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JONATHAN ANDREW LINEBAUGH

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GOD, GRACE, AND RIGHTEOUSNESS

*WISDOM OF SOLOMON AND PAUL'S LETTER TO THE ROMANS IN CONVERSATION*

BY

JONATHAN A. LINEBAUGH

SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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## Abstract

This thesis places the *Wisdom of Solomon* and Paul's letter to the Romans in conversation. While the lexical and thematic parallels between *Wisdom* 13-15 and Romans 1.18-2.5, and to a lesser extent *Wisdom* 10-12 (or 10-19) and Romans 9-11, have often been noted, comparisons between these two texts have typically identified points of continuity and discontinuity without enquiring into the hermeneutical rationale and theological basis for the observed similarity-in-contrast. This thesis attempts to deepen the dialogue between *Wisdom* and Romans, not primarily by an examination of Paul's use of or dependence upon *Wisdom* but by attempting to consider and compare the essential theological grammar of both texts.

Part one offers a reading of *Wisdom* without reference to Romans. In this way, this thesis both fills a scholarly gap – as no large scale comparison of *Wisdom* and Romans provides a complete reading of the former text – and allows the terms of *Wisdom's* theological description to be configured on the basis of its own basic theological structures. It will be argued that *Wisdom's* absolute distinction between the righteous (Israel) and the ungodly (non-Israel), its emphatic articulation of divine grace and its rereading of Israel's scripture are consistent with and comprehended within a fundamental theological conviction: the God of illimitable love is immutably just.

Part two considers pivotal sections of Romans in dialogue with *Wisdom*. Taking *Wisdom's* central concerns and motifs as topics of conversation, chapters six, seven and eight compare and consider the relationship and respective soteriological status of Jew and Gentile (chapter six), the meaning and relationship of divine righteousness and grace (chapter seven), and the hermeneutical logic that shapes the respective rereadings of Israel's scripture (chapter eight). These multiple points of comparison reflect a common conversational pattern: while *Wisdom* and Romans share much in terms of theme, vocabulary and theological mode, the theologies they articulate are ultimately incommensurable. The central thesis of part two is that the anthropological, semantic and hermeneutical differences between *Wisdom* and Romans point to and are generated by a material contrast at the level of the texts' essential theological logic: *Wisdom's* theology is governed by and reflective of the nuclear significance of the protological order σοφία fashioned, sustains and reveals; the theology of Romans is determined by and radiates from the generative and centrifugal significance of the divine act that is the event, impact and proclamation of Jesus Christ.

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## Declaration

This work has been submitted to the University of Durham in accordance with the regulations for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. It is my own work, and no part of it has been previously submitted to the University of Durham or in any other university for a degree.

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## Abbreviations

All abbreviations of ancient literature, academic journals and monograph series follow the forms indicated in the *SBL Handbook of Style: For Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christians Studies* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2006).

# Chapter 1

## A Contextual Conversation

Il faut en tout dialogue et discours qu'on puisse dire à ceux qui s'en offensent: 'De quoi vous plaignez-vous?' – Blaise Pascal<sup>1</sup>

Scandalous and foolish. This, according to Paul, was how Jews and Greeks classified the proclamation of Christ crucified (1 Cor 1.23). But how would a Diaspora Jew, one soaked in Israel's scriptures and schooled in Hellenistic philosophy, react to the Pauline gospel? This thesis is an attempt to ask and answer this question by reading sections of Paul's letter to the Romans in conversation with the *Wisdom of Solomon* (hereafter, *Wisdom*).<sup>2</sup> Would the author of *Wisdom*, as the extensive thematic and stylistic similarities between Romans and *Wisdom* have suggested to generations of scholars, see Paul as a kinsman, 'not only in ethnic origin but also in theological focus and method'?<sup>3</sup> Or, as 1 Corinthians 1.23 indicates, would he encounter the 'word of the cross' as doubly offensive: a scandal to his Jewish theology and folly to his philosophical conceptualities?

### *Contextualising the Conversation*

Locating the present comparison of Romans and *Wisdom* within the history of research requires, first, situating the particular question about Romans' relationship to *Wisdom* within the larger question about Paul's relationship to Judaism and, second, a review of previous comparisons of Paul and *Wisdom*. The first section, while emphasising the significant change of

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<sup>1</sup> Blaise Pascal, *Pensées* (Brunschvicg edition, 1897), III.188.

<sup>2</sup> The once popular thesis that Paul's polemical statements about Judaism and the law targeted Hellenistic Judaism rather than Palestinian Judaism (e.g. C.G. Montefiore, *Judaism and St. Paul: Two Essays* [London, 1914], 87-112, 126-129; H.-J. Schoeps, *Paulus: Die Theologie des Apostels im Lichte der jüdischen Religionsgeschichte* [Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1959], 224-30) has been fatally problematised by the relativising of the distinction between 'Hellenistic' and 'Palestinian' in M. Hengel, *Judentum und Hellenismus: Studien zu ihrer Begegnung unter besonderer Berücksichtigung Palästinas bis zur Mitte des 2. Jahrhunderts vor Christus* (WUNT 10; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1969); cf. the collection of essays in *Paul Beyond the Judaism/Hellenism Divide* (ed. T. Engberg-Pedersen; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001); G. Boccaccini, 'Myth or Reality', in *Jewish Literatures and Cultures: Contexts and Intertexts* (ed. Y.Z. Eliav and A. Norich; Providence: Brown Judaic Studies, 2008), 55-76. The question being asked here is not how a Diaspora Jew rather than a Palestinian Jew would have reacted to Paul; the question is specifically how the Diaspora Jew who wrote *Wisdom* would have reacted to Paul.

<sup>3</sup> The citation is from J.M.G. Barclay, 'Unnerving Grace: Approaching Romans 9-11 from The Wisdom of Solomon', in *Between Gospel and Election* (WUNT 257; ed. F. Wilk and J.R. Wagner; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010): 91-110 (92), though as will become apparent below, he detects both broad continuity and an essential discontinuity between Romans and *Wisdom*.

perspective brought about by E.P. Sanders' *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*,<sup>4</sup> will question whether that shift in perspective amounts to a 'paradigm shift' and ask if the interpretative and evaluative frame within which Paul and Judaism are usually compared tunes into or mutes the proposed conversation between Romans and *Wisdom*. The second section, while appreciatively surveying the many and varied comparisons of Paul and *Wisdom*, will note the lack of a full-scale theological comparison of Romans and *Wisdom*, and suggest that most comparative projects have been content to specify points of continuity and discontinuity without enquiring into the hermeneutical rationale and theological basis of the stated similarity-in-contrast.

### *Paul and Judaism: The Pre- and Post-Sanders Paradigm*

Situating the theological relationship of Paul and *Wisdom* within the larger question about the relationship between Paul and Judaism requires a clear sense of what the present project is not and what it is. The dialogical analysis undertaken here is not a comparison of Paul and some meta-phenomenon called Judaism; it is a specific, focused conversation between Paul and the Diaspora Jew who wrote *Wisdom*. This particular comparison, moreover, is not a tacit suggestion that the theology of *Wisdom* is representative of the variegated matrix of thought and praxis that compromises Second Temple Judaism, nor does it imply that the form of Judaism articulated in *Wisdom* is the 'real' target of Paul's polemics. Rather, the contextual conversation between Romans and *Wisdom* offered here functions as a case-study – that is, this thesis is an attempt to compare the essential theological structures of *Wisdom* and Romans and ask whether the interpretative and evaluative frame within which the comparison of Paul and Judaism is usually conducted clarifies or obfuscates the deep logic of *Wisdom's* theology and thus sharpens or silences the proposed dialogue between Romans and *Wisdom*. While *Wisdom's* theology cannot be said to be *representative* of Second Temple Judaism, it is a thought-pattern *available* to Second Temple Jews and if, to borrow a few conceptualities from Thomas Kuhn, it relates to the received 'paradigm' as an 'anomaly', then the present comparison of Romans and *Wisdom* will contribute to establishing the preconditions for a scholarly 'crisis'.<sup>5</sup> In other words,

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<sup>4</sup> E.P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1977).

<sup>5</sup> The terms 'paradigm', 'anomaly' and 'crisis' are from T.S. Kuhn, *The Structures of Scientific Revolutions* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996). In Kuhn's accounting of scientific progress, 'crisis' is a technical term that refers to the questioning of a paradigm due to the accumulation of 'anomalies' and thus specifies the

if the standard catalogue of comparative tropes and the presuppositions of the interpretative paradigm repress rather than reveal the essential theological structures of *Wisdom* and thus fail to facilitate the fine parsing necessary to conduct a conversation between Romans and *Wisdom*, then the precision and functionality of the paradigm itself will need to be rethought.

While E.P. Sanders acknowledges the scholarly antecedents to his argument for the reevaluation of Palestinian Jewish soteriology,<sup>6</sup> it is generally recognised that it was *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* that finally shifted the tectonic plates that supported the antithetical relation of Judaism and (Pauline) Christianity established and exemplified in the work of Ferdinand Weber, Wilhelm Bousset and Paul Billerbeck.<sup>7</sup> Among Sanders' 'chief aims' was 'to destroy the view of Rabbinic Judaism' associated with Billerbeck's description of Judaism as 'eine Religion völliger Selbsterlösung'<sup>8</sup> and 'to establish a different view of Rabbinic' and Palestinian Judaism.<sup>9</sup> As is well known, Sanders' strategy was to consider the 'pattern of religion' reflected in the 'Palestinian material dating from the period 200 b.c.e. to 200 c.e.', and he argued that, with the exception of 4 Ezra, 'the type of religion best called "covenantal nomism" is common to Judaism as it appears in the literature'.<sup>10</sup> The welcome and lasting contribution of Sanders' study is the success of his stated aims: he 'destroyed' the view of early Judaism that prejudiced the literature by 'the retrojection of the Protestant-Catholic debate into ancient history', and he argued for and to a large extent established 'a different view' in which the Palestinian Jewish pattern of religion emphasised and prioritized the grace and mercy of God.<sup>11</sup> This, to be sure, represents a seismic shift in perspective. But is this, as is so often claimed, a 'paradigm shift in the Kuhnian sense'?<sup>12</sup>

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condition for the practice of 'revolutionary science' – that is, the search for alternative explanations to received assumptions and ultimately a new paradigm. T.S. Kuhn, *Scientific Revolutions*, 52-91.

<sup>6</sup> See especially G.F. Moore, 'Christian Writers on Judaism', *HTR* 14 (1921): 197-254; W.D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism: Some Rabbinic Elements in Pauline Theology* (London: SPCK, 1948). Cf. S. Schechter, *Aspects of Rabbinic Theology* (New York: Schocken, 1961 [1909]); Montefiore, *Judaism and St. Paul*; Schoeps, *Paulus: Die Theologie des Apostels im Lichte der jüdischen Religionsgeschichte*. For a review of Sanders' scholarly precedents, see Laato, *Paul and Judaism*, 13-20.

<sup>7</sup> Weber's 1880 work was edited by F. Delitzsch and G. Schnedermann and published as *Jüdische Theologie auf Grund des Talmud und verwandter Schriften* (Leipzig: Dörffling & Franke, 1897); W. Bousset, *Die Religion des Judentums im neutestamentlichen Zeitalter* (Berlin: Ruether & Reichard, 1903); H. Strack and P. Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch* (4 vols.; München: C.H. Beck, 1922-28).

<sup>8</sup> Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch*, 4.3-13.

<sup>9</sup> Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, xii.

<sup>10</sup> Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 16-18, 422.

<sup>11</sup> Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 57.

<sup>12</sup> The citation is from D. Boyarin, *A Radical Jew: Paul and the Politics of Identity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 47. Others who use Kuhn's concept to describe Sanders' achievement include R. Jewett,

For Thomas Kuhn, a ‘paradigm’ is ‘the entire constellation of beliefs, values [and] techniques...shared by members of a given community’ – it names the presuppositions about the objects of enquiry, the method of investigation and the principles of evaluation.<sup>13</sup> As Donaldson notes, Kuhn uses this concept ‘to refer...to the set of basic assumptions and convictions’ that tacitly regulate the process and results of scholarly research.<sup>14</sup> A brief analysis of Sanders’ notions of ‘pattern of religion’ and ‘covenantal nomism’ will demonstrate that while *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* swung the perspectival pendulum from viewing Judaism as ‘eine Religion völliger Selbsterlösung’ to seeing it as ‘a religion of grace’, his project operated with the same ‘constellations of beliefs, values and techniques’ utilized by Weber, Bousset and Billerbeck, with the result that his proposal reinforced rather than replaced the inherited interpretative and evaluative paradigm.

Following his own methodological advice to ‘compare an entire religion...with an entire religion’, Sanders proposed ‘the concept of a “pattern of religion”’ as the point comparison.<sup>15</sup> ‘A pattern of religion’, as Sanders defines it, is a description of how a religion is perceived by its adherents to function’ – that is, ‘how getting in and staying in are understood’.<sup>16</sup> In other words, Sanders is concerned to identify and compare a kind of *ordo salutis*; he wants to trace the movement or ‘sequence of steps from the logical starting-point to the logical conclusion of the religion’ because ‘the relationship of the sequential steps to each other is crucial’ in determining ‘whether election was perceived to precede the requirement of obedience’.<sup>17</sup> By emphasising the foundational function of election, Sanders was able to insist that, in contrast to Billerbeck’s classification of Jewish soteriology as ‘Selbsterlösung’, in Palestinian Judaism ‘salvation...is always by the grace of God’ and therefore ‘the intention and effort to be obedient constitute the condition for remaining in the covenant, but they do not earn it’.<sup>18</sup> My purpose here is neither to endorse nor to question Sanders’ results; my purpose is to question

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‘The Law and the Coexistence of Jews and Gentiles in Romans’, *Int* 39 (1985): 341-56 (341); J.G. Gager, *The Origins of Anti-Semitism* (Oxford: OUP, 1983), 198-99. The concept is also used by T.L. Donaldson, *Paul and the Gentiles: Remapping the Apostle’s Convictional World* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), though Donaldson shows a much greater awareness of Kuhn’s definition of the term and employs it to describe the transformation of Paul’s thought (43-47).

<sup>13</sup> Kuhn, *Scientific Revolutions*, 175.

<sup>14</sup> Donaldson, *Paul and the Gentiles*, 44.

<sup>15</sup> Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 16.

<sup>16</sup> Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 17.

<sup>17</sup> Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 548.

<sup>18</sup> Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 297, 180.

his basic question: when studying early Jewish literature ‘on its own terms’ and when comparing it with Paul, does Sanders’ index of questions about the causal or conditional function of law-observance and the soteriological sequence offer the right interpretative frame? A consideration of ‘covenantal nomism’ will show that Sanders’ driving question about the priority of election and divine mercy, rather than being a neutral heuristic, is a reflex of the inherited (and ultimately ideological) ‘mental furniture’ embedded in the interpretative and evaluative paradigm.

Sanders identifies the ‘pattern of religion’ evidenced in the Palestinian literature between 200 BCE and 200 CE as ‘covenantal nomism’:

(1) God has chosen Israel and (2) given the law. The law implies both (3) God’s promise to maintain election and (4) the requirement to obey. (5) God rewards obedience and punishes transgression. (6) The law provides means of atonement, and atonement results in (7) maintenance or re-establishment of the covenantal relationship. (8) All those who are maintained in the covenant by obedience, atonement and God’s mercy belong to the group which will be saved.<sup>19</sup>

Following this extended description Sanders offers an interpretative comment: ‘An important interpretation of the first and last points is that election and ultimately salvation are considered to be by God’s mercy rather than human achievement’.<sup>20</sup> Here, ‘covenant’ and ‘nomism’ are distinguished and ordered. Law-observance is a consistent feature of this pattern of religion, but it occurs subsequent to and within the humanly uncaused and thus gratuitously established covenant. In Sanders’ words, ‘obedience...is the condition of salvation...but not its cause’.<sup>21</sup> The cause of salvation is always ‘the grace of God, embodied in the covenant’.<sup>22</sup> It is hard not to hear a *Pauline* antithesis in Sanders’ absolute distinction between ‘human achievement’ and ‘the grace of God’, and indeed, as Sanders famously concludes, ‘on the point at which many have found the decisive contrast between Paul and Judaism – grace and works – Paul is in agreement with Palestinian Judaism’.<sup>23</sup> This conclusion is suggestive, and implies that Sanders’ principal difference with Weber, Bousset and Billerbeck concerns whether the Jewish ordering of grace and works is antithetical to or harmonious with the Pauline pattern. Whereas Weber refers to obedience as the ‘means of

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<sup>19</sup> Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 422.

<sup>20</sup> Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 422.

<sup>21</sup> Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 371.

<sup>22</sup> Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 297.

<sup>23</sup> Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 543.

salvation' that earns the mercy and satisfaction of God,<sup>24</sup> Sanders insists that Palestinian Judaism 'kept grace and works in the right perspective' and that 'the gift and demand of God were kept in a healthy relationship'.<sup>25</sup> But on what basis is such a perspective and relationship judged to be 'right' and 'healthy'? The evaluative language here points to the shared values and assumptions that Kuhn suggests constitute a paradigm, and ultimately imposes an ideology on Second Temple Judaism. Like Weber, Bousset and Billerbeck before him, Sanders assumes that grace, by definition, is 'groundless', 'free', 'not earned' and 'unmerited'; his distinction is that he finds *this* grace in Palestinian Judaism.<sup>26</sup> The question, however, is whether this is an assumption reflected in the extant early Jewish literature; or more to the point: is this an assumption shared by the author of *Wisdom*? An answer to this question will have to await the conclusion, but at this stage it is necessary to note that while Sanders' alternative to the antithetical relating of (Pauline) Christianity and Judaism represents a significant change of perspective, it is not a 'paradigm shift' because it operates with the same presuppositions about the proper (or right or healthy) ordering of God's grace and human works.<sup>27</sup>

In the end, Sanders does not ask, presumably because the tacit entrenchment of the interpretative paradigm prevents him from imagining, whether an early Jewish text might emphasise and order God's righteousness and grace in a way that is equally emphatic yet finally different from Paul (and, it should be noted, different from the negative foil associated with Weber-Bousset-Billerbeck). A similar tendency can be observed in those who have worked in his wake. Sanders' study initiated a renaissance of sorts, with scholars both sympathetic and dubious crying *ad fontes* as they reconsidered the early Jewish literature and reconstructed Paul's relationship to early Judaism. But here, too, it must be asked whether the extensions, challenges and alternatives to Sanders' thesis ever broke out of the inherited

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<sup>24</sup> Weber, *Jüdische Theologie auf Grund des Talmud und verwandter Schriften*, 259-62; quoted in Laato, *Paul and Judaism*, 6.

<sup>25</sup> Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 427.

<sup>26</sup> Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 394-96.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. the early reaction to Sanders' book by Jacob Neusner, 'The Use of Later Rabbinic Evidence for the Study of Paul', in *Approaches to Ancient Judaism II* (6 vols.; ed. W.S. Green; Chicago: Scholars Press, 1980), 2.50-51: Sanders' brought to the Jewish sources 'questions of Pauline-Lutheran theology, important to Sanders and New Testament scholarship', thereby imposing 'the pattern of one religious experience, Paul's, upon the description of another'.

paradigm.<sup>28</sup> There is, on the one hand, an interpretative trend that regards Sanders' challenge to the prejudicial construal of Judaism 'as more or less established' and has therefore sought to locate Paul's 'problem' with Judaism somewhere other than the traditional *sola gratia* versus synergism antithesis.<sup>29</sup> On the other hand, there is a more mixed reaction to Sanders' thesis, one which grants the necessary recalibration of Jewish soteriology performed by Sanders but also insists that his proposed reconstruction is in danger of being as 'misleadingly one-sided' as the position he set out to destroy.<sup>30</sup> Both of these responses to Sanders need to be considered briefly.

Representative of the former trend is James D.G. Dunn's statement that after Sanders Judaism 'can now be seen to preach good Protestant doctrine: that grace is always prior; that human effort is ever the response to divine initiative; that good works are the fruit and not the root of salvation'.<sup>31</sup> This reorientation, according to Dunn, requires a new target for Paul's polemics. In what is now a well-known and widely influential alternative to the so-called 'Lutheran' reading of Paul, Dunn, along with N.T. Wright and others, argued that, to borrow a phrase from Sanders, 'what Paul finds wrong with Judaism' is not works righteousness, but 'national righteousness';<sup>32</sup> or in Dunn's description, 'the xenophobic strand of Judaism'.<sup>33</sup> In Don Garlington's precise summary of the thesis that defines and unifies the otherwise diverse and complex phenomenon known as 'the new perspective', 'Paul's dispute with Israel...had not

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<sup>28</sup> My purpose here is not recount the history of scholarly reactions to Sanders, but rather to trace the presuppositional status and tacit influence of the interpretative and evaluative paradigm in post-Sanders' research. For a detailed review of the various responses to Sanders through 2004, see S. Westerholm, 'The "New Perspective" at Twenty-Five', in *Justification and Variegated Nomism: Volume 1, The Paradoxes of Paul* (ed. Carson et al.; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 1-38.

<sup>29</sup> The citation is from N.T. Wright, 'New Perspectives on Paul', in *Justification in Perspective: Historical Developments and Contemporary Challenges* (ed. B.L. McCormack; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006), 243-64 (247).

<sup>30</sup> This classification is from S.J. Gathercole, *Where is Boasting: Early Jewish Soteriology and Paul's Response in Romans 1-5* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 182.

