission. Paul shows that Israel's “failure” was in fact a means for Gentile salvation rather than an end in itself; Israel's failure was part of her role in God's worldwide purposes through Christ. Indeed, Israel's failure testifies to Christ, and so acts in concert with Paul's own apostolic preaching of the gospel. Thus Israel's hardening and rebellion is not her ultimate role in God's worldwide salvific plans. Paul's ministry as apostle to the Gentiles will cause other Israelites to be envious that God is achieving his plans for the world in this way. This will bring them to trust in Christ themselves, leading to their salvation and to the restoration of their own prominent place in God's worldwide purposes.

Chapter 6: Conclusions

Our contention in this dissertation has been that *Paul's apostolic mission was his way of being Jewish*. Paul, through preaching Christ to the Gentiles, was convinced that he was fulfilling Israel's role in God's worldwide purposes. For many of Paul's Jewish contemporaries, Israel's divine role consisted primarily of keeping and teaching the precepts of the Law of Moses as an exemplary witness to God's power and wisdom. For Paul, however, Jewish identity and vocation was expressed primarily by preaching the gospel of Christ, as the *fulfilment* of the Law of Moses, to the Gentiles.

Our primary methodology in this dissertation has been to examine *Paul's Jewish identity*. We have not been seeking to assess Paul's Jewishness against an external standard (past or present). Rather, we have been seeking to investigate Paul's *own* understanding of Jewishness in the light of his Jewish context. Moreover, we have not been seeking primarily to compare Paul's soteriological beliefs with the soteriological beliefs of other first-century Jews. Rather, we have been seeking to examine how Paul understood the *distinct* value of Jewish identity *within* the "saved" Christ-believing community. Paul did not believe that Jewishness defined the boundaries of salvation, yet he continued to maintain that Jewishness was theologically significant. This is because Paul's discussions of Jewishness are undergirded by the concept of a divine *vocation*. The term "vocation" here refers to the notion that the distinct existence and concrete practice of Jewish people stems from a special divine intention and implies a special role for Jews within God's wider purposes.

Paul's vision of Jewish identity and vocation was deeply controversial. Paul acknowledged the existence of a "mainstream" understanding of Jewish identity, an identity which was focussed on keeping and teaching the Law of Moses as an exemplary witness to God's power and wisdom. This was a view which Paul had once held and which he still saw as predominant in the synagogue. Paul, however, was seeking to *contest* and *redefine* Jewish identity in such a way that it held a new, distinct and theologically significant place *outside* the synagogue, within his own

Christ-believing communities. Moreover, this contested redefinition of Jewish identity was intimately related to Paul's own divine vocation as apostle to the Gentiles.

Most of our investigation in this dissertation was devoted to a single letter—Romans. Among Paul's letters, it is Romans which is most explicitly and directly concerned with issues of Jewish identity. Furthermore, Paul in Romans describes his *own* gospel ministry as a Jew-Gentile dynamic. He includes a statement of Jewish pre-eminence within the thesis statement of Romans itself: the gospel is the power of God for salvation “for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek” (Rom 1:16). These two concepts—Jewish equality (“all who believe”) and Jewish pre-eminence (“the Jew first”)—are the subject of a frequent dialectic throughout the rest of the letter to the Romans. The former concept has been the subject of a great deal of scholarly discussion. It was, however, the latter concept—the idea of a distinct and significant place for Jews within God's global purposes—which we have sought to bring to prominence in our discussion of Paul's understanding of Jewish identity and Jewish vocation in Romans.

6.1. Summary of the argument

In **chapter 2**, we surveyed three key aspects of Paul's language of Jewish identity in his letters: Jewish distinctiveness, divine revelation and divine vocation.