<sup>31</sup> J.D.G. Dunn, 'The Justice of God: A Renewed Perspective on Justification By Faith', in *The New Perspective on Paul* (revised edition; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 193-211 (199). We leave to one side the question of whether and to what degree 'covenantal nomism' as described by Sanders and endorsed by Dunn is actually consistent with the Protestant or Reformational 'pattern of religion'. For an early observation of the similarities between 'covenantal nomism' and the soteriology of late medieval nominalism, see K.T. Cooper, 'Paul and Rabbinic Soteriology', *WJT* 44 (1982): 123-24, quoted in T. George, 'Modernizing Luther, Domesticating Paul: Another Perspective', in *Justification and Variegated Nomism: Volume 2, The Paradoxes of Paul* (ed. Carson et al.; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 437-63 (448 n.30); cf. M.A. Seifrid, 'Blind Alleys in the Controversy Over the Paul of History', *TynBul* 45 (1994): 73-95 (74); P.F.M. Zahl, 'Mistakes of the New Perspective on Paul', *Them* 27.1 (2001): 5-11.

<sup>32</sup> N.T. Wright, 'The Paul of History and the Apostle of Faith', *TynBul* 29 (1978): 61-88 (65).

<sup>33</sup> J.D.G. Dunn, 'Paul: Apostate or Apostle of Israel?' *ZNW* 89 (1998): 256-71 (261). Similarly, B.W. Longenecker, *Eschatology and the Covenant: A Comparison of 4 Ezra and Romans 1-11* (JSNTS 57; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), 228 describes the target of Paul's polemics as 'ethnocentrism'. Cf. Boyarin, *A Radical Jew*, 52.

to do with “grace” as opposed to “legalism”...but with a more ethnically inclusive vision of God and his law as over against one which was more nationally restrictive’.<sup>34</sup> The purchase of this proposal on the relevant Pauline texts continues to be debated, but what needs to be emphasised here is, first, that it was Sanders’ rereading of Palestinian Jewish soteriology within a particular interpretative and evaluative paradigm that precipitated this rereading of Paul and, secondly, it is, for our purposes, an open and essential question whether a firm distinction between national and works/worth righteousness is applicable to *Wisdom*. The presuppositional status of the paradigm is exemplified in Wright’s insistence that the polemical target of ‘justification by faith...is not the usual Lutheran one of “nomism” or “Menschenwerke”’, while his counter-proposal that the polemical target is ‘the Pauline one of Jewish national pride’ crystallizes the distinction between ‘ethnocentrism’ and ‘legalism’ that unifies the new perspective.<sup>35</sup> As we will see, however, though *Wisdom* draws its anthropological dividing-line between Jews and non-Jews, it does so on the basis of moral and rational criteria and in accordance with the symmetrical structuring of the cosmos.<sup>36</sup> In other words, for *Wisdom*, the question of works/worth and the question of Israel’s election are integral rather than alternative aspects of Jewish identity. This, again, raises questions about the adequacy and assumptions of the standard interpretative paradigm for a dialogical analysis of *Wisdom* and Romans and forces us to ask whether the identification of Paul’s ‘problem’ with Judaism as national rather than nomistic righteousness points to or away from Paul’s ‘problem’ with the Diaspora Jew who wrote *Wisdom*.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> D.B. Garlington, *The Obedience of Faith: A Pauline Phrase in Historical Context* (WUNT II.38; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1991), 265.

<sup>35</sup> Wright, ‘The Paul and History’, 71.

<sup>36</sup> For this, see especially chapters four and six.

<sup>37</sup> It should be noted that there is an increasingly vocal scholarly opinion that it is misleading to talk about Paul’s ‘problem’ with Judaism when in fact Paul’s polemical target is Christian Judiazers rather than non-Christian Jews and when Paul’s pattern of religion is describable as ‘Paul’s Judaism’. For variations of this thesis, see e.g. L. Gaston, *Paul and the Torah* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 1987); N. Elliott, *The Rhetoric of Romans: Argumentative Constraint and Strategy and Paul’s Dialogue with Judaism* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990); S. Stowers, *A Rereading of Romans: Justice, Jews, and Gentiles* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994); M. Nanos, ‘Paul and Judaism: Why Not Paul’s Judaism?’, in *Paul Unbound: Other Perspectives on the Apostle* (ed. M. Given; Peabody: Hendrickson, 2010), 117-60. While this is a significant alternative to the standard comparative conclusions, the deep discontinuity that will emerge between *Wisdom* and Romans in the course of this thesis suggests that, at least in terms of his theological relation to this Diaspora Jew, the possibility of theological incommensurability needs to be left open. That being said, as will become clear, the common inheritance, especially the common scriptural inheritance, that is signified by the identity-descriptor ‘Jew’ is an essential element in accounting for the broad continuity between Paul and the author of *Wisdom*. As Watson writes, Pauline and early Jewish theology occur ‘within a single interpretative field’ and therefore the hermeneutical significance

If Wright regards Sanders' thesis about Palestinian Jewish soteriology as 'more or less established' and if Lloyd Gaston assumes both that Sanders' reconstruction is right and 'that Paul knew at least as much about "covenantal nomism" and Jewish "soteriology" as E.P. Sanders',<sup>38</sup> there is another interpretative trend that judges Sanders' work to be a necessary though overstated correction. Again, my purpose here is not to offer a thorough review of post-Sanders scholarship, but rather to consider a few representative responses in order to demonstrate the continued influence of the common interpretative and evaluative paradigm. As Kent Yinger notes, much of the scholarly debate since Sanders has focused on what he calls 'the grace-works axis' – that is, whether divine grace or human achievement is the cause of salvation and whether an instrumental and conditional role for law-observance renders a soteriological scheme synergistic.<sup>39</sup> This index of questions exposes the presuppositional status of a paradigm that appears to (tacitly) assume the normativity of Pauline antitheses and ensures that the various scholarly answers will be plottable within the inherited interpretive frame. Thus, for example, Laato's important anthropological comparison of Paul's post-lapsarian pessimism and Judaism's more optimistic embrace of free will assumes a soteriological correlate: Pauline soteriology is monergistic; Jewish soteriology is synergistic.<sup>40</sup> Similarly, noting the coordination of grace and human works/worth in Philo, Chris VanLandingham questions the graciousness of what some Jews labeled χάρις. Commenting specifically on Philo's insistence on the correspondence between God's grace and Abraham's worth, VanLandingham asserts, 'Considering what "grace" means, Philo's portrayal of Abraham's election cannot be characterized as such'.<sup>41</sup> That an interpretative and evaluative paradigm is in play here is evident in the fact that VanLandingham's exegetical incredulity is based on a presupposed definition of grace that prevents the possibility of imagining that Philo's use of χάρις and his regular coordination of it with the adjective ἄξιος is a real and emphatic articulation of divine benefaction. As we will see, *Wisdom* too links divine grace and

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of Paul's Jewishness is not predicated on the fact that 'many other Jews were saying the same thing (they were not), but because Paul [is engaged in] intra-Jewish issues of scriptural interpretation and hermeneutics' (F. Watson, *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith* [London: T&T Clark, 2004], 5, 27).

<sup>38</sup> Gaston, *Paul and the Torah*, 65.

<sup>39</sup> K.L. Yinger, *Paul, Judaism, and Judgment According to Deeds* (SNTS 105; Cambridge: CUP, 1999), 4.

<sup>40</sup> T. Laato, *Paul and Judaism: An Anthropological Approach* (trans. T. McElwain; Atlanta: University of South Florida, 1995), 213; cf. T. Eskola, *Theodicy and Predestination in Pauline Soteriology* (WUNT II.100; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998), 296.

<sup>41</sup> C. VanLandingham, *Judgment and Justification in Early Judaism and the Apostle Paul* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2006), 27.

human worth, and it is therefore vital for the purposes of this comparison to insist that, in the first instance, theologies of grace should not be compared based on *degree* – what text emphasises grace more – but must ask after *definition* – what grace means in *Wisdom* and *Romans*.

The complementary corrections to Sanders by Simon Gathercole and Friedrich Avemarie also demonstrate the tacit influence of the same interpretative and evaluative paradigm. Focusing on ‘the basis of the boast of Israel’, Gathercole concludes that Sanders’ preoccupation with ‘getting in’ and ‘staying in’ misleadingly relativizes the soteriological question about the grounds of eschatological salvation, what Gathercole calls ‘getting in to the life in the future age’ or ‘getting there’.<sup>42</sup> This necessary nuancing of Sanders’ thesis leads to the helpful observation that ‘the basis of the boast of Israel was not just election but also obedience’.<sup>43</sup> In this soteriological scheme, as Gathercole notes, ‘there is a considerable emphasis on gracious election’ and ‘obedience [is]...a basis for vindication at the *eschaton*’.<sup>44</sup> The doubleness of this conclusion creates the condition to rethink the assumed univocity of grace and thus to imagine the possibility of a new interpretative frame; and in fact, Gathercole observes that the co-existence of divine grace and human obedience is ‘by no means incompatible’. But then he adds, parenthetically, ‘at least in the texts’.<sup>45</sup> This qualification is grounded in the presuppositions of the interpretative paradigm: grace and works appear commensurate in the Jewish literature, but how can that be? That an unspoken question of this kind is implied by Gathercole’s parenthesis is confirmed by the parallel he draws between his study of Jewish ‘literature written before the destruction of Jerusalem’ and Avemarie’s consideration of ‘the rabbinic literature from (approximately) 200-500 C.E.’<sup>46</sup> The significance of Avemarie’s study is that it identifies and acknowledges the co-existence of ‘recompense’ (*Vergeltung*) and ‘election’ (*Erwählung*) as soteriological principles in rabbinic literature without

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<sup>42</sup> Gathercole, *Where is Boasting*, 24. Cf. P. Stuhlmacher, *Revisiting Paul’s Doctrine of Justification: A Challenge to the New Perspective* (trans. D.P. Bailey; Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2001), 42. See also Hans-Martin Rieger’s comment with reference to *Sifre Deut.* 306: ‘als conditio des „Darinverbleibens“ könnte der Sachverhalt von SifDev § 306 schliesslich „soteriologisch“ bedeutsamer werden als das „Hineingelangen“’ (‘Eine Religion der Gnade Zur ‘Bundesnomismus’ – Theorie von E.P. Sanders’, in *Bund und Tora: Zur theologischen Begriffsgeschichte in alttestamentlicher, frühjüdischer und urchristlicher Tradition* (WUNT 92; ed. F. Avemarie and H. Lichtenberger; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996), 129-61 (151).

<sup>43</sup> Gathercole, *Where is Boasting*, 263.

<sup>44</sup> Gathercole, *Where is Boasting*, 263-64.

<sup>45</sup> Gathercole, *Where is Boasting*, 263.

<sup>46</sup> Gathercole, *Where is Boasting*, 264. Cf. F. Avemarie, *Tora und Leben: Untersuchungen zur Heilsbedeutung der Tora in der frühen rabbinischen Literatur* (TSAJ 55; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996).

attempting to subordinate election to recompense (Billerbeck) or recompense to election (Sanders).<sup>47</sup> Avemarie's own solution to this 'problem' of co-existence, as endorsed and summarised by Gathercole, 'is to recognize the *diversity* of rabbinic views.... The better model is...one of tension'.<sup>48</sup> This conclusion, like Gathercole's, recognises the apparent commensurability of gracious election and human obedience in the rabbinic sources, but the insistence that the harmonious co-existence of grace and reward language is actually, despite appearances, a theological 'tension' exposes a presupposition.<sup>49</sup> The assumption that divine grace and human work/worth are, by definition, in tension is indicative of the tacit influence and presuppositional status of an interpretative and evaluation frame – that is, it assumes rather than asks about the meaning and coordination of grace and work/worth.

This is, for our purposes, an essential observation because it foregrounds the need to penetrate the logic of *Wisdom's* theology before offering evaluated conclusions about whether it 'keeps grace and works in the right perspective', whether 'the gift and demand of God are kept in a healthy relationship' or whether the concurrence of gift and reward language reflects a theological tension.<sup>50</sup> In this sense, this thesis, at least by implication, is an attempt to test the interpretative and evaluative paradigm and consider the possibility that the essential theological structures of *Wisdom*, and thus the proposed dialogue between *Wisdom* and Romans, are silenced rather than allowed to surface by the usual catalogue of questions about the priority of grace, the causal or conditional function of obedience, the relative pessimism or optimism of an author's anthropology and the presupposed tension between divine giving and human deserving. Is it possible, in other words, that *Wisdom*, like Paul, is preoccupied with the relation between Jew and non-Jew, theologises with and from Israel's scripture and is emphatic about divine grace and divine righteousness and yet that the meaning, location and relation of this shared conceptual constellation operates in a theological frame that is finally incommensurable with Paul? This question forces us to move beyond the identification of

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<sup>47</sup> This way of framing the contrast between Avemarie's work and the respective theses of Billerbeck and Sanders is drawn from F. Avemarie, 'Erwählung und Vergeltung: Zur optionalen Struktur rabbinischer Soteriologie', *NTS* 45 (1999): 108-26 (113).

<sup>48</sup> Gathercole, *Where is Boasting?*, 155.

<sup>49</sup> A similar tendency is evident in Westerholm's critique of Sanders' 'Lutheran' reading of the rabbinic literature, but his claim that the rabbinic explanations for election ground election in something other than the 'utter gratuity of God' does not consider the possibility of a soteriological logic in which grace was precisely grace in its explainable operations vis-à-vis the worth of its human beneficiaries (*Perspectives Old and New*, 341-46).

<sup>50</sup> Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 427.

structural continuity and discontinuity and to enquire after the deep logic of *Wisdom* and Romans in an effort to determine why two texts that share so much can also configure the theological world so differently. As will be noted below with reference to the history of comparing Romans and *Wisdom*, it is this hermeneutical question that is regularly left unasked and, as this section has demonstrated, the presuppositional status of the interpretative paradigm in pre- and post-Sanders scholarship tends to (tactically) restrict comparisons of Paul and Judaism to their soteriological structures, thereby submerging the ‘why’ questions: Why do some Jewish texts coordinate grace and human worth when Paul sets them in antithesis? Why do election and recompense co-exist in texts without any indication of incompatibility when Paul emphasises the unconditioned operations of God’s electing word? Why do some Jewish texts explain the Pentateuch’s occasional failure to specify the human quality that makes divine blessing sensible and just, when Paul’s exegesis often exploits that same silence? Why, in basic terms, are Paul and various Jewish texts different? For the purposes of the present comparison of Romans and *Wisdom*, then, the basic heuristic question is hermeneutical: Romans and *Wisdom* are, as we will see, both deeply Jewish and deeply different texts – but why? What hermeneutical rationale, common inheritance and theological basis accounts for what they share and where and why they configure the world differently? By asking this specific question – by remaining true to the scope of this study – it is hoped that this particular comparison of Romans and *Wisdom* can make an implicit and indirect, though not therefore unimportant, contribution to the larger question about Paul’s theological relationship to early Judaism.

### *Chronicling the Conversation: Comparing Paul and Wisdom in the History of Research*

The conclusion of Moyna McGlynn’s 2001 study of *Wisdom of Solomon* provides an apt introduction to the present project:

The coincidences of topics between Paul’s epistle to the Romans and *Wisdom*: the corruption of idolatry, the judgment of God, the problem of sin and Adam’s fall, the glory inherent in creation and the long struggle with the place of Israel, have never been adequately studied and compared.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> M. McGlynn, *Divine Judgment and Divine Benevolence in the Book of Wisdom* (WUNT II, 139; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 222.

The ‘coincidences’ to which McGlynn refers are of course well known; her observation is simply that the numerous and striking parallels between *Wisdom* and Romans, while regularly noticed, are yet to be adequately probed and parsed.<sup>52</sup> Eduard Grafe’s influential attempt to determine the probability and extent of Paul’s engagement with *Wisdom* traces a history of recognising the overlap between portions of *Wisdom* and various parts of the Pauline corpus beginning with B. Kuinoel in 1794.<sup>53</sup> According to Grafe, the most conspicuous points of contact between *Wisdom* and Romans are the polemics against false worship in *Wisdom* 13.1-9 and Romans 1.18-32 and the pattern of predestination in *Wisdom* 12-15 and Romans 9.19-23.<sup>54</sup> In his opinion, these parallels, together with several other notable correspondences, force the conclusion that it is ‘mindestens höchst wahrscheinlich’ that Paul knew and used *Wisdom*.<sup>55</sup> A few years later, in acknowledged agreement with Grafe, Sanday and Headlam considered the ‘resemblances’ between Romans 1.18-32 and *Wisdom* 13, as well as the topical overlap and similar ‘drift of the argument’ in Romans 9-11 and *Wisdom* 10-19, and argued that ‘while there can be no question of direct quotation’, it appears that ‘St. Paul must have bestowed upon the Book of Wisdom a considerable amount of study’ and that between Romans and *Wisdom* there is ‘some definite literary obligation’.<sup>56</sup> For Sanday and Headlam, however, ‘the contrast’ between the texts was ‘equally instructive’: ‘If St. Paul learnt from the Book of Wisdom expressions illustrating the Divine power, and a general aspect of the question: he obtained nothing further’.<sup>57</sup> For some, this theological discontinuity between *Wisdom* and Romans argues against a direct literary relationship, but even here the lexical and topical parallels are not denied; they are attributed to a shared tradition.<sup>58</sup> At this stage in the history of research, then, the tendency was essentially to locate correspondences between the two texts in an effort to

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<sup>52</sup> For a detailed review of the scholarly comparison of Romans and *Wisdom* through 2004, see J.R. Dodson, *The ‘Powers’ of Personification: Rhetorical Purpose in the Book of Wisdom and the Letter to the Romans* (BZNV 161; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 5-13. Among the most thorough tabulations of the parallels between Romans 1.18-2.5 and *Wisdom* 11-15 is a book that Dodson does not include in his survey: Laato, *Paul and Judaism*, 94-95.

<sup>53</sup> E. Grafe, ‘Das Verhältniss der paulinischen Schriften zur Sapientia Salomonis’ in *Theologische Abhandlungen: Carl von Weizsäcker zu seinem siebenzigsten Geburtstag 11. December 1892 gewidmet* (Freiburg: Mohr Siebeck, 1892), 251-86 (257).

<sup>54</sup> Grafe, ‘Verhältniss’, 274-76.

<sup>55</sup> Grafe, ‘Verhältniss’, 285. This conclusion has been defended in recent years by, among others, U. Wilckens, *Der Brief an die Römer* (3 vols; EKKNT; Neukirchen: Benziger, 1978-82), 1.96-97; C.M. Pate, *The Reverse of the Curse* (WUNT II.114; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 139-45, 233-36; Watson, *Hermeneutics*, 405.

<sup>56</sup> W. Sanday and A.C. Headlam, *The Epistle to the Romans* (ICC; New York: Scribner’s, 1896), 51-52, 267-69.

<sup>57</sup> Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, 268-69.

<sup>58</sup> See e.g. F. Focke, *Die Entstehung der Weisheit Salomos* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1913), 113-26; O. Michel, *Der Brief an die Römer* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978), 16-18

identify the likelihood and scope of Paul's 'dependence' on *Wisdom*. This all changed in 1947 with the publication of Anders Nygren's Romans commentary.

Like his scholarly predecessors, Nygren notes the points of contact between Romans 1.18-32 and *Wisdom* 13-14, but unlike Grafe and Sanday and Headlam, he is unwilling 'to assert, on the basis of these facts alone, that Paul makes direct reference to...the Book of Wisdom'.<sup>59</sup> For Nygren, however, Paul's 'very special relation' to *Wisdom* becomes apparent and 'decisive' when the comparison is extended into Romans 2.<sup>60</sup> According to this reading, the text of Romans is not just formally linked to *Wisdom* by a catalogue of shared lexemes or a similar theological style or a parallel argumentative pattern; Romans 2 actively addresses the theological content of *Wisdom* 11-15, argues against it, and accuses 'the Jew' who is described by it. Citing *Wisdom* 11.9f, 12.22, and 15.2f, Nygren suggests that *Wisdom* restricts divine wrath to Gentiles because, unlike Israel who knows and worships God, they are idolatrous and immoral. In Romans 2, according to Nygren, Paul attacks precisely this presumption and as he does so 'it is not against an imaginary opponent that Paul contends.... When he says, "O man, you who judge," he addresses himself to the Jew's manner of life, as we see it in the Book of Wisdom'.<sup>61</sup> This interpretation has proven programmatic, dominating the modern commentaries together with the added insistence that the reactivation of *Wisdom's* polemic against Gentile idolatry in Romans 1.18-32 functions as 'a rhetorical sting operation',<sup>62</sup> eliciting the sympathy of Paul's interlocutor before 'Paul turns to him and denounces him'.<sup>63</sup> This diatribal reading moves the comparison of Romans and *Wisdom* beyond the identification of parallels by demonstrating the argumentative function of Paul's engagement with *Wisdom*. But even here, where the points of textual connection and theological disconnection are identified and exploited, there is essentially no consideration of the theological grounds for the deep anthropological incommensurability between the two texts that this reading exposes: why is Paul's perspective on the hamartiological status of Jew and Gentile so different from *Wisdom's*?

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<sup>59</sup> A. Nygren, *Commentary on Romans* (trans. C.C. Rasmussen; London: SCM Press, 1952), 112, 114. The original German appeared in 1947.

<sup>60</sup> Nygren, *Romans*, 114.

<sup>61</sup> Nygren, *Romans*, 115-16.

<sup>62</sup> R.B. Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1996), 389.

<sup>63</sup> Watson, *Hermeneutics*, 410; cf. E. Käsemann, *An die Römer* (HNT 8a; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1973), 49; J.D.G. Dunn, *Romans 1-8* (WBC 38a; Waco: Word, 1988), 82-83; J.A. Fitzmyer, *Romans* (AB 33; London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1992), 298; D.J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 133; E. Lohse, *Der Brief an die Römer* (KEK 4; Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003), 86, 99. This interpretative trend will be discussed and evaluated more fully in chapter six.

The failure to ask this type of question legitimates McGlynn's complaint that Romans and *Wisdom* 'have never been adequately studied and compared'.<sup>64</sup>

There are, however, four comparisons of Romans and *Wisdom* that partially mitigate this conclusion, three of which appeared after McGlynn's comment.<sup>65</sup> The first, which bears the closest resemblance to the present work, is an unpublished doctoral dissertation by Paul-Gerhard Keyser.<sup>66</sup> For Keyser, the rationale for comparing Romans and *Wisdom* is not lost if a direct literary relationship is denied: both texts reflect on the mercy and righteousness of God in relation to the anthropological distinction between the ungodly and the righteous/elect, and both make sustained and repeated recourse to Israel's scripture in the process.<sup>67</sup> These similarities in terms of focus and method, however, regularly give way to theological disagreement: whereas *Wisdom* exonerates Israel from idolatry and thereby excludes Israel from judgment, Paul detects divine wrath in Israel's history and includes Israel among the objects of eschatological judgment; whereas *Wisdom* defines mercy as the temporary postponement of divine justice, Paul locates the paradigmatic exemplification of mercy in the Christ-event.<sup>68</sup> This is a valuable contribution and many of the points made by Keyser will be argued in the course of this thesis. There are, however two serious weaknesses to this work. The first problem, admittedly pragmatic, is inaccessibility and, as a result, anonymity. Comparisons of Paul and *Wisdom*, especially in English-speaking scholarship, are usually carried out without reference to Keyser's significant (unpublished) dissertation for the simple

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<sup>64</sup> The one exception to this criticism is D.A. Campbell, *The Deliverance of God: An Apocalyptic Rereading of Justification in Paul* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 2009), 360-62, 542-47. In Campbell's reconstruction, the reason Romans 1.18-32 parallels *Wisdom* 12-15 is that Paul, in Romans 1.18-32, summarises the *exordium* of his opponent – 'the Teacher' – whose theology is indebted to *Wisdom*. This explains the points of contact. Campbell's explanation for the theological difference is that the Teacher's 'vision of the future wrath of God – of God as retributively just' is not, for Paul, 'the essential nature of the God of Jesus Christ' (543). Campbell's proposal will be considered in chapter six.

<sup>65</sup> A few other works have undertaken topical comparisons of Paul and *Wisdom* and will be referenced when appropriate. See e.g., B.R. Gaventa, 'The Rhetoric of Death in the Wisdom of Solomon and the Letters of Paul', in *The Listening Heart* (ed. K.G. Hoglund; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1987), 127-45; J. Barr, *Biblical Faith and Natural Theology* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993), 66-78; Rodrigo J. Morales, 'The Spirit, the Righteous Sufferer, and the Mysteries of God: Echoes of Wisdom in 1 Corinthians?' *BZ* 54 (2010): 54-72.

<sup>66</sup> Paul-Gerhard Keyser, 'Sapientia Salomonis und Paulus: Eine Analyse der Sapientia Salomonis und ein Vergleich ihrer theologischen und anthropologischen Probleme mit denen des Paulus im Römerbrief' (Dr. theol. diss., Martin-Luther-Universität, 1971), 2 vols. I am grateful to Joseph Dodson for alerting me to this work.

<sup>67</sup> Keyser, 'Sapientia Salomonis und Paulus', 225-26. For a similar insistence that there is value in comparing Romans and *Wisdom* irrespective of the question of literary dependence, see N. Walter, 'Sapientia Salomonis und Paulus', in *Die Weisheit Salomos im Horizont biblischer Theologie* (ed. H. Hübner; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1993), 86; cf. Watson, *Hermeneutics*, 405.

<sup>68</sup> Keyser, 'Sapientia Salomonis und Paulus', see 141-42, 195, 215-225.

reason that it is unavailable and unknown. The second, and for our purposes more urgent, weakness of Keyser's work is the limited attention it gives to the central section of *Wisdom* – chapters 6-10. While Keyser's concern to relate God's righteousness and mercy to the anthropological contrast between the ungodly and the righteous explains his preoccupation with *Wisdom* 1-5 and 11-19, the logic of *Wisdom* remains obscure without a full consideration of the identity, character and function of σοφία in chapters 6-11. Consequently, while Keyser deepens the comparison by focusing on points of theological continuity and discontinuity, the conversation he facilitates between Romans and *Wisdom* is unable to penetrate the essential logic of either text because it ignores the centrifugal and organizing significance of σοφία. The result is an important study that nevertheless fails to ask the basic question: what is the hermeneutical rationale and theological basis for the theological similarities and dissimilarities Keyser identifies?

The three other works are by Francis Watson, Joseph R. Dodson and John M.G. Barclay. Watson's *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith* places Paul in conversation with a range of Second Temple Jewish authors as one who 'read the same texts, yet read them differently'.<sup>69</sup> The comparison with *Wisdom* is thus a comparison of their respective exegetical activity, in particular their respective readings of select narratives from Numbers which Watson identifies primarily in *Wisdom* 16-19 and Romans 7.7-11 and 1 Corinthians 10.5-10. After a detailed demonstration of *Wisdom*'s editorial technique of 'displacement' – that is, transplanting an event or actor from one narrative location to another – Watson concludes that Paul and the author of *Wisdom* agree canonically, but disagree exegetically: 'Paul and the author of *Wisdom* are agreed that the scriptural narrative of Exodus and Numbers bears paradigmatic witness to the nature of divine saving action' (canonical agreement); but '*Wisdom* strives to suppress' Israel's complicity 'in the idolatry and ungodliness it prefers to ascribe to the Gentiles' whereas 'Paul chooses not to conceal the fact that the gift bestowed at Sinai led immediately to catastrophe' (exegetical disagreement).<sup>70</sup> The exegetical contrast is stark: *Wisdom* reads Numbers as a narration 'of the saving benefits bestowed on the holy nation'; Paul reads Numbers as 'the justification of the ungodly'.<sup>71</sup> This is a remarkably subtle study and the comparative conclusion is able to offer a formal explanation for the points of continuity and

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<sup>69</sup> Watson, *Hermeneutics*, ix.

<sup>70</sup> Watson, *Hermeneutics*, 411.

<sup>71</sup> Watson, *Hermeneutics*, 411.

discontinuity: Paul and the author of *Wisdom* read the same texts (continuity) yet read them differently (discontinuity). But again, Watson's conclusion raises a crucial question that he never fully answers: why are the readings of Numbers in Paul and *Wisdom* so different? Watson does note that this is partially explicable in terms of 'a difference in homiletical strategy' – *Wisdom* wanting to encourage; Paul wanting to warn<sup>72</sup> – and he mentions in one place that the exegetical activity of Paul and *Wisdom* are enmeshed in a hermeneutically transformative event – the illumination of σοφία and God's act in Christ respectively.<sup>73</sup> But these homiletical and hermeneutical answers are never developed.<sup>74</sup>

A similar complaint can be raised against the otherwise incisive and illuminating studies of Dodson and Barclay. Dodson's book, *The 'Powers' of Personification*, does not purport to be a full comparison of the theology of Romans and *Wisdom*; it is a focused comparison of their respective employment of personification. While Dodson concludes on a strong note of continuity – Paul and *Wisdom* use personification 'to exonerate God' from evil and 'to explain the history of Israel'<sup>75</sup> –, he recognises a range of differences related to salvation from personified Sin and Death to immortality (through 'intimacy with personified Wisdom' in *Wisdom*) or everlasting life (through 'participation with personified Grace and Righteousness and the person of Christ' in Romans). This, again, is a subtle and sophisticated identification of real difference and commonality, and Dodson does offer the beginnings of an explanation for his findings: 'The difference here reflect the authors' respective beliefs concerning the epoch of God in history' and is reflective of *Wisdom's* protological emphasis on 'God's work...through Sophia at Creation.... before death intruded the world' and Paul's eschatological orientation to 'the second Adam' who 'came into the world after Sin and Death had already entered it'.<sup>76</sup> Dodson's concern, however, is to compare the use and function of personification in Romans and *Wisdom*, and so the scope of his study prevents him from pursuing this promising line of thought. Dodson's book is by far the most thorough comparison of Romans and *Wisdom* in English-speaking scholarship, but like Watson's work, Dodson's observation that 'each author

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<sup>72</sup> Watson, *Hermeneutics*, 383.

<sup>73</sup> Watson, *Hermeneutics*, 529-30.

<sup>74</sup> Cf. Richard Hays' contribution to the book symposium on *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith*: R.B. Hays, 'Paul's Hermeneutics and the Question of Truth', *Pro Ecclesia* 16.2 (2007): 126-33.

<sup>75</sup> Dodson, *The 'Powers' of Personification*, 222.

<sup>76</sup> Dodson, *The 'Powers' of Personification*, 221.

shares ideas' and that they have 'vastly different ideas' forces the hermeneutical question: what is the theological basis and rationale for this broad continuity and deep discontinuity?

Barclay's recent study, 'Unnerving Grace: Approaching Romans 9-11 from *The Wisdom of Solomon*', is the only work to date that explicitly addresses this question. After a brief yet full reading of *Wisdom*, Barclay considers Romans 9.6-18 in conversation with *Wisdom's* vision of 'cosmic order, symmetry and equilibrium' – a vision that is exemplified in an emphatic stress on divine grace that is comprehended with the operations of divine justice: there is a correspondence between God's benefaction and the 'worth' of his human beneficiaries.<sup>77</sup> Noting Paul's repeated refusal to relate the operations of divine grace to 'any comprehensible moral, rational, or natural order in the cosmos', Barclay concludes that 'in contrast to *Wisdom*, with which he shares so much, Paul propounds a quite bizarre notion of Israel's story'.<sup>78</sup> This comparative conclusion, that 'Paul's voice in this dialogue is thoroughly Jewish, but also bizarre, theologically dangerous and extremely unnerving',<sup>79</sup> raises the hermeneutical question to its highest pitch: what accounts for Paul's 'disregard of cosmic order'?<sup>80</sup> It is a virtue of Barclay's work that he provides an answer: 'What has twisted Paul's theology into this strange shape is his understanding of a "gift" [i.e. the Christ-event] that has redefined the meanings of χάρις and ἔλεος and defies explanation or rationale'. The restrictions of scope and space, however, mean that this thesis is asserted rather than argued, and the limited focus on Romans 9.6-18 invites a fuller comparison. In a certain sense, the present study is an attempt to test Barclay's hypothesis by offering a more comprehensive reading of *Wisdom* and by extending the dialogue to a significantly larger selection of passages from Romans.

It seems, then, that McGlynn's observation remains valid. The long and significant history of comparing Romans and *Wisdom* indicates that readers of both texts have regularly agreed with Gaventa's judgment 'that they might profitably be read together'.<sup>81</sup> And yet, because no such comparative project has offered a thorough reading of *Wisdom*, and because the identification of continuity and discontinuity has never been sufficiently followed by an exploration of its hermeneutical rationale and theological basis, it remains the case that 'the

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<sup>77</sup> J.M.G. Barclay, 'Unnerving Grace: Approaching Romans 9-11 from The Wisdom of Solomon', in *Between Gospel and Election* (WUNT 257; ed. F. Wilk and J.R. Wagner; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010): 91-110.

<sup>78</sup> Barclay, 'Unnerving Grace', 110.

<sup>79</sup> Barclay, 'Unnerving Grace', 92.

<sup>80</sup> Barclay, 'Unnerving Grace', 110.

<sup>81</sup> Gaventa, 'The Rhetoric of Death', 127.

coincidences of topics between Paul's epistle to the Romans and *Wisdom*...have never been adequately studied and compared'.

### *A Contextual Conversation: Outline and Approach*

The basic methodological orientation of this study is captured by Mikhail Bakhtin: 'The text lives only by coming into contact with another text.... Only at the point of this contact between texts does a light flash, illuminating both the posterior and anterior, joining a given text to a dialogue'.<sup>82</sup> Texts look different when they are allowed to talk, and it is the hope of this dialogical analysis of *Wisdom* and Romans that both texts will look different in the light of the other, that familiar passages will lose some of their familiarity and come alive 'by coming into contact with another text'.<sup>83</sup> Expressed another way, the basic methodological benefit of comparative projects is that, to the degree the textual dialogue can expose the presuppositions of the reader and thereby amplify the voice of the texts, the exegesis itself becomes an act of listening – that is, an endeavor not so much to solve a set of scholarly debates as an attempt to let the respective authors ask each other the exegetical questions.<sup>84</sup> This thesis is thus an exercise in exegetical eavesdropping; it hopes to facilitate and listen to a contextual conversation between the author of *Wisdom* and Paul.

Comparisons, however, come with their own set of problems. As Sanders noted in the introduction to his large scale comparison of Paul and Palestinian Judaism, 'the two principal difficulties' of placing texts in conversation can be 'summarized by the words *imbalance* and *imposition*'.<sup>85</sup> The first difficulty, 'imbalance', refers to the problem of comparing a single author with a large body of literature. The tendency here is to reduce the collection of texts to some comparatively useful common denominator that may conceal rather than capture the logic of the texts in question. The decision to restrict our comparison to two texts is an attempt to circumvent this issue by providing the space to engage *Wisdom* and Romans in sufficient depth

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<sup>82</sup> M. Bakhtin, 'Toward a Methodology for the Human Sciences', in *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays* (eds. C. Emerson and M. Holquist; trans. V.W. McGee; Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986), 159-72, (162).

<sup>83</sup> For the reciprocal benefit of comparative projects, see Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 19; cf. Dodson, *The 'Powers' of Personification*, 2-3.

<sup>84</sup> This way of framing the comparison is both an indication about the suggested 'freshness' of my approach and a disclaimer of sorts: the various and important debates that surround the texts of Paul and *Wisdom*, while regularly engaged throughout the thesis, are, for our comparative purposes, subordinate to the conversation between *Wisdom* and Romans.

<sup>85</sup> Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 19.

to allow their own logic to emerge. The second difficulty, however – what Sanders calls ‘imposition’ – is less easily avoided. Sanders’ strategy to navigate this exegetical error is ‘to compare an entire religion...with an entire religion’ by comparing ‘Paul on his own terms with Judaism on its own terms’.<sup>86</sup> But it must be asked whether the imbalance of Sanders’ comparison and the resulting reduction of Jewish soteriology to covenantal nomism, together with the presuppositional status of the interpretative paradigm that shaped its articulation, forced the imposition of a Pauline pattern onto the Jewish literature.<sup>87</sup> This tendency to assume and impose the normative status of Paul in comparative projects is also evident in dialogical analyses of Romans and *Wisdom*. As Gaventa observes, ‘For Christian scholars, Paul was the standard against which *Wisdom* was measured’.<sup>88</sup> My attempt to combat this temptation is essentially structural, and it is therefore necessary to offer a brief outline of the present project.

First, in an attempt to take seriously Sanders’ invitation to consider Jewish texts on their own terms and thus avoid the error of imposition, part one of this thesis will offer a reading of *Wisdom* without reference to Romans. In this way, I hope both to fill a scholarly lacuna by comparing Romans with a full reading of *Wisdom* and to allow the terms of *Wisdom*’s theological description to be configured based on its own essential theological structures and concerns. Part two will then consider pivotal passages of Romans in conversation with *Wisdom*. Here, however, the topics under consideration – e.g. the relation of Jews and non-Jews, the meaning and theological ordering of God’s justice and grace, the hermeneutical logic that shapes the rereading of Israel’s scripture – arise, in the first instance, not because they are important to Paul (though they are), but because they are central to *Wisdom*. Chapter six will consider the issue of the relation and relative soteriological status of Jews and non-Jews. At this juncture, the often asked question about the literary and theological relationship between *Wisdom* 13-15 and Romans 1.18-2.5 will be reconsidered with reference to the function of that anthropological distinction within the rhetorical argumentation and broader theological structures of Romans and *Wisdom*. Chapter seven will then moderate a dialogue about the definition and relationship of divine righteousness and grace. Following Sanders’ insistence

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<sup>86</sup> Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 18, 12.

<sup>87</sup> Cf. the criticism of Sanders by Neusner noted above (n.27); see also Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New*, 341: in Sanders’ reconstruction, ‘Jews are said, in effect, to have been good Protestants all along’.

<sup>88</sup> Gaventa, ‘The Rhetoric of Death’, 138.

that comparisons need to ‘go behind the terminology’, this chapter will ultimately move beyond Sanders’ by suggesting that it is necessary to go through the terminology – δικαιοσύνη and χάρις – to get to the deep logic of Romans and *Wisdom*. This chapter will therefore question the assumed univocity of theological vocabulary and ask whether Romans and *Wisdom* offer equally emphatic though finally incommensurable expressions of the justice and grace of God. Lastly, chapter eight will compare the rereadings of Israel’s scripture in *Wisdom* 10-19 and Romans 9-11. However, whereas some recent comparative work has been content to observe that Paul and the author of *Wisdom* ‘read the same texts, yet read them differently’,<sup>89</sup> this chapter will both identify these points of canonical connection and exegetical difference and enquire after the hermeneutical rationale behind the authors’ respective rereadings.

Thus, by allowing *Wisdom* to set the dialogical agenda, the conversation between Romans and *Wisdom* will engage the ‘common places’ of comparisons between Paul and Judaism – anthropology (Laato), soteriology (Sanders, Gathercole), hermeneutics (Watson) – and engage us in a range of issues in Pauline theology: the soteriological (in)significance of the Jew/Gentile distinction, the origin and meaning of Paul’s soteriological semantics – e.g. δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ, πίστις χριστοῦ, χάρις – and the content and hermeneutical contours of Paul’s engagement with Israel’s scripture. ‘The intention then’, to adapt Sanders’ statement of purpose, is to make a contribution both to Pauline theology and to the understanding of *Wisdom*, ‘as well as to clarify how they stand vis-à-vis each other’.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> The citation is from Watson, *Hermeneutics*, ix, though this restriction does not adequately characterise his study.

<sup>90</sup> See Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 19.

Part I  
*Wisdom of Solomon*

## Chapter 2

### Reading the World Rationally from End to Beginning: *Wisdom* 1-6

‘The human mind has at no period accepted a moral chaos’ – George Eliot, *Middlemarch*

#### *Reading a Reader, Between the Lines*

The theological horizon of ‘sapiential theology is’, as Giuseppe Bellia and Angelo Passaro gracefully conclude, ‘to discover the thread of the discreet lordship exercised by God in history, even within the shadowy and opaque twists and turns of daily life’.<sup>1</sup> The author of *Wisdom of Solomon* (hereafter, *Wisdom*) takes his place within this theological trajectory as a reader, both of texts and of the world. As John Barclay summarises, ‘*Wisdom* struggles to make sense of a world that does not follow an anticipated script’ and, in its effort to ‘understand the workings of God on an individual, a communal and a cosmic scale’, *Wisdom* ‘activates scriptural resources which it reshapes in order to make sense of the present’.<sup>2</sup> This is both a description of the theological content and contours of *Wisdom* and a methodological invitation. Readings are the result of the dynamic exchange between text and interpreter.<sup>3</sup> Both text and reader – in this case the author of *Wisdom* – play a constitutive role in the creation of the interpretative product. This means that when and where a reading departs from its text it provides a clue about the hermeneutical and theological substructure of the interpreter. The text, of course, is often straightforwardly complicit in the reading it generates,<sup>4</sup> but when a reading breaks with

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<sup>1</sup> G. Bellia and A. Passaro, ‘Infinite Passion for Justice’, in *The Book of Wisdom in Modern Research: Studies on Tradition, Redaction, and Theology* (DCLY 2005; ed. A. Passaro and G. Bellia; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2005), 307–28 (307).

<sup>2</sup> J.M.G. Barclay, ‘Unnerving Grace: Approaching Romans 9–11 from The Wisdom of Solomon’, in *Between Gospel and Election* (WUNT 257; ed. F. Wilk and J.R. Wagner; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010): 91–110 (91–92).

<sup>3</sup> For differing views concerning whether the mutually affective and relational interplay between text and reader is properly described as ‘dialogical’, see Paul Ricoeur, *From Text to Action: Essays in Hermeneutics* (trans. K. Blamey and J.B. Thompson; Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1991) and Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode: Grundzüge einer philosophischen Hermeneutik, Gesammelte Werke 1* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1990). While both reference Plato’s preference for dialogue in the *Phaedrus*, Gadamer insists that a text is ‘ein echter Kommunikationspartner’ (*Wahrheit und Methode*, 364) and therefore speaks ‘vom einem hermeneutischen Gespräch’ (*Wahrheit und Methode*, 391). Ricoeur, by contrast, argues that ‘The writing-reading relation is...not an instance of dialogue....The reader is absent from the act of writing; the writer is absent from the act of reading. The text thus produces a double eclipse of the reader and the writer’ (*From Text to Action*, 107).

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Watson, *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith* (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 4: ‘It is wrong to imagine that the text itself is no more than a blank screen onto which readers project their various concerns: normally it is

the script (again this could be the manipulation of the history or ideas in a document or assertions that run counter to the empirical realities of the observed world) these ‘breaks’ are the hermeneutical effect of some prior theological cause. These ‘effects’, then, are hints, invitations to those who read readers to reverse the aetiological process and attempt to detect the substance of the theological causes that give rise to the interpretative effects.