1. Paul saw an ongoing, distinct and positive value for Jewish identity. Paul believed that Jews were a distinct ethnic group, and that their ethnic distinctiveness had an ongoing theological significance, even in light of the gospel of Christ.
2. For Paul, the value of Jewish identity arose primarily from the conviction that Israel's Scriptures, and the Law of Moses in particular, were a special gift of divine revelation to Israel. Jewish identity was in large part generated and sustained by the communal reading of the Law of Moses as a divine revelation.
3. For Paul, as for a number of his contemporaries, the possession of divine revelation by Jews led to a sense of vocation—i.e. a special place and role

within God's wider purposes. There was a variety of views amongst Paul's Jewish contemporaries about the exact nature of this divine vocation. Paul's former view of Israel's vocation, which he associated with the terms "Judaism," "zeal[ot]" and "Pharisee," had construed Israel's role in God's purposes as a call to live as a holy nation in the midst of the other nations, and to maintain that holiness by seeking to protect and remove Jews from the contaminating influence of unclean and sinful Gentiles. Paul, however, had rejected this view of Israel's vocation in light of the revelation of Christ. Paul's new construal of Israel's vocation involved preaching the gospel of Christ, as the fulfilment of Israel's Law, to the Gentiles.

In **chapter 3**, we demonstrated that a sense of Jewish vocation was foundational for Paul's self-description in his letter to the Romans. In particular, we showed that Paul deliberately framed his letter (Rom 1:1–15, 15:14–16:24, esp. 15:14–33) by presenting his apostolic ministry as the fulfilment of positive scripturally-based eschatological expectations concerning Israel's divine vocation with respect to the nations. Prior to our study, the Jewish elements in Paul's apostolic self-presentation had tended to be presented in an *ad hoc* manner, and as such had often been passed over or dismissed too readily by other scholars. We sought to fit these various Jewish elements into a coherent whole, while answering some common objections against the identification of scriptural elements in Paul's self-presentation. We saw that there were two related aspects to Paul's apostolic self-presentation:

1. Paul presents himself as participating in the ministry of the "Servant of the Lord," a figure described in Isaiah 40–55 who both represents Israel and also has a decisive eschatological role vis-à-vis the nations.
2. Paul describes his apostolic vocation in terms of Israel's eschatological "priesthood" among the nations, using terminology and concepts from Jeremiah 1 and Isaiah 60–61.

We then compared and contrasted Paul's understanding of his mission with other first-century expressions of Jewish vocation. We compared and contrasted Paul's description of the Jewishness of his apostolic ministry in the outer frame of Romans with the various ways in which Paul's Jewish contemporaries expressed their role in

God's wider purposes. We found that Paul's self-description corresponded more closely to certain Jewish *eschatological* expectations concerning Israel's role vis-à-vis the nations than it did to any other expression of Israel's vocation amongst Paul's Jewish contemporaries. Despite the close and striking correspondence between Paul's self-description and Jewish eschatological expectations, however, we found that there were also a number of apparent anomalies. These anomalies suggested that there was further work to do in exploring the nature of Paul's understanding of Jewish identity and Jewish vocation.

In **chapter 4**, we concentrated our attention on Rom 2:17–29. This is a passage which begins with a question about Jewish identity, ends with an assertion about Jewish identity, and is replete with terms relating to Jewish identity. We argued that Paul deliberately set this passage in the context of the mainstream Jewish synagogue, in order to *contest* and to *redefine* the distinct nature of Jewish identity and Jewish vocation. Our interpretation is very different to most other interpretations which read Rom 2:17–29 primarily as a discussion about the nature of (Jewish or Christian) *salvation*. We argued that soteriological themes are not the burden of this particular passage. Paul here is primarily discussing the Jewish *vocation* which arises from the possession of divine *revelation*—i.e. God's gift of the Law to Israel. In vv. 17–20, Paul describes the mainstream understanding of Jewish identity and Jewish vocation, which found its exemplary expression in the synagogue-based Law-teacher. In vv. 21–27, Paul deconstructs this view of Jewish identity, using two arguments: in vv. 21–24, he demonstrates that the Jewish Law-teaching vocation had in fact failed in its intention to bring glory to God in the nations; and in vv. 25–27, he uses the figure of the Law-abiding Gentile synagogue adherent to turn the mainstream understanding of Jewish identity and Jewish vocation on its head and to expose its contradictions. In vv. 28–29, Paul begins to reconstruct Jewish identity. Contrary to most interpreters, we argued Paul is not here applying the designations Ἰουδαῖος and περιτομή indiscriminately to all Christ-believers. Rather, Paul is making a specific claim about *Jewish* identity. For Paul, Jewish identity and Jewish vocation must be understood, not in terms of the mainstream, “public” Jewish community which sought to keep the Law and teach it as divine wisdom, but rather in terms of prophetic expectations concerning marginal

figures. By engaging and arguing with the teachers in the synagogue, then, Paul was in the process of *contesting* and *redefining* what it meant for Jews to be Jews.