An attentive tracing of the contours and idiosyncrasies of *Wisdom’s* reading of the workings and temporal completion of the world (*Wis.* 1-6) and of the classic history contained within Israel’s sacred texts (*Wis.* 10-19) will create the methodological space within which it will be possible to work backwards from the ‘effects’ (counter-empirical and manipulated readings of world and text) to the ‘cause’ (a web of theological convictions which shape and are shaped by the interpretation of text and world). The principle of ‘scripture normativity’, which states that ‘text and world must somehow be made to fit one another’,<sup>5</sup> certainly exerts a constraining function on *Wisdom’s* theologising. The ‘vagueness of this “somehow”’,<sup>6</sup> however, provokes a power struggle between text and interpreter. In the case of *Wisdom*, this politicking for interpretative power is resolved by a hermeneutical reactivation of the text which, while legitimately called a ‘realization of semantic potential’,<sup>7</sup> is nevertheless reflective of ‘the press of an interpretative paradigm onto somewhat recalcitrant material’.<sup>8</sup> Within this creative act of appropriation the hermeneutical balance appears to be tipped in favour of making text conform to conviction. This, then, is the juncture at which to investigate the theological and hermeneutical patterns which inform *Wisdom’s* reading of sacred history and eschatological destinies. The basic thesis of this section is that *Wisdom’s* reading of text and world operates within the theological boundaries marked off by a vision of cosmic order that

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possible to show that the text itself is implicated in the reading it occasions. To interpret is always to interact with a text, and it is also to be *constrained* by the text’ (italics original).

<sup>5</sup> Watson, *Hermeneutics*, 1.

<sup>6</sup> Watson, *Hermeneutics*, 1.

<sup>7</sup> Watson, *Hermeneutics*, 4.

<sup>8</sup> Barclay, ‘Unnerving Grace’, 92. This notion of ‘power struggle’, however, need not imply violence. As Ricoeur argues, ‘Appropriation [i.e. the constructive process of moving beyond intended meaning to potential meaning] loses its arbitrariness insofar as it is the recovery of that which is at work, in labour, within the text. What the interpreter says is a resaying that reactivates what is said by the text’ (*From Text to Action*, 124). Thus, for Ricoeur, this act of appropriation is neither (necessarily) violent nor arbitrary. In fact, it is in the ‘concert act’ of reading, an act which includes appropriation ‘at the extremity of...the hermeneutical arc’, that ‘the destiny of the text is fulfilled’ (italics removed).

σοφία fashioned, manages and reveals and in which the operations of divine justice ensure the stable and rational distribution of fitting salvation and judgment.<sup>9</sup>

Nothing, however – configurations of the cosmos included –, comes from nothing. The symmetry and soteriological logic of this cosmological construal is shaped by a paradigmatic reading of the Exodus-pattern of salvation for the righteous and condemnation for the ungodly (*Wis.* 10.15-21; 19.1-9) and, more subtly, the eschatological projection of the deuteronomic formula of blessings and curses.<sup>10</sup> This rationality, however ‘canonical’, is not obvious; it is the effect of the illumination of divine Wisdom that enables the right evaluation of history, reality and eschatology. *Wisdom* acknowledges that temporal history appears to be an arena in which its perception of moral and cosmic order is disqualified, where the ungodly prosper and the righteous suffer. The gift of divine Wisdom, however, enables a right reasoning which sees past the empirical to the ineluctable forces of divine justice and creational order which will, however surprisingly, ensure the eschatological dispensing of fitting destinies (*Wis.* 1-6). Similarly, the apparent ambiguity of Israelite and Egyptian morality and the unpredictability of the divine disposition in the pentateuchal narrative give way, again under the illumination of Wisdom, to a reading in which moral symmetry is maintained by the exoneration of Israel and the consistent exercise of divine favour and judgment (*Wis.* 10-19).<sup>11</sup> It is Wisdom that both enables this proper reading of world and text and ensures that this stable and rational order persists despite all appearance, whether historical or empirical, to the contrary (*Wis.* 6-10). Wisdom, then, or at least the vision of cosmic order which she generates, is the hermeneutic that shapes *Wisdom’s* comprehensive reading of history and

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<sup>9</sup>Cf. Barclay, ‘Unnerving Grace’, 92: ‘For *Wisdom*, the goodness and mercy of God are comprehended within a sacred order – natural, rational and moral – in accordance with which the cosmos makes stable sense; scriptural types and narratives are manipulated to demonstrate the equitable workings of this moral universe, and to eliminate any possibility of arbitrariness or injustice’. For three recent treatments of *Wisdom* which recognize the thematic centrality of justice, see M.F. Kolarcik, ‘Universalism and Justice in the Wisdom of Solomon’, 289-301 and F. Raurell, ‘From ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣΥΝΗ to ΑΘΑΝΑΣΙΑ (*Wisd* 1,1.15)’, 331-56, both in *Treasures of Wisdom: Studies in Ben Sira and the Book of Wisdom* (BETL CXLIII; ed. N. Calduch-Benages and J. Vermeylen; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1999); Bellia and Passaro, ‘Infinite Passion for Justice’, 307-28. A thorough analysis of δικαιοσύνη in *Wisdom* is provided by H. Engel, *Das Buch der Weisheit* (Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1998), 58-60.

<sup>10</sup> The probability of this latter hypothesis is strengthened by *Wisdom’s* conceptual dependence on the *Epistle of Enoch*, which, as will be discussed below, theologises in explicitly deuteronomic categories.

<sup>11</sup> Watson, *Hermeneutics*, 385: ‘For the author of *Wisdom*, the narrative sequence from Genesis to Numbers consists in a homogeneous series of anticipations and repetitions of the exodus paradigm of salvation for the righteous and judgment for the unrighteous’.

reality from eschatology (*Wis.* 1-6) to Israel's origins (*Wis.* 10-19); a rational reading of the world from end to beginning.

This theological consideration of *Wisdom* will unfold in three stages. After a brief structural and socio-historical introduction, this study will, in turn, explore *Wisdom's* eschatology (this chapter), celebration of σοφία (chapter three) and Exodus-shaped hermeneutic (chapter four). In the end, it will be argued that despite obvious thematic and stylistic diversity, *Wisdom*, even where *prima facie* tensions exist (e.g. is justice historically [*Wis.* 10-19] or eschatologically [*Wis.* 1-6] realised?) argues from and for a consistent theological vision shaped by the rational exercise of divine justice and the predictable patterns of moral order, both of which find paradigmatic, canonical expression in the Exodus event.

### *Setting and Structure*

It is difficult to fix the date, provenance and setting of *Wisdom*. The consensus, which is probable though not definitive, places *Wisdom* in Alexandria somewhere between 220 BCE and 50 CE.<sup>12</sup> While it seems correct to note that portions of *Wisdom*, especially 19.13-15, 'reflect social tensions in Egypt (Alexandria)',<sup>13</sup> attempts to affix the occasion of *Wisdom* to a particular socio-historical event, the hostilities towards Jews under the reign of Caligula in 38 CE for example,<sup>14</sup> appear to stretch the evidence.<sup>15</sup> What can be said with some certainty, however, is

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<sup>12</sup> C. Larcher, *Le Livre de la Sagesse, ou La Sagesse de Salomon* (Paris : Gabalda, 1983) 1.141-61; D. Winston, *The Wisdom of Solomon* (AB, 43; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1979), 20-25; H. Hübner, *Die Weisheit Salomons* (ATD Apokryphen 4; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1999), 15-19; J.J. Collins, *Jewish Wisdom in the Hellenistic Age* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1997), 178. See, however, R. Zimmermann, 'The Book of Wisdom: Its Language and Character', *JQR* 57 (1996): 1-27, 101-35 and D. Georgi, 'Weisheit Salomos', *JSHRZ* III.4 (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1980): 391-478 who both argue for a Syrian provenance. The Alexandrian (or at least Egyptian) setting seems to be confirmed by the expansion of the Egyptian plague cycle and the relative disinterest in the Canaanites, the similarities to Philo of Alexandria and the adaptation of (what appears to be) Middle Platonism (McGlynn, *Divine Judgment and Divine Benevolence in the Book of Wisdom* [WUNT II, 139; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001], 9-10). While 220 BCE and 50 CE serve as *terminus a quo* and *terminus ad quem*, a date in the early Roman period, perhaps three or four decades after Actium, appears to better satisfy lexical questions and possible allusions to Roman occupation (McGlynn, *Divine Judgment*, 13). This narrower dating has been recently supplemented by fresh evidence from Egyptian cultic practice (M.F. Baslez, 'The Author of Wisdom and the Cultured Environment of Alexandria', in *The Book of Wisdom in Modern Research: Studies on Tradition, Redaction, and Theology* [DCLY 2005; ed. A. Passaro and G. Bellia; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2005], 33-54).

<sup>13</sup> Barclay, 'Unnerving Grace', 91 n.1.

<sup>14</sup> Winston, *Wisdom*, 23-24; S. Cheon, *The Exodus Story in the Wisdom of Solomon: A Study in Biblical Interpretation* (JSPSS 23; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 151

<sup>15</sup> J.M.G. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora from Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE - 117 CE)* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 181-82. See also B.J. Lietaert Peerbolte, 'The Hermeneutics of Exodus in the Book of Wisdom', in *The Interpretation of Exodus: Studies in Honor of Cornelis Houtman* (BET 44; Leuven: Peeters, 2006),

that whatever social conflict necessitated the writing of *Wisdom*, the event(s) was serious enough to generate a series of questions about the stability of the cosmos, the patterns of history and the past, present and future justice of God.

The diversity of content and style which characterises *Wisdom*'s three major sections has occasioned a litany of source-critical hypotheses.<sup>16</sup> As Winston remarks, 'its abrupt shifts in style, meter, and subject long resisted all efforts to see it as a unified and fully coherent whole'.<sup>17</sup> Such long standing resistance, it seems, has finally been overcome. While the composite history of this text should not be ruled out, current scholarly opinion favours reading *Wisdom* as a unified work.<sup>18</sup> Whether or not this trend is correct, it reflects the skill with which the author or final redactor transitions from one section to the next. There is almost unanimous agreement that *Wisdom* should be divided into three general units, but it is difficult to deciding exactly where to place the breaks. Chapters 6 and 10/11 appear to serve something of a Janus function, rounding off one section as they introduce the next. As Maurice Gilbert remarks, 'in the Book of Wisdom every conclusion says more than its introduction, and does so with new nuances, and in doing so, moves progressively ahead'.<sup>19</sup> Recognising this structural ambiguity, Gilbert calls for 'an account which is fluid and flowing', an invitation the following outline attempts to accept.<sup>20</sup>

- I. Two Ways of Reasoning: Justice and the Problem of Death (1.1-6.11)
- II. Wisdom, a Saving and Fitting Gift (6.1-10.21)
- III. History and the Divine Economy (10.15-19.22)

### *A Rational Paradox: Divine Justice and the Problem of Death (1.1-6.11)*

Rationality and paradox are matters of perspective. At the close of *Wisdom*'s imaginary drama, the ungodly murderers of the righteous are confronted with 'the paradox of salvation'

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97-116 who suggests a polemical reaction to Egyptian idolatry and polytheism as the socio-rhetorical occasion of *Wisdom*.

<sup>16</sup> For a review of the source-critical proposals see Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, 182.

<sup>17</sup> D. Winston, 'A Century of Research on the Book of Wisdom', in *The Book of Wisdom in Modern Research: Studies on Tradition, Redaction, and Theology* (DCLY 2005; ed. A. Passaro and G. Bellia; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2005), 1-18 (1).

<sup>18</sup> J.M. Reese, *Hellenistic Influence on the Book of Wisdom and its Consequences* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1970) 145; Larcher, *Le Livre de la Sagesse*, 1.100-103; L.L. Grabbe, *Wisdom of Solomon: Guides to Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 25.

<sup>19</sup> M. Gilbert, 'The Literary Structure of the Book of Wisdom: A Study of Various Views', in *The Book of Wisdom in Modern Research: Studies on Tradition, Redaction, and Theology* (DCLY 2005; ed. A. Passaro and G. Bellia; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2005), 19-32 (31).

<sup>20</sup> Gilbert, 'The Literary Structure of the Book of Wisdom', 31.

(τῷ παραδόξῳ τῆς σωτηρίας, 5.2). Their unsound reasoning (λογισάμενοι οὐκ ὀρθῶς, 2.1) blinded them to the ‘mysteries of God’ (2.22), leading to the cynical conclusions that death is final (2.1-5), pleasure is proper (2.6-9) and might is right (2.11). Within this logical sphere the eschatological vindication of the murdered righteous is impossible, irrational and paradoxical. *Wisdom*, however, reasons within an alternative sphere of logic. The salvation of the righteous may be ‘counter-intuitive’,<sup>21</sup> or at least counter-empirical; but as *Wisdom* reads the world, the symmetrical and fitting destinies of the righteous and the ungodly are both inevitable and supremely rational.

Twin addresses to the ‘rulers of the earth’ (1.1-11; 6.1-11) form an *inclusio* around the opening section of *Wisdom*, thus indicating the universality of the subject matter.<sup>22</sup> The topic under discussion is announced in the opening exhortation: ‘Love justice’ (δικαιοσύνη, 1.1). On the surface, however, *Wisdom*’s world is not a straightforwardly just and equitable place. Therefore, the task of divine *Wisdom*, while characteristically a φιλόανθρωπον πνεῦμα (1.6), is to expose the irrational superficiality of the ‘perverse’ (σκολιός, 1.3) and ‘foolish’ (ἄσύνετος, 1.5) thoughts which characterise the ungodly (ἄσεβής, 1.16). This introduces the negative side of an irreducible distinction between the righteous and the wicked that runs throughout *Wisdom*. Whereas *Wisdom* regularly passes into holy souls (ψυχὰς ὁσίας, 7.27), she will not enter into one that is characterised by evil practices (κακότεχνον ψυχὴν, 1.4). The twisted logic (σκολιοὶ λογισμοί, 1.3) of the impious cannot reason beyond the penultimacy of death and therefore overlooks the inevitability of judgment. Blasphemous and unrighteous words, along with those who utter them, will not go unpunished (1.3, 8-10). Thus, what the ungodly fail to recognise is that hidden beneath the ubiquity and obvious injustice of death is a primordial rationality, a divinely instituted order that is life-creating (1.13-14a) and, at an elemental level, salvific (σωτήριοι αἱ γενέσεις τοῦ κόσμου, 1.14b). This counter-empirical moral order is maintained by the power of God which exposes foolishness (1.3), and the activity of *Wisdom* who, in the role of personified justice, ensures that a record of the words of those who utter unrighteous things will be brought before the Lord (1.6, 8-9).<sup>23</sup> As Joseph Dodson

<sup>21</sup> Watson, *Hermeneutics*, 384.

<sup>22</sup> J.M. Reese, ‘Plan and Structure in the Book of Wisdom’, *CBQ* 27(1965): 391-399; A.G. Wright, ‘The Structure of the Book of Wisdom’, *Biblica* 48 (1967): 165-184; Winston, *Wisdom*, 9-10

<sup>23</sup> McGlynn, *Divine Judgment*, 55. The activity of *Wisdom* here, especially as listener, reporter and avenger (1.8), parallels the roles of personified Δίκη in classical Greek literature. See, for example, Plato *Laws* 715E, 872E; Aeschylus *Agamemnon*; and Sophocles *Electra* 475, 528 (Winston, *Wisdom*, 105; McGlynn, *Divine Judgment*, 90).

indicates, the joint effect of the summons to love righteousness and the threatening personifications is a two-ways exhortation which has justice as its goal and judgment as its warning.<sup>24</sup>

The empirical, however, cannot be ignored. If there is a rationality deeper than the reality and apparent finality of death it must be able to account for and pass through this most basic of theistic enigmas. The obvious tension between *Wisdom's* assertion that God created humanity for incorruption (ἀφθαρσία, 2.23) and the presence of death invites an account of death's cosmogony. The words and works of the ungodly summon death as a friend for whose company they are well suited (ἄξιος, 1.12, 16; cf. 2.24). Additionally, death's entrance onto the stage of God's life-creating world is ascribed to 'the devil's envy' (2.24).<sup>25</sup> Both explanations, which together frame the first speech of the wicked (2.1-20), contain an unmistakable trace of theodicy: 'God did not make death' (ὁ θεὸς θάνατον οὐκ ἐποίησεν, 1.13); 'God created humankind for incorruption' (ὁ θεὸς ἔκτισεν τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἐπ' ἀφθαρσία, 2.23).<sup>26</sup> Death, however, makes his way into God's originally deathless world by acting antithetically to Wisdom. Whereas Wisdom avoids the unrighteous (1.4-5), death draws near to those who summon and pine after (τήκω) him.<sup>27</sup> As Larcher describes this illicit love affair, the impious 'flirt avec la Mort', and in response death offers himself, thereby ensuring that neither his desire (i.e. the destruction of his partners) nor that of his ungodly lovers goes unrequited. Death's deal with the devil (2.24) stands behind this romantic pact, establishing a causal chain that moves from death's entrance via the devil's envy to the experience of death by those who

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<sup>24</sup> J.R. Dodson, *The 'Powers' of Personification: Rhetorical Purpose in the Book of Wisdom and the Letter to the Romans* (BZBW 161; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 103: 'The chief purposes of these personifications [Dodson cites Dynamis, Sophia, Spirit and Dike]...are to motivate the audience to love righteousness and to seek the Lord. If they refuse to pursue righteousness, these personifications...ensure judgment, a life without Wisdom and a future examination without mercy'.

<sup>25</sup> Although the devil's activity is noted, the aetiological weight seems to be on the side of the self-destructive patterns of the ungodly (cf. 1.16; 13.1-14.31). Barclay, 'Unnerving Grace', 93 n.4 sees in this imbalance an emphasis on human responsibility in determining soteriological status. Simon Gathercole (*Where is Boasting? Early Jewish Soteriology and Paul's Response in Romans 1-5* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002], 68) detects in *Wisdom* a 'three-part historical scheme' that moves from intended immortality, through the interruption of death, back to immortality by way of a Torah-defined holiness.

<sup>26</sup> Dodson, *The 'Powers' of Personification*, 62: 'As in 1.13-16, *Wisdom* sets two statements about the original intentions of God vis-à-vis His creation (2.23) in contrast to two statements about the current reality of creation'.

<sup>27</sup> In the context of Alexandrian poetry, τήκω language was often employed as a metaphorical expression of sexual desire (Larcher, *Le Livre de la Sagesse*, 207)

belong to his company (μερίς) because their wickedness (ἡ κακία αὐτῶν) makes them worthy (ἄξιος) of such a lot.<sup>28</sup>

More important than how death invaded God's ordered cosmos, however, is the troubling reality that death's chaotic regime is a challenge to the purported immutability of the operations of divine justice. Death stands in explicit antithesis to the divine creative intention and, by extension, the very image of God in accordance with which humankind was fashioned (2.23). This creational contradiction must be addressed. Before proceeding to subvert the disorderly polity of death, however, death himself, or at least death's friends (φίλοι, 1.16), are permitted to provide an (ir)rational *apologia* for his anarchic rationality (2.1-20). The naturalistic logic of the ungodly moves from the randomness of life and the finality of death (2.1b-5) to a corresponding (οὖν, 2.6) ethic of temporal pleasure (2.6-9), and ends in an assertion of authority established by power (2.10-11).<sup>29</sup> The evidence for the correctness of this chaotic perspective is death itself: 'Our name will be forgotten in time and no one will remember our works.... For our time is the passing of a shadow, and there is no return from our death' (2.4-5). Within this line reasoning, the fate of the righteous (δίκαιος, 2.12) functions as an experiment to test the theological perspectives of the righteous and the ungodly (2.12-20).<sup>30</sup> If the righteous person, who claims divine sonship (2.13, 16) and adheres to a codified

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<sup>28</sup> The reference to the 'devil's envy' – a probable allusion to the tradition found in *Life of Adam and Eve* 12.1 – together with the phrase 'image of God' and a reflection on the original creation suggest a reworking of the Genesis 1-3 narrative.

<sup>29</sup> While the Epicurean feel of this line of reasoning has led some commentators to posit an Epicurean identity for the 'ungodly' (e.g. A. Dupont-Sommer, 'Les Impies du Livre de la Sagesse sont-ils des Épicuriens?' *RHR* 111 [1935]: 90-109), Winston is correct to argue that 'only a grossly distorted understanding of Epicureanism could conceivably reconcile that philosophy with the...crude and unprincipled brand of hedonism' placed on the lips of the ungodly (Winston, *Wisdom*, 115). The Epicurean hypothesis is further problematised by *Wisdom's* apparent dependence on the imputed speech of the sinners in *1 Enoch* 102.6-11. In parallel to *Wisdom* 2.1-20, *1 Enoch* 102.6-11 has the wicked reasoning from the brevity of life and finality of death (102.6-8; cf. *Wis.* 2.1-5) to the conclusion that life should be enjoyed (102.9; cf. *Wis.* 2.6-9) and the righteous who question this rationality, helpless as they are (102.10-11; cf. *Wis.* 2.18-20), should be exploited and persecuted (102.9; cf. *Wis.* 2.10-16).

<sup>30</sup> For the death of the righteous as a test of justice see Collins, *Jewish Wisdom in the Hellenistic Age*, 195; McGlynn, *Divine Judgment*, 69. See also S. Manfredi, 'The Trial of the Righteous in *Wis* 5.1-14 (1-7)', in *The Book of Wisdom in Modern Research: Studies on Tradition, Redaction, and Theology* (DCLY 2005; ed. A. Passaro and G. Bellia; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2005), 159-78 (161): 'The persecution of the just...puts God himself, his existence and the truthfulness of his particular revelation in that law by which the just man lives, to the test'. Early Christian interpreters, hearing the allusion to Isaiah 3.10 (LXX) in *Wisdom* 2.12 and noting the familiar pattern of the Servant Songs of Isaiah 52-53 within the drama at large, read the persecution of the suffering righteous as a straightforward reference to Jesus' passion (e.g. Barn. 6.7, Justin Martyr *Dial.* 17, Augustine *Civ. Dei* 17.20.1; see Winston, *Wisdom*, 119 for further references).

morality (2.16), dies at the hands of those whom he reproaches and calls sinners (2.12), then the ungodly are justified in their reasoning.<sup>31</sup>

Within *Wisdom's* moral schema, however, the ungodly can never be justified, especially not in their reasoning. Their logical fallacies (λογισάμενοι οὐκ ὀρθῶς, 2.1) are a product of the noetic effects of their wickedness (κακία, 2.21) which prevent them from knowing, and therefore reasoning from, the 'mysteries of God' (μυστήρια θεοῦ, 2.22). Being 'fit' (ἄξιος, 1.16) for death, the irrationality of the ungodly will meet its appropriate retribution (3.10). The righteous, by contrast, read the world *sub specie aeternitatis*. In accordance with the 'mysteries of God' (2.22), they are able to peer beyond the roodscreen of death and perceive a hidden, though still operative, cosmology governed by divine justice. The tyranny of death's de-creative injustice will give way to the intended incorruption (2.23) as the righteous receive the 'reward of holiness' (μισθὸν ὁσιότητος 2.22; cf. 5.15) and the 'prize for blameless souls' (γέρας ψυχῶν ἀμώμων, 2.22). Only the foolish think that the righteous have met death (3.2) and punishment (3.4),<sup>32</sup> while those reasoning rightly know that 'their hope is full of immortality' (ἀθανασία, 3.4) and their suffering was not punishment but discipline (ὀλίγα παιδευθέντες μεγάλα εὐεργετηθήσονται, 3.4-5), the paternal process through which God determined them to be 'worthy of himself' (εὗρεν αὐτοῦς ἀξίους ἑαυτοῦ, 3.5).

### *The Empirical and the Eschaton*

This equitable cosmic administration is illustrated by contrasting the uselessness of the illegitimate progeny of the ungodly (4.3-6; cf. 3.16-19) with the counter-empirical favour bestowed on the undefiled barren woman (3.13), the law-observant and faithful eunuch

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<sup>31</sup> The oppressors here are accused by the righteous of 'sinning against our training' and 'against the law' (2.12). This has compelled commentators to identify the author's rhetorical target as fellow, though probably apostate, Jews (e.g. E. Clarke, *The Wisdom of Solomon* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973], 25). While this is possible, the ungodly's characterisation of the customs of the righteous as odd (ἀνόμοιος, 2.15), coupled with the ethnically-other polemical orientation of *Wisdom* as a whole (especially *Wis.* 11-19), suggests that the contrast between the 'righteous' and the 'ungodly' in *Wisdom* 1-6 is probably reflective of socio-religious tensions between Jews and non-Jews (see Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, 186; N.T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God* [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003], 166).

<sup>32</sup> For the confusion surrounding the definition of death in *Wisdom* see M. Kolarcik, *The Ambiguity of Death in Wisdom Chapters 1-6: A Case Study of Literary Structure and Interpretation* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1991), *passim*; J.P. Weisengoff, 'Death and Immortality in The Book of Wisdom' (*CBQ* 3, 1941): 104-133. The precise nature of immortality is similarly difficult to determine (see, for instance, M.-J. Lagrange, 'Le Livre de Sagesse, sa doctrine des fins dernières', *RevB* 4 [1907]: 85-104; N.T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God* [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003], 162-175).

(3.14),<sup>33</sup> and the righteous whose God-pleasing lives ended prematurely (4.7-8, 16; cf. 4.9-15).<sup>34</sup> In each case, an empirical curse is reinterpreted as a blessing.<sup>35</sup> According to canonical tradition, the eunuch was debarred from the assembly (Deut 23.1), but *Wisdom* promises him ‘a place of great delight in the temple of the Lord’ (3.14). Similarly, *Wisdom*’s redefinition of longevity (4.8-9) clearly clashes with Moses’ exhortation to ‘choose life, that you and your children may live’ (Deut 30.19). Whereas Moses promises life (ζήσεται, future tense) to those who keep the law (Lev 18.5b), *Wisdom* defines long life as moral spotlessness (ἡλικία γήρως βίος ἀκηλίδωτος, 4.9). The most dramatic instance of this rethinking of tradition, however, is *Wisdom*’s assignment of blessing to the barren. In contrast to the causal connection between favour and fertility (Deut 28.4, 11) and infertility and transgression (Deut. 28.18; 1 En. 98.5), *Wisdom* links the childless with virtue (ἀρετή, 4.1), thereby implying, in Larcher’s words, that ‘la vertu confère une valeur positive à l’ *ateknia*’.<sup>36</sup> Dodson is correct to detect here a ‘redefining of reality’.<sup>37</sup> The contrast is between the empirical and the ontological/eschatological – that is between the way things appear and the way things actually are and will be.

This depiction of blessing and curse, while empirically upside-down, is neither arbitrary (cf. 2.2) nor irrational. In fact, it appears to be a patterned projection of the conditions and symmetry of the deuteronomic formula onto an eschatological stage: the righteous *will* be blessed and the wicked *will* be cursed.<sup>38</sup> This hunch moves closer to certainty

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<sup>33</sup> For πίστις as faithfulness here, see Hübner, *Weisheit Salomons*, 57.

<sup>34</sup> Barclay is correct to emphasise the note of compensation that shapes the respective blessings of the empirically cursed (*Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, 185 n. 7): barrenness is overturned with fruit (3.13), faithfulness is met with special favour (3.14), and brevity of life is countered with a redefinition of longevity in terms of understanding rather than age (4.8).

<sup>35</sup> The canonical motivation for rethinking the deuteronomic tradition of blessing and curses is provided by Third Isaiah (cf. Isa 56.3-5) and, as will be argued below, the theological pattern, if not the details, of Deuteronomy.

<sup>36</sup> Larcher, *Le Livre de la Sagesse*, 2.315.

<sup>37</sup> Dodson, *The ‘Powers’ of Personification*, 104-105. Dodson notes the contrast between the soon-forgotten children of adultery with the enduring memory of virtue, suggesting that, in concert with the various victories and prizes she confers (4.1-2), ‘Lady Virtue...provides true fulfillment for life, promising women a fertility greater than that of carnal fecundity’.

<sup>38</sup> That our author can critique the details of Deuteronomy (e.g. the status of the barren and the eunuch, Deut 23.1; 28.18) on the basis of the text’s basic theological shape demonstrates a characteristic willingness to re-evaluate canonical data in light of paradigmatic readings of what, to *Wisdom*, are central canonical themes. This pre-critical brand of canonical criticism – perhaps *Sachkritik* is a more accurate label – will occupy us below in relation to *Wisdom*’s Exodus-inspired re-narration of pentateuchal history in 10.15-19.21 (chapter four). G.W.E Nickelsburg (*Resurrection, Immortality, and Eternal Life in Intertestamental Judaism and Early Christianity* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006], 162) probably overstates the matter when he refers to ‘Wisdom...opposing the deuteronomic theology’. As will presently be argued in the case of the *Epistle of Enoch*, the deuteronomic pattern is rescued from its temporal contradiction by relocating its actualisation in the eschaton.

when considered in relation to the *Epistle of Enoch* (hereafter, the *Epistle*).<sup>39</sup> As noted above, the similarities between *Wisdom* (especially chapter 2-4) and the *Epistle* (especially chapter 102-104) are striking. In addition to parallel speeches of the sinners (*Wis.* 2.1-20; *1 En.* 102.6-11), both texts refute the logic of the wicked (*Wis.* 2.21-3.9; *1 En.* 103.1-4) by appealing to a divinely revealed mystery (*Wis.* 2.21-24; *1 En.* 103.1-2) which relates to the eschatological preservation of the souls/spirits of the righteous dead (*Wis.* 3.1; *1 En.* 103.4-5).<sup>40</sup> These connections (and a few others)<sup>41</sup> have compelled some commentators to argue for literary dependence.<sup>42</sup> While such a conclusion is certainly possible, it is enough for our purposes to note the indisputable presence of *conceptual* dependence. In an effort to clarify the theological shape of *Wisdom*'s theodicy, it will be useful to explore briefly one of its (major) theological resources.

For the *Epistle*, the problem of the present is the perceived inversion of deuteronomic theology: the wicked prosper at the expense of the righteous whose lived experience is characterised by the deuteronomic curses. The explicitly deuteronomic shape of this injustice is evident in 103.9-15 which describes the conditions of the righteous in terms of the covenant curses of Deuteronomy 28-30.<sup>43</sup> 'Having hoped to be the head' (γενέσθαι κεφαλή), the righteous 'have become the tail' (ἐγενήθημεν κέρκος; 103.11a; cf. Deut 28.13, 44). The question is whether this upside-down existence reflects reality or simply reality's empirical, temporary aberration. The *Epistle*'s opinion is clear: at the judgment the righteous 'will not be found to be as sinners' (οὐ μὴ εὐρεθῆτε ὡς οἱ ἁμαρτωλοί; 104.5).<sup>44</sup> Actuality, it seems, cannot be separated from eschatology. More colloquially, looks can be deceiving. The apparent righteousness of the rich

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<sup>39</sup> The *Epistle* (*1 En.* 92.1-5; 93.11-105.2) represents a relatively late moment in the Enochic literary history. The composition of both the frame and body of the *Epistle* probably date from the period immediately before the Maccabean Revolt (L.T. Stuckenbruck, *1 Enoch 91-108* [CEJL; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2007], 211-15; Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch, Chapters 1-36; 81-108* [Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001], 427-28).

<sup>40</sup> Nickelsburg, *Resurrection, Immortality and Eternal Life*, 161.

<sup>41</sup> For Georgi, the presence of the resurrection of the soul in both *Wisdom* and *1 Enoch* 96-97 is an indication that *Wisdom* should be dated earlier and its provenance moved closer to Palestine than the general scholarly consensus (*Weisheit Salomos*, 395-97).

<sup>42</sup> P. Grelot, 'L'Eschatologie de la Sagesse et les Apocalypses Juives' in Bibliothèque de la Faculté Catholique de Théologie de Lyon, ed., *La Rencontre de Dieu : Festschrift für A. Gelin* (Le Puy: Xavier Mappus, 1996), 169, quoted in Gathercole, *Where is Boasting*, 68 n.138.

<sup>43</sup> Stuckenbruck, *1 Enoch*, 548: 'The language in the text...consists in large part of words, expressions and whole phrases drawn from the reservoir of curses for breaking the covenant in Deuteronomy 28....The righteous are made to utter a deep disappointment, if not disillusionment, that they themselves are suffering the consequences promised in the covenant to the disobedient (cf. e.g. Lam. 5.1-22; Deut. 31.17b)'. See also A. Dillmann, *Das Buch Henoch* (Leipzig: Fr. Chr. Wilh. Vogel, 1853), 322.

<sup>44</sup> Note also the prohibition that introduces the speech of 103.9-15 (μὴ γὰρ εἴπητε, 103.9) and the oath-formula that opens 104.1-6. These prefaces serve to commend the content of the latter passage while discouraging the attitude expressed in the former.

(cf. 96.4) and the assumed disobedience of the downcast (103.9-15) will both be exposed in an eschatological reversal of fortunes (104.5-6).<sup>45</sup> By way of this ontological sleight-of-hand – that is, the eschatological is more real than the empirical – the symmetrical justice of deuteronomic theology is preserved by being postponed.

For this theodicy to work, however, the aetiological lines that connect, on the one hand, covenant obedience and blessings and, on the other hand, disobedience and the covenant curses need to be redrawn. Put another way, the problem of the present is the empirically asymmetrical relationship between Deuteronomy’s anthropological and soteriological dualisms. The anthropological poles of righteousness and impiety are supposed to correspond to the twin soteriological destinies of, respectively, blessing and curse or, if interpreted eschatologically, life and death. Restated in these terms, the *Epistle’s* problem is the disjunction between the crisscross soteriology of the present and the linearity of Deuteronomy. Quite naturally, then, the solution is articulated in terms of the eschatological reestablishment of the soteriological correspondence between the righteous and blessing/life and, conversely, the wicked and curse/death. As Nickelsburg distills the *Epistle’s* central message, the final judgment is the time when ‘God will recompense the righteous and the wicked according to their deeds’.<sup>46</sup> Within the narrative world of the *Epistle*, then, the good news is not that sinners will enjoy soteriological blessings – that is precisely the problem – but rather that divine saving action will correspond to human moral action.<sup>47</sup>

Not surprisingly, therefore, and in harmony with the *Epistle’s* deuteronomic eschatology and theodicy, there is in *Wisdom* a correspondence between human ‘worth’ (ἄξιος, 3.5) and the divine exercise of judgment and ‘grace and mercy’ (χάρις καὶ ἔλεος, 4.15). The children of an ‘unlawful union’ (παρὰ νόμου κοίτης, 3.16), even if they appear to experience the covenantal blessing of long life, will find themselves hopeless and inconsolable on the ‘day of

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<sup>45</sup> G.W.E. Nickelsburg, ‘Riches, the Rich, and God’s Judgment in 1 Enoch 92-105 and the Gospel According to Luke’, *NTS* 25 (1978-1979): 324-44.

<sup>46</sup> Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch* 1, 420. It is important to note that for the *Epistle* the main question is not whether the righteous and wicked deserve their respective fates, although that is, to a degree, assumed in the reward soteriology of 99.10; 103.3-4; 1-4.13-105.1 and the two-ways theology of 94.1-5. The question is whether or not the right people are going to receive the right retribution. In other words, the basic question is one of theodicy, not soteriology.

<sup>47</sup> The grounds for this soteriological fittingness are implicit in the sobriquets that stereotype the competing groups: sinners and righteous. That these are essentially moral categories is evident, on the one hand, in the correlation between the repeatedly described sins of the wicked and their eschatological destruction and, on the other hand, the assumption that the righteous have chosen the path of righteousness and will be rewarded accordingly. These respective points are particularly clear in the woe-oracles and exhortations.

judgment' (ἡμέρα διαγνώσεως, 3.18). By contrast it is the empirically cursed undefiled barren woman who is actually blessed (μακαρία, 3.13) and the paradoxically righteous objects of the covenant punishment of an early death who will find eschatological rest (ἐν ἀναπαύσει ἔσται, 4.7). This latter example is canonically confirmed by an appeal to the figure of Enoch, whose premature departure from earthly existence is interpreted as a protective and loving expression of the grace and mercy of God towards one who pleased him (4.10-15). Similarly, the covenantally cursed and ostracised eunuch will be, because of (γάρ, 3.14) his faithfulness (πίστις, 3.14) given χάρις ἐκλεκτή (3.14; cf. 3.9; 4.15). Election, therefore, is not a process of random selection, but operates within the boundaries of the justly constituted moral order. In accordance with the soteriological pattern implicit in 2.22 (i.e. 'wages of holiness'), the χάρις καὶ ἔλεος of election (ἐκλεκτός, 3.9; 4.15) is reserved for the 'holy ones' (οἱ ὅσιοι, 4.15).<sup>48</sup> Similarly, as Barclay observes, 'Wisdom refers to the "lot" (κλήρος) of the righteous (3.14; 5.5) as the product not of chance but of justice, the "fruit" of good labours (3.13, 15)'.<sup>49</sup> Not surprisingly, therefore, immortality, precisely as a divine gift (χάρις, cf. 3.5-9; 4.10-15), is nevertheless spoken of in terms of reward (μισθός, 5.15; cf. 2.22; 3.13-15).<sup>50</sup> There is a suitably rational correspondence between gift and beneficiary, for after all, it is precisely 'righteousness that is immortal' (δικαιοσύνη ἀθάνατός ἐστιν, 1.15).<sup>51</sup> As Gathercole reads *Wisdom*, 'Reward is considered to be something gracious and granted by God's free choice';<sup>52</sup> or again, in Lagrange's pithy definition of *Wisdom's* notion of χάρις, the gift of immortality is a

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<sup>48</sup>The process by which people become οἱ ὅσιοι is, with some redundancy, spelled out in 6.10: οἱ γὰρ φυλάξαντες ὁσίως τὰ ὅσια ὁσιωθήσονται. That election was 'utterly gratuitous' has become something of a rallying cry in the post-Sanders era. While this refrain is true as it stands, it tends to (ironically) import the peculiarly Pauline notion of the un-preconditioned gift into its description of early Jewish theology. Election as a divine χάρις is coordinated with notions of human suitability such that the gift (election) corresponds to the social, intellectual and/or moral worth of its recipient (for Abraham's election see e.g. *Jub.* 11.14-12.24; *L.A.B.* 6.1-18; *Ant.* 1.154-185; *Apoc. Ab.* 1-9; for the election of Abraham's immediate descendents see e.g. *Jub.* 19.13-20; *CD* 3.1-4; *L.A.B.* 32.5; for the election of national Israel see e.g. *2 Bar.* 48.20; *1QM* 10.9-11). For a fuller discussion of 'grace/gift' in *Wisdom* in relation to its ancient context (both social and theological) see the section on *Wisdom* as a 'saving and fitting gift' (chapters three, five and seven).

<sup>49</sup> Barclay, 'Unnerving Grace', 94 n.5.

<sup>50</sup> Larcher, *Le Livre de la Sagesse*, 1.265; H. Bückers, *Die Unsterblichkeitslehre der Weisheitsbuch: ihr Ursprung und ihre Bedeutung* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1938), cited in Reese, *Hellenistic Influence*, 64 n. 149. For more on *Wisdom's* conception of χάρις and the mechanics of gift-giving see the discussion of 6.12-10.21 (chapter three).

<sup>51</sup> Hübner interprets the connection between righteousness and immortality as implying a correspondence between the human performance of righteousness and immortality: 'Wer die unsterbliche Gerechtigkeit übt' (*Weisheit Salomons*, 36).

<sup>52</sup> Gathercole, *Where is Boasting*, 71. For the use of μισθός in gift-discourse, see chapter seven.

‘récompense gracieuse’.<sup>53</sup> ‘The outcome of life, then’, as Barclay remarks, ‘is not the product of chance (2.2) or ultimately unfair: in accordance with what is morally, socially or rationally fitting, the ungodly will meet their end in death (1.16) and the godly will live with God (3.5)’.<sup>54</sup>

The principles, then, are in place. The injustice of death’s anarchic reign is a temporary aberration from the ultimately unassailable orderliness of the divine intention. Death’s destabilising rationality has been boldly countered with an empirically nonsensical vision of moral symmetry and cosmic equitability. To counter the empirical, however, is necessarily to point to the eschatological. In other words, to say *that* injustice, chaos and death will give way to justice, order and immortality is to invite an explanation of *how* and *when* this equitable administration will come into being.

For *Wisdom* the arena in which the irrationality of death will be exposed and defeated is an eschatological judgment scene (4.16-5.23).<sup>55</sup> Clothed for battle (5.17-20), the Lord will don the ‘helmet of impartial justice’ (κόρυθα κρίσιν ἀνυπόκριτον, 5.18) to ensure that the righteous and the ungodly meet their ‘fitting’ fates. Demolished by the justice and power of God (4.18-20), terrified and condemned by their sin (4.20) and unable to account for the paradoxical vindication of the righteous (παραδόξω τῆς σωτηρίας, 5.2) the ungodly will acknowledge that their perception of reality was far ‘from the way of truth’ (ἀπὸ ὁδοῦ ἀληθείας, 5.6). The righteous, by contrast, will receive their reward (μισθός, 5.15): exalted life in the presence and protection of God (5.15-16). This eschatological reversal extends to the empirical sphere as *Wisdom*’s natural theology (*Wis.* 13.1-5) is transposed into a creational soteriology in which the elements join in the divine battle against the ungodly (5.17-23; cf. 19.18-20), thus demonstrating the cosmic scale on which the principles of divine justice and moral order operate (cf. 1.14b).

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<sup>53</sup> Lagrange, ‘Le Livre de Sagesse’, 95. Gathercole (*Where is Boasting*, 71 n. 157) notes D.A. Carson’s argument for the redefinition of ‘grace’ in some early Jewish literature as a kind response to merit rather than favour in defiance of demerit (*Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility: Biblical Perspectives in Tension* [London: Marshall Pickering, 1991], 69). This observation appears to move beyond univocal assumptions about soteriological terms, but Carson’s comment about ‘the diluted value of “grace” in early Judaism indicates that he presupposes a normative definition of grace that assumes a fitting gift is an inferior gift (*Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility*, 69). Also, the reference to merit implies that moral worth (i.e. merit) is the sole precondition for divine favour, when a range of Jewish literature, not least *Wisdom* (cf. *Wis.* 10.1-2), indicate that fittingness can be based on rational, ethnic and social status as well as ethical conformity.

<sup>54</sup> Barclay, ‘Unnerving Grace’, 94.