In **chapter 5**, we examined Rom 9–11 from the perspective of Jewish vocation. We maintained that the argument of Rom 9–11 is not just about “Israel”; it is also, quite fundamentally, about *Paul*. Paul’s apostolic identity, in fact, forms the framework for his argument about Israel. By concentrating on Paul’s first-person statements, we sought to demonstrate that in Rom 9–11, Paul presents his own apostolic vocation, in various ways, as a contrast to, a fulfilment of, and a means of hope for Israel’s place and role in God’s worldwide purposes. Paul, in other words, is using the fundamentally Jewish nature of his own apostolic mission to resolve the tensions he sees concerning Israel’s place and role in God’s purposes.

At the beginning of Rom 9, Paul expresses his grief-filled identification with his fellow Jews. We suggested that Paul’s grief does not simply arise from his sympathy with Israel’s soteriological plight due to her “unbelief”; rather, it arises from the fact that the majority of his fellow Jews have failed to come to terms with his own redefinition of Israel’s divine vocation. Paul shows his readers the intimate yet profoundly *conflicted* relationship between Israel’s place in God’s worldwide purposes and his own divine gospel-preaching vocation. Israel has been given a gift of divine revelation in the Law (Rom 9:4); yet Israel must ultimately be understood from the point of view of the gospel of Christ, which is the fulfilment of God’s worldwide purposes *through* Israel and her Law (Rom 9:5). Israel’s failure to understand the nature of her own divine vocation, therefore, threatens Paul’s gospel-preaching mission at its deepest level. This suggestion was borne out by our subsequent exegesis.

In Rom 10, Paul and Israel are described as having *competing* vocations. Paul’s argument is based on a strong antithesis between two conceptions of Jewish identity, which correspond respectively to two different understandings of the Law of Moses and two different conceptions of Israel’s role in God’s worldwide purposes. The mainstream Jewish community understands the Law according to human activity and sees it as their vocation to preserve Israel’s purity as God’s holy, Law-keeping people. Yet they have failed in this vocation. Paul’s alternative conception of Jewish identity understands the Law according to its testimony to the gospel

message about faith in Christ, and sees the Jewish vocation fulfilled paradigmatically in his own gospel-preaching ministry. Indeed, in contrast to Israel's failed vocation, Paul's vocation has enjoyed great success.

In Rom 11, Paul's vocation and Israel's vocation *converge*. Paul no longer simply views Israel's failure to read the Law rightly as an *alternative* to his apostolic mission; rather, he sees that this failure, in God's purposes, is inextricably *linked* with his apostolic mission. Paul shows that Israel's "failure" was in fact a means for Gentile salvation; Israel's failure was part of her role in God's worldwide purposes through Christ. Indeed, Israel's failure testifies to Christ, and so acts in concert with Paul's own apostolic preaching of the gospel. In turn, Paul's ministry as apostle to the Gentiles will cause other Israelites to be envious that God is achieving his plans for the world in this way. This will bring them to trust in Christ themselves, leading to their salvation and to the restoration of their own prominent place and role in God's worldwide purposes.

6.2. Implications for further study

Pauline interpreters are often too ready to identify "Jewishness" or "membership in Israel" with "salvation" in Paul's thought. Our study has demonstrated that for Paul, Jewish identity does *not* always correspond directly with soteriological boundaries. Rather, discussions of Jewish identity for Paul are often caught up with the distinct concept of a *divine vocation*. Although Paul's discussions of Jewish identity often have soteriological *implications*, they are not necessarily *about* salvation in every instance. We have sought in this study to disentangle vocational and soteriological concepts in some of Paul's discussions of Jewish identity, particularly in some of the key passages in Romans. It is our hope that this disentanglement will enable Paul's explicitly soteriological arguments to be understood with even *more* clarity and precision. We also hope that our study of Romans will assist interpreters of Paul's other letters to avoid oversimplifications as they seek to relate his discussions of Jewishness with his discussions of salvation.