<sup>55</sup> Nickelsburg, *Resurrection, Immortality, and Eternal Life*, 67.

Glancing backwards from the end of chapter 5 provides a view from which we can detect a suggestive connection between 1.13-2.24 and 4.16-5.23.<sup>56</sup> If 1.13-2.24 expresses the empirically accurate though theologically ignorant worldview of the ungodly from the perspective of the present, then 4.16-5.23 provides an eschatological re-presentation of this drama that turns the empirical inside-out and thereby turns the theological right-side-up. In both instances, the ungodly are given a voice (2.1-10; 5.3-13), but the content and tone of the speeches are antithetical. Eschatology is an event of exposure. What once appeared to the wicked as the totality of existence (i.e. earthly life, 2.1b-5) is now, in view of the salvation of the righteous (5.4-6), seen to be ontologically empty (ἡμεῖς γεννηθέντες ἐξελίπομεν, 5.13). A similar reverse is evident as the counter-empirical affirmations of the soteriological nature of the cosmos (1.13-14; 2.23) find eschatological confirmation: God arms creation to repel his enemies and fight with him against his deranged (παράφρων) enemies (5.17, 20). According to Manfredi, this complete postponement of deuteronomic justice moves beyond both the prophetic and even Enochic traditions from which it draws: ‘the revelation of that which gives sense to the life and suffering of the just, the perfect divine recompense is life after death, in the presence of God, in peace and in love’.<sup>57</sup> This eschatological extremity, however, only highlights the categorical distinction between the ungodly and the righteous, between life and death, between the way things appear and the way things actually are. The present is a perversion. The covenantal lines of blessing and curse are unjustly and inversely linked to the wrong people – the ungodly prosper and the righteous suffer. The first speech of the wicked takes this aberration to be actuality; their second speech acknowledges their overly empirical irrationality in the face of the eschatological reestablishment of the straight lines of justice: the ungodly are consumed (καταδαπανᾶω, 5.13) and the righteous are numbered among the children of God (5.5).

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<sup>56</sup> Manfredi, ‘The Trial of the Righteous’, 161-62.

<sup>57</sup> Manfredi, ‘The Trial of the Righteous’, 176. Manfredi argues that the Confessions of Jeremiah (11.18-12.6; 15.10-21; 17.14-18; 18.18-23; 20.7-18) and the Third Servant Song of Isaiah (50.4-9, 10-11) provide *Wisdom’s* main canonical resources in the Trial of the righteous (Wis. 5.1-14). Nickelsburg prefers to see the story of the persecuted and exalted righteous person as ‘an interpretation or expansion or elaboration of Isaiah 52-53 with certain motifs and elements added from Isaiah 13 and 14.... using the latter to describe the judgment/punishment of the persecutors’ (*Resurrection, Immortality, and Eternal Life*, 101, 107).

## Concluding a Court Drama

In *Wisdom* the eschatological actualisation of the promise of immortality is the answer to the theodicy question that has shaped the debate between the righteous and the ungodly.<sup>58</sup> Offering the finality of death as their seemingly incontrovertible closing statement, the ungodly rested confidently in the perceived unassailability of their evidence.<sup>59</sup> Such logical confidence, however, failed to account for God's universal providence (προνοεῖ περὶ πάντων, 6.7) which scrutinizes everything (6.3) and relentlessly judges (κρίσις ἀπότομος, 6.5) all, especially the powerful (δυνατοί, 6.6), who οὐκ ἐκρίνατε ὀρθῶς οὐδὲ ἐφυλάξατε νόμον οὐδὲ κατὰ τὴν βουλήν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπορεύθητε (6.4). The righteous, by contrast, reasoning within the rational sphere constituted by the μυστήρια θεοῦ (2.22), know that even an early, childless and violent death cannot separate them from their fitting destiny: 'the souls of the righteous are in the hands of God' (3.1). Immortality, then, is the counter-evidence to death, an eschatological ace-in-the-hole which trumps death's dual pretensions: finality and anarchy. These competing teleological perspectives generate 'alternative readings of the world',<sup>60</sup> one characterised by moral chaos, judicial mayhem and cosmic instability, the other corresponding to a primordial order which is predictably and unalterably rational, symmetrical and equitable. The most basic manifestation of this symmetrical justice is the fitting destinies of the righteous and the ungodly. As Nickelsburg suggests, 'The thesis of the *Wisdom of Solomon* 1-6 is that unrighteousness leads to death and destruction (1.12; 5.9-14), while righteousness leads to life and immortality (1.15; 5.15)'.<sup>61</sup> This counter-empirical thesis cannot be read off the surface of temporal existence; it is the product of an interpretative exercise shaped by the hermeneutical constraints of a pre-existing cosmological and theological vision of divine justice and moral order.

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<sup>58</sup> A.A. Di Lella ('Conservative and Progressive Theology: Sirach and Wisdom of Solomon', *CBQ* 28 [1966]: 139-54) argues that *Wisdom's* theological innovation is most clearly detectable in the author's emphasis on eschatological retribution and the afterlife. Cf. D.J. Harrington, *Invitation to the Apocrypha* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 75: 'The emphasis on immortality is the writer's most original and influential contribution to biblical theology'.

<sup>59</sup> For death and immortality as the respective pieces of evidence marshaled by the ungodly and the righteous see Kolarcik, 'Universalism and Justice in the Wisdom of Solomon', 300.

<sup>60</sup> Barclay, 'Unnerving Grace', 94.

<sup>61</sup> Nickelsburg, *Resurrection, Immortality, and Eternal Life*, 67; see also Kolarcik, 'Universalism and Justice in the Wisdom of Solomon', 300; D.E. Gowan, 'Wisdom', in *Justification and Variegated Nomism: Volume 1, The Complexities of Second Temple Judaism* (ed. D.A. Carson, Peter T. O'Brien and Mark A. Seifrid; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 215-239; Watson, *Hermeneutics*, 384; S.J. Gathercole, *Where is Boasting*, 67-72.

Cosmology and theology, however, are noetically unavailable to the natural epistemological project. Within *Wisdom's* theological grammar, it is the educational activity of the divine σοφία that reveals the true structures of the ordered cosmos which she fashioned and sustains. Thus, following *Wisdom*, it is to Wisdom that we now turn.

## Chapter 3

### Wisdom's Place in *Wisdom's* Theology: 6.1-10.21<sup>1</sup>

Soteriologically interested interpretations of *Wisdom* tend to hurry from the so-called 'Book of Eschatology' (*Wis.* 1-5/6) to the 'Book of History' (*Wis.* 10/11-19), making only passing comments about the central section (the 'Book of Wisdom', *Wis.* 6-9/10) as they catch glimpses of the strange conceptual topography from the window of their exegetical train. In contrast to the 'cross-cultural' semantics of σοφία, the δίκαιο- language which dominates the first and last section of *Wisdom* provides, especially for the Pauline tourist, familiarity, a lexical home away from home.<sup>2</sup> This trend, while understandable, is problematic. Although the distribution of vocabulary is indicative of the central thematics of *Wisdom's* three major units, it is not quite right to suggest that σοφία is absent from the books of eschatology and history. The prologue is peppered with the poetics of Wisdom (1.4-9), and she pops up again in 3.11 and 6.9.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, while it is almost true that Wisdom 'only occurs twice in an incidental way in chs. 11-19 (14.2, 5)',<sup>4</sup> σοφία (10.21) is the unambiguous subject of εὐόδωσεν in 11.1. The result is a gong-like effect in which 11.1 sounds the loud note of Wisdom's initiating and directing role in the Exodus events (10.15-11.1) and sends her agency, however hidden and unspoken, reverberating through the re-narration of the wilderness adventures (chapters 11-19).<sup>5</sup> These exegetical observations reflect the centrality of σοφία at the sub-structural level of *Wisdom's* theology. However, because *Wisdom* is often read as a conversation partner for Paul, Pauline patterns of discourse are permitted to dictate what is deemed interesting and relevant – even theologically important – for *Wisdom's* soteriological schema. The problem is that Wisdom is a central and constituent feature of *Wisdom's* theological architecture and the architect of

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<sup>1</sup> For a similarly entitled and conceptually related discussion see D. Winston, 'Wisdom in the Wisdom of Solomon', in *In Search of Wisdom: Essays in Memory of John G. Gammie* (ed. Leo G. Perdue; Louisville: John Knox Press, 1993), 149.

<sup>2</sup> D.E. Gowan, 'Wisdom', in *Justification and Variegated Nomism: Volume 1, The Complexities of Second Temple Judaism* (ed. D.A. Carson, Peter T. O'Brien and Mark A. Seifrid; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 215-239.

<sup>3</sup> J.R. Dodson also detects the agency of 'Lady Wisdom' in the activity of her synonymous personification (i.e. Lady Virtue) in *Wisdom* 4.1-2 (*The 'Powers' of Personification: Rhetorical Purpose in the Book of Wisdom and the Letter to the Romans* [BZNV 161; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008], 103-105).

<sup>4</sup> Gowan, 'Wisdom', 225.

<sup>5</sup> Pace H. Hübner, *Die Weisheit Salomons* (ATD Apokryphen 4: Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1999), 393 who argues that σοφία is absent from *Wisdom* 11-19 in order to indicate that 'die das Heil wirkende Weisheit wirkt kein anderes Wirken als das Wirken Gottes'.

*Wisdom's* theological universe. As will be argued below, Wisdom is both the creative instrument through whom the natural, rational and moral order coheres and the educational agent by whom a proper perception of reality is engendered. Moreover, the soteriological significance of σοφία is evident in her action as a salvific agent, an agency which is particularly notable as Wisdom is portrayed as the divine gift (χάρις, 8.21) and as she is retrojected into the Genesis narratives (10.1-14).

### *Speaking as Solomon – Singing of Σοφία*

The historical implausibility of Solomonic authorship should not distract us from the hermeneutical perspective implicit in the rhetorical association of the 'Book of Wisdom' with the voice of Solomon.<sup>6</sup> Two points need to be emphasised. First, Solomon speaks as a king (9.7) to fellow kings (6.1, 9, 21). This rhetorical address is regularly described as a (mere) adoption of, as Reese puts it, 'a hellenistic literary convention',<sup>7</sup> but the preponderance of 'ruling' language<sup>8</sup> and the explicit connection between Wisdom and kingship<sup>9</sup> suggests material as well as formal significance.<sup>10</sup> The abrupt transition from judgment against the inappropriate exercise of power (οὐκ ἐκρίνατε ὀρθῶς, 6.4) to Wisdom's instructive generation of lasting (εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, 6.21) and sensible (φρόνιμος, 6.24) kingdoms reflects the ancient, near-eastern tradition of locating the instantiation of divine principles in the person and activity of the monarch.<sup>11</sup> Within this kingship model, the βασιλεύς is both the focal point of moral

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<sup>6</sup> The references to the speaker's kingship and charge to build the temple (9.7-8) make the allusion to Solomon unmistakable.

<sup>7</sup> J.M. Reese, *Hellenistic Influence on the Book of Wisdom and its Consequences* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1970), 110-11; E. Clarke, *The Wisdom of Solomon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 14.

<sup>8</sup> For example: κρίνω (1.1, 3.8, 6.4), βασιλεύς (6.1, 24; 7.5; 9.7; 10.16; 11.10; 12.14; 14.17; 18.11), δικαστής (6.1), κράτησις (6.3), δυναστεία (6.3), κρατέω (3.8, 6.2), βασιλεία (6.4, 20; 10.10, 14), τύραννος (6.9, 21; 8.15; 12.14; 14.17).

<sup>9</sup> M. McGlynn, *Divine Judgment and Divine Benevolence in the Book of Wisdom* (WUNT II, 139; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck), 105-08.

<sup>10</sup> This is further indicated by the clarifying repetition of the objects of address in 6.9, 21 in which it is explicitly the 'rulers' (note the οὖν in 6.9) and not the people (λαός, 6.21) whom they govern who are summoned to learn (μανθάνω, 6.9) about Wisdom from their fellow king. A notable exception to this general interpretive indifference is Roberto Vignolo, 'Wisdom, Prayer and Kingly Pattern: Theology, Anthropology, Spirituality of Wis 9', in *The Book of Wisdom in Modern Research: Studies on Tradition, Redaction, and Theology* (DCLY 2005; ed. A. Passaro and G. Bellia; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2005), 255-282. Setting the model of kingship expressed in *Wisdom* 9 alongside the 'Qohelethian model', Vignolo argues that in contrast to Qoheleth's claim that 'regality is...an unfitting...symbol of the anthropologic condition', *Wisdom* thinks 'regality is man's true vocation' (279).

<sup>11</sup> S.N. Morschauser, 'The Ideological Basis for Social Justice/Responsibility in Ancient Egypt', in *Social Justice in the Ancient World* (ed. K.D. Irani and Morris Silver; Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1995), 101-11. Morschauser argues that this was particularly true in pre-Ptolemaic Egypt where Pharaoh was regarded as the

discourse<sup>12</sup> and the guarantor of justice – the one through whom the orderly structures of the cosmos take earthly shape in political, social and judicial praxis.<sup>13</sup> *Wisdom* appears to operate within this basic framework, depicting kings in general (6.9-25) and Solomon in particular (7.1-9.18) as the instruments through whom *Wisdom* effects the proper ordering of the created sphere: '[a king's] desire for *Wisdom* leads to a kingdom' (6.20) However, the apparently generous invitation to learn *Wisdom* (μάθητε σοφίαν, 6.9) subtly subverts this monarchical model by divesting rulers of their *a priori* association with divine virtue and locates the potentiality of equitable societies not in the king *per se* but in the king as a recipient and pupil of the educational agency of σοφία. That Solomon was this kind of king bring us to our second point.

The reading of reality and primeval history offered in these chapters comes from an interpreter whose hermeneutical vision has been transformed by the illuminating gift of divine *Wisdom*. Solomon, aware of the common origin and mortality of humankind (7.1-6), prayed for understanding (φρόνησις, 7.7a) and received in response the hermeneutically generative πνεῦμα σοφίας (7.7b).<sup>14</sup> It is the educational agency of *Wisdom* (7.22), an agency guided (ὁδηγός, 7.15) by God, which produces an 'unerring knowledge of what exists' (τῶν ὄντων γνῶσιν ἀψευδῆ, 7.17) that extends from the 'composition of the cosmos' and 'activity of the elements' (7.17) to the 'nature of animals' and the 'variety of plants' (7.20). It is from the hermeneutical vantage point of this 'perfection of understanding' (φρονήσεως τελειότης, 6.15) that the poems in praise of *Wisdom* (6.12-9.18)<sup>15</sup> and the Exodus-shaped recasting of the Genesis narratives (10.1-14) are placed on the lips of *Wisdom's* archetypal beneficiary.

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embodiment of justice (balance) because he was the possessor and distributor of *ma'at* ('Social Justice/Responsibility in Ancient Egypt', 101, 103).

<sup>12</sup> Discussing kingship tracts Reese notes that 'productions of this genre became the ordinary vehicle for tracing the moral ideal of Hellenism in the form of a mirror for the wise and benevolent king.... hellenistic thinkers resorted to essays on kingship to explain the idea of human perfection' (*Hellenistic Influence*, 72-73).

<sup>13</sup> Morschauer, 'Social Justice/Responsibility in Ancient Egypt', 103; McGlynn, *Divine Judgment*, 105-08. See also A. Mancini (*Maat Revealed: Philosophy of Justice in Ancient Egypt* [United States: Buenos Books America, 2004], 3) who argues that in Egyptian society 'there is no difference between divine and human justice', the latter being modeled after and, if *ma'at* flows unhindered (*Maat Revealed*, 82), reflective of the former.

<sup>14</sup> Watson speaks of 'Sophia's transforming illumination' which 'comes onto the scene "vertically, from above"' (*Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith* [London: T & T Clark, 2004], 529-30).

<sup>15</sup> McGlynn, *Divine Judgment*, 102: 'The author of *Wisdom* has adapted the form of the praise-poem/hymn to suit his own theological convictions of unequivocal monotheism where God's active attributes are presided over by wisdom'.

The rational relationship between Solomon and σοφία is the antithesis to the foolish friendship the ungodly imagine they have with death (1.16).<sup>16</sup> Whereas the wicked indulge their unwise infatuation with death (1.16-2.1), Solomon, loving her whom God loves (8.3) and enchanted by her beauty, pursues Wisdom as a bride (8.2). In contrast to the illicit pact (συνθήκη, 1.16), which has death as both its co-signer and *telos*, marriage to Wisdom brings all the sexual joys of matrimony (8.16)<sup>17</sup> and has immortality as its soteriological end: ἀθανασία ἐστὶν ἐν συγγενείᾳ σοφίας (8.17). The antithesis is stark. The ungodly long for and therefore find death in all its absurd meaninglessness. The righteous seek Wisdom and through her educational and salvific beneficence attain immortality. Those worthy of death die; those worthy of Wisdom live forever. As one who was worthy of Wisdom, as one who loved her and knew her both intimately and intelligently, Solomon is qualified to sing praises about her in the presence of kings so that they might learn Wisdom (μάθητε σοφίαν, 6.9).<sup>18</sup>

Solomon's song is wide ranging. The language of Middle-Platonism is commandeered to describe the indescribable, she who is a breath of divine power and whose beauty eclipses the sun and stars (7.29). It takes the sage a list of twenty-one words just to establish a rough sketch which he then colours in with the conceptualities of emanation, beauty, power, image and reflection (7.22-30).<sup>19</sup> Σοφία proceeds from God and reflects his eternal light, she is the image of his goodness and, though she is one, she is omnipotent, passing into holy souls (ψυχὰ ὄσια)

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<sup>16</sup> Dodson explores this contrast in terms of *Wisdom's* personification of 'Death' and 'Sophia', suggesting that the author employs this rhetorical device to establish a two-ways soteriology. 'Through this juxtaposition, the sage presents two paths of life. Either one will pine for Death or long for Wisdom. His audience can either make Death their king or take Sophia as their bride' (*The 'Powers' of Personification*, 106-14, 16). Burton Mack, *Logos und Sophia* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1973), 106 also notes the contrast, though he frames it in relation to spheres of existence: 'Diese Sphäre der Existenz Israels, die als Sphäre des Lichtes, der Sohnschaft Gottes und der Weltherrschaft vorgestellt wird, ist aber nicht konsequent ins Überkomische verlegt als eine transzendente Erscheinung, sondern erscheint als Existenzbereich innerhalb des Kosmos, der für die Gottlosen die Sphäre der Strafe, der Finsternis und des Todes darstellt'.

<sup>17</sup> *Wisdom* 1.16 speaks of the gladness and joy derived from lying beside (προσαναπαύω), having intercourse with (ἡ συναναστροφή) and cohabitating with Wisdom. This may serve as a counter-claim to the sexual imagery that characterised the relationship between death and the ungodly in 1.16. For the erotic personality of Wisdom, see J.M. Reese, *The Book of Wisdom, Song of Songs* (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1983), 97; L.L. Grabbe, *Wisdom of Solomon* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 68; A.M. Sinnott, *The Personification of Wisdom* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 198.

<sup>18</sup> Solomon's instruction extends to at least 10.14. This is indicated by the parenetic function of Adam and Joseph as exemplary monarchs who, respectively, had 'strength to rule all things' (10.2) and received 'the sceptre of the kingdom' (10.14). The end of this unit is difficult to fix, but the rhetorical transition from addressing kings to addressing God (10.20) probably functions as both a conclusion and an introduction (as does 10.15-21 as a whole).

<sup>19</sup> Winston, *Wisdom*, 178-80 notes the significance of the number twenty-one.

to make them friends of God.<sup>20</sup> As the song expands Wisdom is depicted as quintessentially a creator, instructor and saviour. She was present when God created the cosmos (9.9) and is herself credited with ‘fashioning what exists’ (τῶν ὄντων τεχνίτις, 8.6). Cognizant of the operations and structures of that which she fashioned (7.17-21; 8.6), Wisdom is able to disseminate the secrets of history, the beginning and end and middle of times (ἀρχὴν καὶ τέλος καὶ μεσότητά χρόνων, 7.18; cf. 8.8). This educational activity, moreover, has a soteriological intention. Those who, by Wisdom, are taught what pleases God (τὰ ἀρεστά σου ἐδιδάχθησαν, 9.18) are saved by Wisdom (τῇ σοφίᾳ ἐσώθησαν, 9.18).<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, Wisdom’s instruction (παιδεία, 6.17) produces a love for her that takes the form of obedience to her laws (τήρησις νόμων αὐτῆς, 6.18),<sup>22</sup> which in turn ensures the actualisation of God’s soteriological purpose: immortality (6.18).<sup>23</sup> The aetiology here is carefully structured and, on the surface, straightforward. Desiring instruction generates a love of Wisdom that produces obedience to her. This obedience in turn has its soteriological end in immortality whose own *telos* is nearness to God (6.17-19).

Behind – ‘within’ is perhaps more precise – this seemingly simple cause and effect soteriology is the salvific activity of Wisdom. Divine and human agency coexist within the same causal chain. Wisdom’s ἀρχή is located in a human desire for her, but it is precisely these persons whom Wisdom is already seeking (1.12-16). The love which presupposes and produces obedience to her laws is also the precondition of her self-disclosure (1.12). Human worth (ἄξιος, 1.16) is a necessary prerequisite for those who would be the objects of Wisdom’s acts of revelation and salvation; and yet even to the worthy she comes only as a divine gift (χάρις, 8.21). Set against this complex aetiological pattern, Wisdom’s soteriological role is again seen

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<sup>20</sup> The use of φίλους θεοῦ in 7.27 is reminiscent of *Jubilees* 30.21 where, in the context of a discussion of the heavenly tablets (3.17-23), Israel is exhorted to do the commandments and so ‘be written down as friends of God’ (*adscribentur amici dei*).

<sup>21</sup> While it is clear that it is Wisdom who saves, it is difficult to determine whether she saves by teaching or simply saves those whom she has taught, the latter assuming no causal link between knowledge and salvation. Either way, the crucial point is that the objects of Wisdom’s saving action are those who know what pleases God. In other words, in both readings, it is those who have been taught who are the objects of saving action. This proper ‘fit’ between Wisdom’s soteriological activity and the beneficiaries of that activity will occupy us below.

<sup>22</sup> Gathercole assumes that the commandments of Wisdom are functionally equivalent to Torah (*Where is Boasting? Early Jewish Soteriology and Paul’s Response in Romans 1-5* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002], 68). If this is correct, then immortality, the soteriological *telos* of Wisdom, is the gift/reward awaiting Torah-observant Israel (see also Lagrange, ‘Le Livre de Sagesse, sa doctrine des fins dernières’, *RevB* 4 [1907]: 85-104). This conclusion, while possible, should not be pressed too far as the paucity of evidence makes a firm conclusion impossible.

<sup>23</sup> It is perhaps more accurate to say that immortality is the instrumental precondition for God’s soteriological purpose which is nearness to and life with him (5.15; 6.19).

to include her educational activity. Wisdom saves those whom she instructs (9.18), but she only instructs those who desire instruction (6.17). This does not necessarily imply a cooperative soteriology – it is unambiguously Wisdom who saves (τῇ σοφίᾳ ἐσώθησαν, 9.18) – but it does indicate that the objects of salvation correspond to a preconditional standard of worth. This is not salvation *by* human worth; this is salvation *for* those who are worthy.<sup>24</sup>

This connection between salvation and education, moreover, cannot be disconnected from Wisdom’s cosmological role as co-creator. Because Wisdom fashioned the cosmos (7.22), she can reveal its secrets (7.17-21). Consequently, because the content of Wisdom’s instruction is, at least in part, cosmological (cf. 7.18), Wisdom’s creative, educative and salvific functions mingle together in a web of interdependence: Wisdom saves by teaching about creation.<sup>25</sup> Wisdom, therefore, in her cosmological, epistemological and soteriological operations, manages all things (διοικεῖ τὰ πάντα, 8.1). This is not quite the same as saying that ‘wisdom is the sacred order according to which the universe is governed, and in which the natural, social and moral orders coheres’,<sup>26</sup> but it is at least true that it is the beneficent and humane (εὐεργετικόν, φιλόανθρωπον, 7.23; cf. 1.6) activity of Wisdom that guarantees the stability of this order, reveals its operations to suitable beneficiaries and acts with salvific efficacy within the rational and moral parameters of the cosmic structures she fashioned.<sup>27</sup>

### *Pre-Conditional Χάρις: Σοφία, God’s Saving and Fitting Gift*

The intersection between the agency of Wisdom and human existence is the divine granting of Wisdom as ἡ χάρις (8.21). For *Wisdom*, however, even, or perhaps especially, the economy of divine beneficence functions within the rational confines of moral order and divine justice. Correspondingly, the gifting of Wisdom cannot be a whimsical exercise of

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<sup>24</sup> The various ways in which *Wisdom* conceives of human worth will be addressed below. What is important here is that *Wisdom*’s interest is not so much in *how* humans contribute to their salvation (i.e. causality), but rather *whom* Wisdom saves (i.e. the worthy).

<sup>25</sup> This interconnectedness makes me hesitate to adopt the otherwise helpful structure proposed by Dodson, *The ‘Powers’ of Personification*, 106: ‘The three dimensions of Sophia unfold in *Wisdom* 6-10. In *Wisdom* 6, she is the way to eternal life; in *Wisdom* 7, the emanation of God and co-creator of his universe. She is the bringer of all good gifts in *Wisdom* 8, the key to understanding in *Wisdom* 9, and the deliverer from suffering in *Wisdom* 10’.

<sup>26</sup> Barclay, ‘Unnerving Grace’, 93 (italics original).

<sup>27</sup> The significant lexical and thematic parallels between *Wisdom*’s mediation on σοφία and the popular Isis aretologies are regularly noted (e.g. Reese, *Hellenistic Influence*, 45-50). Although it is probable that Isis-vocabulary informed *Wisdom*’s reflection, divine Wisdom is, unlike Isis, not an autonomous deity, but rather ‘a pure emanation of the glory of the Almighty’ (ἀπόρροια τῆς τοῦ παντοκράτορος δόξης εἰλικρινής, 7.25).

random favour, but rather must be seen to cohere with the principles of cosmic equity that have shaped *Wisdom's* theological project. Therefore, even though Wisdom is easily discerned (εὐχερῶς θεωρεῖται, 6.12) and proactively self-disclosing (φθάνει προγνωσθῆναι, 6.13),<sup>28</sup> neither of these traits are without qualification. Wisdom is found by those who love (ἀγαπάω) and seek (ζητέω, 6.12) her and reveals herself to those who eagerly desire (ἐπιθυμέω, 6.13) her. There is, then, both reciprocity of agency and a correlation of gift and recipient. While it is difficult to determine a chronology of agency – although priority is typically ascribed to human request (7.7; 8.21) – it is clear that both Wisdom and her beneficiaries actively contribute to the distribution of the divine χάρις. Within *Wisdom's* 'gift-theory', however, aetiology is a subsidiary concern to the 'fittingness of the gift'. In Barclay's words, '*Wisdom's* concern here is less causality (regarding "prior" cause, God or humanity) than *affinity*'.<sup>29</sup> Wisdom's qualified proactivity seeks those who are 'worthy of her' (ἀξιους αὐτῆς, 6.16). This condition of suitability can be variously met by requesting (7.7; 8.21; 9.1-18), loving (6.12, 17; 8.2), honouring (6.21), serving (10.9), desiring (6.13, 17, 20; 8.2) and seeking (6.12; 8.2, 18) Wisdom. The diversity of criteria, however, in no way delimits the fundamental criterion of 'fittingness'. Thus, in the particular case of Solomon who, by virtue of his lot, received a good soul (ἀγαθὴ ψυχή, 8.19), and in the general case of holy souls (ψυχὰι ὅσαι, 7.27), Wisdom only enters, illumines and ultimately saves those whom she determines to be ἄξιος.

But again, as emphasised above, while it is the worthy who are saved, it is Wisdom who saves (9.18). *Wisdom's* repeated insistence on the suitability of the human recipient of divine grace is not indicative of notions of human earning. On the contrary, though Solomon was good (ἀγαθὸς ὢν, 8.20), his obtainment of the χάρις of Wisdom required an act of genuine giving (δίδωμι). His goodness made him a 'fitting' recipient of the divine gift, but the gift remains a gift – a rational bestowal of divine Wisdom to one who corresponds to an appropriate standard of pre-conditional worth. In this theological context, an act of grace or a divine gift is an *unearned* – non-contractual, voluntary – though *explainable* – fitting, congruous – benefaction.

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<sup>28</sup> The syntax of this verse is thorny, but following Winston (*The Wisdom of Solomon* (AB, 43; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1979), 153) it seems best, both grammatically and contextually, to take the infinitive (προγνωσθῆναι) with φθάνω.

<sup>29</sup> Barclay, 'Unnerving Grace', 95 (italics original).

According to Barclay, this emphasis on the affinity between gift and recipient situates *Wisdom* squarely within the normative antique practices of gift exchange.

Like any good giver in the ancient world, God gives gifts to those able and willing to receive them, and this proper ‘fit’ between gift and recipient does not make the gift any less a gift (it is entirely that), but ensures that it is a *good* gift, not wasted, ineffective or inappropriate.<sup>30</sup>

While anything like a competent survey of ancient gift-theory is beyond the scope of this project, it is worth noting that Seneca’s *De Beneficiis*, the most elaborate and influential ancient discourse on benefaction and gratitude,<sup>31</sup> offers an exhaustive – and somewhat exhausting – argument for the moral, logical and social necessity of ensuring that acts of benefaction are directed toward suitable beneficiaries.<sup>32</sup> Seneca’s basic complaint is that people ‘do not know how either to give or to receive benefits’ (*De Beneficiis* I.1.1). This ignorance is principally evident in irrational gifting and a correspondingly irrational expectation of reward: ‘For it follows that, if they [gifts] are ill placed, they are ill acknowledged, and when we complain of their not being returned, it is too late; for they were lost at the time they were given’ (*De Beneficiis* I.1.1; cf. VII.30.1). The primary cause of this frustrated economy of benefaction is that people fail to ‘pick out those who are worthy (*dignus*) of receiving our gifts’ (*De Beneficiis* I.1.2).<sup>33</sup> This gives way, after some qualification and digression, to a maxim of sorts: ‘we ought to be careful to confer benefits by preference upon those who will be likely to respond with favour’ (*De Beneficiis* I.10.4).

It is crucially important, however, both for a proper understanding of Seneca and for a fair reading of *Wisdom*, to note that this discerning benefaction in no way disqualifies the

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<sup>30</sup> Barclay, ‘Unnerving Grace’, 96 (italics original).

<sup>31</sup> J.W. Basore, introduction to *Seneca III: Moral Essays*, by Seneca (trans. J.W. Basore; LCL 310; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1935), vii-viii. It is important to remember that Seneca’s discourse represents a philosophical reflection on the ideals of gift exchange rather than a description of popular practice. Nevertheless, even when Seneca is complaining about the improper praxis of the populace, he argues from a shared ideology of social exception, thereby reflecting the substructural dynamics that shape his mediations as well as the habits of the masses.

<sup>32</sup> Suitability here is defined both in terms of worth in some social, moral or practical sense (*De Beneficiis* I.1.2; I.10.4) and in relation to a perceived need or desire (*De Beneficiis* I.12.3; II.1.3)

<sup>33</sup> This logical and pre-conditioned gifting appears to be qualified later as Seneca exhorts his reader to continue, like the gods who show lavish and unceasing kindness to those who are sacrilegious and indifferent to them’ (*De Beneficiis* I.1.9), in generosity even in the face of ingratitude; thus making their ‘benefits not investments, but gifts’ (*De Beneficii* I.1. 9). But even the apparent irrationality of this seemingly reason-less giving is misconstrued if the benefits involved are regarded as wasted; for even this act of benefaction will realise its reciprocal intentions as it ‘draws forth gratitude even from a heart that is hard and unmindful’ (*De Beneficiis* I.3.1). Furthermore, at the conclusion of his discourse, Seneca relocates the benefit of giving in the act of beneficence itself, rather than in the reciprocity of returned honour, such that to give is to receive (*De Beneficiis* VII.32.1).

graciousness – the ‘giftness’ – of the gift. On the contrary, a gift is defined as such precisely as it is rationally extended to a fitting recipient. Indeed, even ‘the gift of a huge sum of money, if neither reason nor rightness of choice has prompted it, is no more a benefit than it is a treasure-trove’ (*De Beneficiis* I.15.6). Thus, drawing together the various discursive threads from Book I, Seneca concludes: ‘The benefit that is a delight to have received...is one that reason delivers to those who are worthy (*dignus*), not the one that chance and irrational impulse carry no matter where’ (*De Beneficiis* I.15.3).

This contextual definition of gift resolves what to many readers of *Wisdom* appears as an irreconcilable tension. The coordination of human worth and divine grace smells like synergism to those whose senses have been trained in a post-Pauline world. This, however, is to read aetiology where *Wisdom* is arguing for affinity: human worth is a soteriological condition but not a soteriological cause. Synergism implies a cooperation of agencies, which, while perhaps present between the lines in 6.17-20 and 3.14, is never the material interest of *Wisdom’s* mediation. To say that God’s gifts are reserved for the worthy – or to use Seneca’s language, the *dignus* – is not in itself an expression of cooperative soteriology; it is rather an instance of contextual common sense. In *Wisdom*, it is only and always God who saves. The question is *whom* does he save? Answer: the worthy, because God is just and good. Divine benefaction does not disrupt the elemental structures of the cosmos; God’s giving exemplifies the theological and cosmological reality that he ‘arranged all things by measure and number and weight’ (11.20).

It appears, then, that Barclay’s location of *Wisdom’s* ‘gift-theory’ within the norms of ancient practices of benefaction is, at least in relation to Seneca’s influential treatise, confirmed. The assumption of affinity between benefit and beneficiary does not reflect an early Jewish deterioration of the concept of χάρις,<sup>34</sup> but rather, as Barclay remarks, ‘expresses the absolutely basic and universal theistic presumption that the universe is fitly and morally ordered’.<sup>35</sup> For *Wisdom*, God’s goodness is evident in his giving precisely because his acts of

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<sup>34</sup> This is the impression given by D.A. Carson’s study *Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility* (p. 69). As we shall argue later, however, though it is incorrect to detect a deterioration of the concept of χάρις – for this is to access the early Jewish literature retrospectively from the novelty and peculiarity of a Pauline framework – it is both accurate and crucially important to note that the semantic domain and corresponding theological meaning of χάρις in Paul and his ideological context (both Jewish and Greco-Roman) are in fact quite different.

<sup>35</sup> Barclay, ‘Unnerving Grace’, 104. The implication, of course, is that χάρις operates within the boundaries of this rationally defined order. Whether or not the same can be said of the Pauline notion of grace is precisely the question that this project is attempting to answer.

benefaction instantiate the protological pattern fashioned and managed by σοφία and because divine grace is therefore an expression of rather than an exception to the immutable operations of justice.

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### Excursus: Philo on Radical though Rational Χάρις

The contextual normativity of *Wisdom's* description of divine benefaction is confirmed by a comparison with another Alexandrian: Philo. The Philonic corpus has the capacity to impress post-Pauline interpreters with its insistence on the creational and causative priority of divine grace. This admiring sense of 'appropriateness', however, often gives way to befuddlement as Philo 'confusingly' coordinates divine χάρις and human ἀξία.<sup>36</sup> This interpretative incredulity, not unlike what we saw in relation to *Wisdom* and Seneca, is a product of thinking Paul while reading Philo.<sup>37</sup> For his part, Philo is quite capable of insisting that the necessary correspondence between anthropological suitability and divine grace does not disqualify the graciousness of the gift. On the contrary, though the recipients – in this case the five daughters of Zelophehad (Num 27.1-11) – are 'considered worthy' (ἀξιόω), the χάρις which they receive is emphatically not a payment (οὐδ' ἀποδώσεις), but 'a gift' (δῶμα).<sup>38</sup>

Several modern readers of Philo have balked at this linking of 'worth' and 'gift', supposing that such an affinity reflects an idiosyncratic or depreciated notion of χάρις.<sup>39</sup> Philo,

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<sup>36</sup> For χάρις in conjunction with the ἀξιο- word group see, e.g., *De Cherubim* 84; *De Somniis* 2.177; *Quod Deus immutabilis sit* 104-10; *Legum Allegoriae* 3.14, 27, 164; *De Mutatione Nominum* 52, 58, 268; *De Specialibus Legibus* 1.43; 2.219; *De Vita Mosis* 2.242.

<sup>37</sup> Again, if, as this study intends to demonstrate, Paul's usage of χάρις represents a conceptual redefinition, then the meaning he assigns to this common term should not be used to evaluate the theological content and cogency of other ancient authors.

<sup>38</sup> *De Vita Mosis* 2.242. Philo is able to refer to divine χάρις as a reward (γεραίοντος) for the pious (e.g. *De Praemiis et Poenis* 126), but this does not signal a transition to a pay-economy; it indicates the congruence between gift and recipient (see chapter seven).

<sup>39</sup> H.A. Wolfson labels some of Philo's χάρις language 'merited grace' (*Philo: Foundations of Religious Philosophy in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 1947], I.1457-58). Similarly, J. Harrison, who otherwise correctly locates Philo's grace discourse within the ancient conventions of gift exchange (*Paul's Language of Grace in its Graeco-Roman Context* [WUNT II.172; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003], 114-33), suggests that 'the ἀξιοι somehow attracted God's grace' (125). Similar protests against the graciousness of Philo's understanding of grace can be found in W. Völker, *Fortschritt und Vollendung bei Philo von Alexandria*, Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1938, quoted in J.M.G. Barclay, 'Grace Within and Beyond Reason: Philo and Paul in Dialogue', in *Paul, Grace and Freedom: Essays in Honour of John K. Riches* (ed. Paul Middleton et al.; London: T&T Clark), 2009, 9-21; D.A. Carson, 'Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility in Philo', *NovT* 23 (1981): 148-64; VanLandingham, *Judgment and Justification*, 27.

however, would be the first to criticise those who reason from (ὥστε) their virtues to some presumption of worthiness in relation to divine favour (*Sacr.* 54), citing Deuteronomy 9.5 as a reminder that it is impious and philosophically dubious to consider oneself worthy (ἀξιόω) of the good (*Sacr.* 57). According to an allegorical exegesis of Leviticus 7.34 (LXX), even human effort towards virtue has its causative power (δύναμις) in God, who energises the quest for the good (τὸ καλόν) by gifting a love for it (ὁ τὸν ἔρωτα χαρισάμενος, *Leg.* 3.136). In fact, as Barclay observes, at his most extreme Philo ‘can emphasize the nothingness of humanity and press for a polar opposition between God, whose nature it is to act (ποιεῖν) and humanity, whose nature it is to be acted upon (πάσχειν, *Cher.* 77; *Leg.* 1.49)’.<sup>40</sup> The connection between divine χάρις and human ἀξία, therefore, cannot properly be conceived in terms of anthropological merit or even a cooperation of agencies. The soteriological equation is not reducible to a symmetrical *quid pro quo*. On the contrary, rather than implying that the ‘worthy’ *earn* God’s grace, the ἄξιος-χάρις link ensures that the ‘fit’<sup>41</sup> between gift and recipient exhibits the rational fairness which, by definition, must characterise the Existent One.<sup>42</sup>

It is this theological necessity that motivates Philo’s exegetical search for an unstated αἰτία in *Legum Allegoriae* 3.77-103.<sup>43</sup> In a manner reminiscent of Romans 9.6ff and, as we shall see below, *Wisdom* 10.1-14, Philo compiles a list of seven canonical figures – Noah, Melchizedek, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Ephraim and Bezalel – who received some form of divine favour without any apparent cause or reason (αἰτία).<sup>44</sup> The initial impression, at least in these admittedly peculiar instances, is that the exercise of divine benefaction appears whimsical, irrational and potentially unjust. For Philo, however, this initial impression is (necessarily) a misreading,

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<sup>40</sup> J.M.G. Barclay, ‘By the Grace of God I Am What I Am’: Grace and Agency in Philo and Paul’, in *Divine and Human Agency in Paul and His Cultural Environment* (ed. J.M.G. Barclay and Simon J. Gathercole; London: T&T Clark, 2006), 140-57 (144). Barclay finds similar evidence that Philo ultimately conceived of human virtue as a product of divine action in the fragment of the lost *Legum Allegoriae* Book 4 (145-46).

<sup>41</sup> Semantically, ἄξιος typically indicates a relational correspondence between two comparable, though not necessarily identical or equal, things. Thus, as Barclay suggests, ‘fit’ is often a better translation than ‘worthy’, as it avoids the possibly misleading ethical connotations associated with the latter, more common gloss (‘Grace Within and Beyond Reason’, 12). Philo seems to conceive of this ‘fit’ primarily in terms of capacity to receive (e.g. *Spec.* 1.43; *Post.* 139); but his interest in the absence of works in *Legum Allegoriae* 3.77-103 (see below) implies that moral worth was within his purview, as was social status (e.g. *Leg.* 3.192; *Opif.* 45).

<sup>42</sup> That this conceptuality finds its ideological location in the patterns of ancient benefaction is rightly perceived by D. Zeller, *Charis bei Philon und Paulus* (Stuttgarter Bibelstudien 142; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1990), 68; Harrison, *Grace*, 114-33; Barclay, ‘Grace Within and Beyond Reason’, 12.

<sup>43</sup> For a penetrating analysis of this passage see Barclay, ‘Grace Within and Beyond Reason’, 10-12.

<sup>44</sup> The missing αἰτία appears to be conceived primarily in terms of a lack of preexisting works or accomplishment (ἔργον, *Leg.* 3.77, 79, 83, 95).

failing as it does to notice the subtle clues in the text that point to the required, though unnamed αἰτία behind the divine blessings. The goal of Philo’s exegesis, as John Riches summarises, ‘is to discern the hidden rationale of God’s gift-giving, that which renders the recipient worthy of such a gift and the gift appropriate to the receiver’.<sup>45</sup> In this case, the various names of the objects of grace represent and in some sense anticipate the quality that establishes the individual as a suitable recipient of blessing (e.g. Noah = rest/righteous; Isaac = joy).<sup>46</sup> Thus, while the divine verdict may be temporally prior to the exercise of virtue that expresses human ἀξία – indeed, in two instances (Isaac and Jacob) it even precedes birth – it is still necessarily tied to the potential and inevitable worth or fit indicated by the various names. This fit, however, is neither aetiologically symmetrical nor soteriologically synergistic; for even the intrinsically (ἐξ ἑαυτῆς) worthy natures (φύσις) which God considers appropriate objects of divine benefit are themselves moulded (πλάττω) and crafted (τορεύω) by God (ὑπὸ θεοῦ, *Leg.* 3.104). Thus, any apparent notion of divine response to human worth is, for Philo, more essentially a divine reaction to previous divine action. God’s suitable gift locates as its proper object those who, in an antecedent act of creational grace, are constituted as ἄξιοι. As such, human worth is a necessary condition though not itself the final αἰτία; for God himself, precisely as the giver, is forever the first cause. This, then, is a notion of divine χάρις that is as radical as it is rational. At stake for Philo in the affinity between gift and recipient is not humans receiving the good they earned or caused (the thought itself is impious), but rather God acting in accordance with the moral, natural and rational justice that defines his character and the cosmos he created. Divine χάρις is reserved for the ἄξιοι, not because such worth earns grace, but simply because God is φιλόδωρος (e.g. *Conf.* 182; *Leg.* 3.166), and as such his beneficence is necessarily appropriate, rational and fair.