Of course, the concept of vocation in Paul's letters is worthy of further investigation in its own right. We have already suggested, albeit briefly, that the concept of Jewish vocation and ministry might assist in understanding certain texts in Philippians and

Galatians which use terms relating to Jewish identity (περιτομή and Ἰσραήλ).¹ The concept of Jewish vocation may also shed light on certain passages in the Corinthian correspondence. For example, we have seen a clear parallel between descriptors of Jewish identity in 2 Cor 11:22 and the Greco-Roman term for a divine messenger (διάκονος) in 2 Cor 11:23 (cf. Josephus, *B.J.* 3.352–354, 4.626).² It is, therefore, worth exploring whether other references to the διακον- word-group in 2 Corinthians may also evoke or echo Jewish vocational concepts.³ There is also a link between the διακον- word-group and discussions of Jewish identity and apostolic ministry in Colossians and Ephesians which are worthy of further study.⁴

Our investigation also has implications for the study of the early history of interpretation of Paul's Jewish identity. In various places in this dissertation, we have suggested points of contact between Paul's letters and the description of Paul's ministry in Acts. The synagogue setting of Paul's dispute over Jewish vocation in Rom 2:17–29 has resonances in Acts: Paul often begins his preaching in the synagogue, yet his ministry often results in sectarian separation from the synagogue.⁵ Paul's identification with the Isaianic Servant,⁶ which we have already noted in regards to Romans, is also an important feature of Acts.⁷ The concept of Jewish vocation may give rise to further points of contact between Paul's letters and Acts which may help to shed light on both. It may also be fruitful to investigate to what extent Paul's own view of a distinct Jewish vocation based on the possession of divine revelation influenced other early Christian writers; e.g. Augustine's defence of Jewish communities on the basis that Jewish Scripture and practice has its source in God's truth and continues to bear witness to Christ.⁸

Paul's letters are often read as powerful—sometimes even apocalyptic—assertions of the universal scope of salvation for all without distinction through faith in Christ.

¹ Phil 3:3 (see p. 178 n. 171); Gal 6:16 (see p. 62 n. 90).

² See p. 63.

³ 2 Cor 3:3–9, 4:1, 5:18, 6:3–4, and also perhaps the offering of chapters 8–9 (8:4, 19–20; 9:1, 12–13).

⁴ Col 1:23–27; Eph 3:6–7, 4:11–12.

⁵ Cf. Watson 2007b, 61–69.

⁶ See pp. 87–100.

⁷ See p. 92 n. 39.

⁸ Fredriksen 2008, 233–257, 288–350.

This cannot be denied. But Paul's letters are also—indeed, at the very same time—expressions and affirmations of distinct, complementary service-oriented vocations within the Christ-believing community.⁹ The gospel of Christ, for Paul, does not simply obliterate human distinctions. It redeems them, for service to others. Paul's letter to the Romans, then, is not only to be read as a letter about human salvation. It is also to be read as a letter about Jewish vocation. Even more than this: *Romans* is an exercise in Jewish vocation; a powerful instance of the ministry of a Jew to Gentiles; and thus a ministry of Israel to the world. I for one, as a Gentile, am forever grateful for the apostolic ministry of this Christ-believing Jew.

*For I am not ashamed of the gospel,
for it is the power of God for salvation
for everyone who believes:
for the Jew first, and also for the Greek. (Rom 1:16)*

⁹ So Harink (2007): "The gospel declares and creates a full and radical *communion in Christ* among those who were formerly divided by different theopolitical covenants (Jew and Gentile), socioeconomic barriers (slave and free), and sexual differences (male and female) (Gal 3:26–28). But it does *not* do so by means of a simple eradication of differential theopolitical callings, socioeconomic orders, or bodily particularities. Rather, the apocalyptic gospel absorbs, recontextualizes, and redefines these distinctions and differences according to a whole new order in which they are made to serve and bear witness to that gospel in the messianic community." (378)

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