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<sup>45</sup> J.K. Riches, ‘Paul, Grace and Freedom: A Response’, in *Paul, Grace and Freedom: Essays in Honour of John K. Riches* (ed. Paul Middleton et al.; London: T&T Clark), 2009, 193-203 (195).

<sup>46</sup> The choice of Jacob over Esau is explained in terms of the divine foreknowledge (*Leg.* 3.88-89), which, as Barclay evocatively translates *Legum Allegoriae* 3.89, responds to even ‘the “slightest whiff of virtue” or vice’ (‘Grace Within and Beyond Reason’, 11). That Philo is compelled to marshal a different form of argumentation for the reasonableness of God’s electing activity when the logic from symbolic names lacks relevance demonstrates that pre-conditional gifting, rather than being an historically unfortunate qualification of divine benefaction, is, at least for Philo, a philosophical, and indeed theological necessity.

## *Wisdom 10: The Operations of Grace in Primeval History*

The correspondence between the gift of Wisdom and her soteriological beneficiaries shapes *Wisdom's* re-narration of primeval history in chapter 10.<sup>47</sup> In order to demonstrate the historical stability of the moral order and divine activity, *Wisdom* provides a reading from Adam to the Exodus which is infused with the retrojected agency of Wisdom and patterned after the soteriological logic of the Exodus event.<sup>48</sup> *Wisdom's* salvific personality is announced as something of a leitmotif in 10.9: 'Wisdom rescues from trouble those who serve her'.<sup>49</sup> Even here, however, *Wisdom's* soteriological activity is qualitatively conditioned – it is for those who care for her (τοὺς θεραπεύοντας αὐτήν). Unsurprisingly, then, all the objects of *Wisdom's* saving benefaction in chapter 10 are credited with a suitable degree of status (whether social or moral). This salvation for the fitting, however, is only one side of a bipartite divine action. The rescue of the righteous always has as its negative foil the condemnation of the unrighteous. As such, the affinity between the benefit of *Wisdom* and her recipients is Exodus-shaped, a two-sided correspondence expressed in the simultaneous exercise of divine mercy and judgment.<sup>50</sup> In order to demonstrate this thesis it is useful to begin where chapter 10 ends – with the Exodus – and then return to the recast Genesis narratives to assess both the logic of *Wisdom's* soteriological activity and the paradigmatic function of the Exodus pattern of salvation for the righteous and judgment for the ungodly.

*Wisdom's* deliverance of Israel, a holy people and blameless race (λαὸν ὄσιον καὶ σπέρμα ἄμειπτον, 10.15), is portrayed as a fitting reward (μισθός, 10.17) for their labours.<sup>51</sup> It

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<sup>47</sup> Chapter 10, while connected to the poetics of chapters 6–9, has a certain independence which is evident in the transition from the first person narrative to the repetition of the third person αὐτή (McGlynn, *Divine Judgment*, 123). This independence, however, is not a definite indication of a composite literary history (pace A.G. Wright, 'Numerical Patterns in the Book of Wisdom', *CBQ* 29 (1967): 218–232). Larcher, *Le Livre de la Sagesse, ou La Sagesse de Salomon* (Paris: Gabalda, 1983), 607 is probably correct to see in chapters 6–9 an anticipation of *Wisdom's* soteriological activity in Israel's history. For McGlynn, 'the primary link [between *Wis.* 6.12–9.18 and 10.1–21] is related to wisdom's purpose as the one who brings about creation with the purpose of saving those who are "righteous"' (*Divine Judgment*, 124).

<sup>48</sup> Cf. Watson, *Hermeneutics*, 386.

<sup>49</sup> Burton Mack, *Logos und Sophia* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1973), 80 similarly describes 10.9 as 'ein Leitmotiv des Buches'. For the thematic and structural centrality of this verse see U. Schwenk-Bressler, *Sapientia Salomonis als ein Beispiel frühjüdischer Textauslegung* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1993), 58, 77–78.

<sup>50</sup> Watson, *Hermeneutics*, 389: 'For the author [of *Wisdom*] as for the biblical narrator, the exodus is simultaneously an event of salvation and judgment'.

<sup>51</sup> These labours, presumably, are those associated with the hard and unpaid work of slavery rather than the moral effort of law-observance. At work here is a notion of compensation, not soteriological desserts. The use of μισθός to describe an act of saving grace will be discussed in chapters five and seven.

was Wisdom who empowered Moses, guided Israel in the form of a pillar of cloud and fire, carried the people over (διαβιβάζω) the Red Sea and opened mouths in praise of God (10.16-21). There are, however, two actors – or rather two objects of Wisdom’s action – in the Exodus tale. Casting Israel as the righteous (δίκαιοι, 10.20), the Egyptians, Israel’s oppressors and enemies, assume the role of the ungodly (ἄσεβεις, 10.20). At the Red Sea, a scene painted as a singular event, the righteous and the ungodly are acted upon by Wisdom with diametrical symmetry: ‘She brought Israel over the Red Sea and led them through deep waters; but she drowned their enemies, and cast them up from the depths of the sea’ (10.18-19).<sup>52</sup> The Exodus, at least for *Wisdom*, is the instantiation of the coterminous exercise of divine judgment and mercy (see chapter four).

But this pattern, however paradigmatic, is not without precedent. As *Wisdom* reads Genesis the activity of σοφία from Adam to Joseph parallels, though does not quite mirror, the soteriological symmetry of the Exodus event.<sup>53</sup> As Watson remarks:

The author ensures the coherence of Genesis-Exodus...by projecting the exodus paradigm of salvation and judgment back into Genesis. If the Israelites and the Egyptians represent the primary objects of salvation and judgment respectively, the same pattern may be seen in Genesis in the pairing of Adam and Cain (10.1-4), Abraham and the builders of the tower of Babel (10.5), and Lot and the inhabitants of the Five Cities (10.6-8)... The Genesis events of judgment and deliverance are types looking ahead to the supreme event narrated in Exodus. The exodus is the definitive fulfillment of the pattern established in Genesis.<sup>54</sup>

This construal implies that the objects of Wisdom’s benevolence in the selected episodes from Genesis correspond to the ‘righteous’ in Exodus’s dualistic anthropology. *Wisdom* carefully alludes to some qualitative indicator in each of the objects of Wisdom’s salvific benefaction, thereby emphasising the appropriateness of the divine exercise of mercy and the diametrical deployment of wrath, both of which operate within the boundaries of divine justice. This

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<sup>52</sup> Wisdom is the unambiguous subject of all four aorist active verbs in 10.18-19: διεβίβασεν, διήγαγεν, κατέκλυσεν, ἀνέβρασεν. Thus, it is a divine activity that both rescues the righteous and destroys the ungodly. Watson, however, is right to note that the introduction of Wisdom into the scriptural narratives provides a ‘secondary level of divine agency’ (*Hermeneutics*, 388), which, in addition to implying a cooperation between divine and human agents in the righteous actions of Wisdom’s beneficiaries (*Hermeneutics*, 388), may indicate a theological desire to place an extra step in the aetiological chain between God and the destructive exercise of his justice (cf. Dodson, *The ‘Powers’ of Personification*, 111).

<sup>53</sup> Establishing a theological principle by appealing to a series of canonical heroes was common practice in early Judaism (e.g. Sir 44-50; 1 Macc 2.49-60; 4 Macc 16.20-21; Leg. 3.77-103; Rom 9.6-13; Heb 11). Dodson, however, correctly notes that *Wisdom* is unique in its presentation of antithetical examples (though cf. Rom 9.10-13). Dodson also suggests *The Apocalypse of Sedrach* as the nearest parallel to *Wisdom* 10 due to its singular focus (on divine love) and anonymous presentation (*The ‘Powers’ of Personification* 110 n.55).

<sup>54</sup> Watson, *Hermeneutics*, 389-91.

pattern is evident in *Wisdom's* depiction of all seven recipients of Wisdom's saving beneficence.<sup>55</sup> Adam's potential moral worth, while not explicitly stated, is implied in the contrast with his soteriological antithesis, Cain, who is directly identified as the unrighteous (ἄδικος, 10.3).<sup>56</sup> Furthermore, though perhaps less obviously, even the apparent disqualification of Adam's moral status (παραπτώματος ἰδίου, 10.1), does not completely divest him of 'fittingness'. As Barclay observes, although 'Adam certainly cannot be credited with righteousness...wisdom's benevolence is not without rationale: his status as 'the father of the world' is enough to justify wisdom's intervention on his behalf'.<sup>57</sup> The criterion which invites Wisdom's salvific activity in the lives of the five individuals that follow Adam is explicitly identified as each person is labeled δίκαιος. In each vignette the righteous are saved from something/someone and stand in soteriological antithesis to something/someone. Abraham is preserved from and is cast in opposition to the wicked and confused nations (10.5).<sup>58</sup> The ungodly who perished in the destruction of the Pentapolis serve as a foil to righteous Lot who escaped (10.6). Similarly, both Jacob and Joseph were rescued from the malicious intents of their brothers and the subsequent tribulations of oppression and false accusation (10.10-12, 13-14).<sup>59</sup> The possible exception to this pattern appears to be Noah, but even here one can detect a subtle contrast between the salvation of righteous Noah and the destructive flooding of the implicitly wicked earth (10.4).

Interestingly, this insertion of Wisdom into the text of Genesis makes her the principal subject of a narrative sequence in which her agency is originally hidden. Reading between the

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<sup>55</sup> The repeated αὕτη, together with the phrase ἀποστάς ἀπ' αὐτῆς (10.3), forms a seven part structure with each sub-unit providing an example of Wisdom's soteriological agency: Adam and Cain (10.1-3), Noah and the wicked earth (10.4), Abraham and the confused nations (10.5), Lot and the ungodly inhabitants of the Pentapolis (10.6-8), Jacob and Esau/oppressors (10.10-12), Joseph and his brothers/false accusers (10.13-14) and Israel and Egypt (10.15-21); cf. McGlynn, *Divine Judgment*, 130 n. 114).

<sup>56</sup> H. Engel, *Das Buch der Weisheit* (Neuer Stuttgarter Kommentar; Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1998), 169; Watson, *Hermeneutics*, 386 n. 46. The contrast, however, may indicate the innocence of Abel rather than the righteousness of Adam.

<sup>57</sup> Barclay, 'Unnerving Grace', 96. Similarly, Philo casts Adam's worth in terms of social status, noting that he, as the first man, 'stands beyond comparison with all other mortals' (*Virt.* 203).

<sup>58</sup> This brief reference to Abraham probably alludes to the well attested tradition in which Abraham's unique righteousness is set in juxtaposition to either his native culture or the nations more broadly conceived (see e.g. *Jub.* 11.14-12.24; *L.A.B.* 6.1-18; *Josephus Ant.* 1.154-185; *Apoc. Ab.* 1-9; *Philo Gig.* 62-64, *Abr.* 70-80, *Virt.* 212-16).

<sup>59</sup> These latter tales, especially the Jacob episode, are riddled with moral ambiguity. *Wisdom's* black-and-white reading reflects the hermeneutical pressures exerted by the pre-conception of moral symmetry and a justly ordered cosmos. As briefly mentioned above, this pressure, rather than reflecting some arbitrary imposition of the author's theological imaginings, comes from a paradigmatic reading of the Exodus event that itself exemplifies the pre-creational order (for more on this see chapter four).

lines of divine and human agency, *Wisdom* detects the unnamed actions of σοφία. As Watson perceptively observes, ‘The effect is to uncover a secret [though secondary] divine agency - that is, the agency of Wisdom - at points where Genesis knows only of human agency’.<sup>60</sup> This theological interpolation is especially clear in the accounts of Abraham, Jacob and Joseph. It was Wisdom who kept Abraham blameless before God (ἐτήρησεν αὐτὸν ἄμεμπτον θεῶ) and strong in the face of his love for Isaac (10.5). Here, Abraham’s righteousness is defined in terms of his blamelessness, especially in relation to the near-sacrifice of Isaac; but these righteous actions are infused with the agency of divine Wisdom. Similarly, the righteous conduct of Jacob (10.10-12) and Joseph’s abstention from sin (10.13; probably a reference to the incident with Potiphar’s wife, Exod 39) are both attributed to the guiding (ὀδηγέω) and delivering (ῥύομαι) activity of σοφία. Righteousness, then, which is at least one major qualification of human worth, cannot be separated from its divine cause. Although the emphasis on divine agency is not as strong as Philo’s exclusivist construal, *Wisdom*’s location of divine agency within the human actions that constitute the prerequisite human worth in the book’s soteriology parallels Philo’s insistence that the divine reaction of temporal χάρις is a rational response to a prior divine act of creational grace. Wisdom, it seems, both saves the righteous and, at least cooperatively, establishes the righteous as such.<sup>61</sup> This is an emphatic and radical conception of grace, but it is also an explainable and rationale account of God’s giving. For *Wisdom*, grace goes ‘all the way down’; and yet, because God is just and good, and because σοφία orders all things well, there is a necessary correspondence between divine benefits and human beneficiaries. The Red Sea crossing provides the paradigmatic exemplification of this theological reality and the rewritten Genesis narratives are therefore anticipatory and canonical concretions of the deep and extravagant and finally just grace of God.

### *Conclusion: Good Gifts and Rational Redemption*

The retrojected activity of divine Wisdom corresponds to the Exodus paradigm insofar as it depicts the symmetrical salvation of the righteous and the destruction of the ungodly.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Watson, *Hermeneutics*, 388.

<sup>61</sup> Watson, *Hermeneutics*, 388: ‘Wisdom...co-operates with the righteous to bring their righteousness to fruition’.

<sup>62</sup> The parallel, however, is not exact because, unlike the Exodus account (10.15-21), Wisdom’s actions in the Genesis episodes seem to reside on the soteriological side of the salvation/judgment divide. Thus, Wisdom’s

This pattern of correspondence between soteriological beneficence and recipient functions as an historical confirmation of the logic of Wisdom's rational benefaction in 6.12-9.18 and, perhaps even more directly, as a canonical demonstration of the eschatological principles announced in 1.1-6.11: 'unrighteousness leads to death and destruction (1.12; 5.9-14), while righteousness leads to life and immortality (1.15; 5.15)'.<sup>63</sup> This two-ways soteriology is expressed in the contrast between the destructive deal the ungodly make with death and the (eternal) life-giving love the righteous have for σοφία. The logic behind the fitting destinies of the righteous and the ungodly (*Wis.* 1-6) is therefore mirrored in the discerning distribution of the divine χάρις of Wisdom. The gift of divine Wisdom, as a *gift*, is necessarily unearned, but it is also, as a *good* gift, necessarily explainable. Human worth and divine χάρις are coordinated to ensure a proper fit between the divine benefit and the human recipient. God's grace, then, like *Wisdom's* eschatology, is Exodus-shaped: it is divine saving action for the worthy – often defined in terms of righteousness – that rescues them from ungodly people and practices (both moral and intellectual). Thus, as in the 'Book of Eschatology', the 'Book of Wisdom' articulates a cosmological vision according to which the salvation and destruction of certain persons is correlated with their moral, rational and/or social suitability. The orderly cosmos which Wisdom established and which she still manages and discloses (*Wis.* 6-9) demonstrates a rational and moral stability from end (*Wis.* 1-6) to beginning (*Wis.* 10). All that remains for *Wisdom* to demonstrate is that these protological and eschatological principles are evident within the history that moves between these temporal poles.

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proactive destruction of the Egyptians (10.19) is an exception to the Genesis pattern in which the ungodly invite their destructive fate by departing from and passing by Wisdom (10.3, 8; see Watson, *Hermeneutics*, 390).

<sup>63</sup> G.W.E. Nickelsburg, *Resurrection, Immortality, and Eternal Life in Intertestamental Judaism and Early Christianity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 67.

## Chapter 4

### ‘Tradition and the Individual Talent’: History and the Divine Economy in *Wisdom* 10.15-19.22

#### *What’s Past is Past...and Present*

‘No poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists’.<sup>1</sup> Such was the opinion of T.S. Eliot. Disillusioned by literary criticism and its unquenchable thirst for ‘novelty’ – its delight in ‘the poet’s difference from his predecessors’ – Eliot insisted that ‘not only the best, but the most individual parts of [a poet’s] work may be those in which the dead poets, his ancestors, assert their immortality most vigorously’. The author of *Wisdom* is this kind of poet, displaying what Eliot terms ‘historical sense’ – that trans-temporal ‘perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence’. *Wisdom*, as Eliot would have expected, is at its theological best as it listens most attentively to the whispers of its ‘dead poets’, the sacred pentateuchal record. To listen, however, is not simply to repeat: ‘To conform merely would be for the new work not really to conform at all; it would not be new’. In contrast to this prosaic echoing, *Wisdom* innovatively reflects the historical reciprocity which captured Eliot’s poetic imagination: ‘the past [is] altered by the present as much as the present is directed by the past’. This is a profound description of *Wisdom*’s theological reading of pentateuchal history in chapters 10-19. The scriptural past both shapes and is shaped by *Wisdom*’s theological vision, and in this dynamic exchange between creativity and canonical constraints we find, as Eliot predicted, ‘not only the best, but the most individual parts’ of our poet.

The explicit agency of *Wisdom* in 10.15-21 connects this passage with the ‘Book of *Wisdom*’, but, as suggested above, this transitional unit looks in both directions. Together with 19.1-12, the retelling of the Exodus in 10.15-21 forms an *inclusio* around *Wisdom*’s theological re-interpretation of Israel’s deliverance from Egypt and subsequent wanderings in the wilderness. This structural frame is also hermeneutical. The Exodus pattern of the condemnation of the ungodly and the salvation of the righteous functions as the paradigmatic matrix within which *Wisdom*’s manipulated reactivation of pentateuchal history finds canonical legitimation. While

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<sup>1</sup> T.S. Eliot, ‘Tradition and the Individual Talent’, in *Selected Essays* (New York: Harcourt, 1950), 4.

it is basically accurate to note that *Wisdom* 11-18 follows the plague cycle of Exodus 7-12,<sup>2</sup> *Wisdom's* narrative re-presentation of the biblical material is much more inventive than an exegetical game of follow the textual leader.<sup>3</sup> The Egyptian plagues are set in antithetical pairs (diptychs) with events from Israel's wilderness sojourn, thereby constructing a symmetrical theology of history shaped by the principles of divine justice and moral order that have driven *Wisdom's* theologising in the book's first two sections. Within this balanced historiography, the ungodly Egyptians consistently meet their inevitable and appropriate destruction whereas righteous Israel, while occasionally tested and disciplined, finds salvation in the just mercy of God. Thus, the Exodus pattern of symmetrical and fitting destinies that was retrojected into the Genesis episodes (*Wis.* 10.1-14) is here projected into the wilderness material.<sup>4</sup> Watson, however, is correct to suggest that 'the scriptural text has to be substantially rewritten' in order for the post-Exodus biblical history to correspond to the 'Exodus paradigm of salvation for God's people and destruction for their enemies'.<sup>5</sup> The content of and motivation for this 'rewriting' of sacred tradition will be the main focus of this section, but before we turn to *Wisdom's* rearranged reading of the pentateuchal texts it is necessary to consider the two extended reflections (11.15-12.27; 13.1-15.19) which interrupt the narrative sequence.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Watson, *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith* (London: T & T Clark, 2004), 394. Of the ten plagues two are omitted (cattle disease and boils; Exod 9.1-12) and four are combined.

<sup>3</sup> Though scholars continue to label *Wisdom's* interpretative method in chapters 10-19 a 'midrash' (Kolarcik, 'Universalism and Justice in the Wisdom of Solomon', 291-297; R.T. Siebeneck, 'The Midrash of Wisdom 10-19', *CBQ* 22 [1960]: 176-182), Reese is probably right to argue that, unlike *Wisdom's* hermeneutical technique, a midrash follows its base text in an orderly fashion (*Hellenistic Influence on the Book of Wisdom and its Consequences* [Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1970], 97-98; see also Lietaert Peerbolte, 'The Hermeneutics of Exodus in the Book of Wisdom', in *The Interpretation of Exodus: Studies in Honor of Cornelis Houtman* [BET 44; Leuven: Peeters, 2006], 97-116). Cheon's descriptive phrase, 'a reshaping of the biblical story', is a definite improvement (*The Exodus Story in the Wisdom of Solomon: A Study in Biblical Interpretation* [JSPSS 23; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997], 150-51), though, following Watson's definition of a 'reading' as 'a construal of the whole from a particular perspective' (*Hermeneutics*, 515, following David Kelsey, *The Uses of Scripture in Recent Theology* [London: SCM Press, 1975], 102), referring to *Wisdom's* interpretative product as a 'reading' seems to capture *Wisdom's* idiosyncrasies without introducing the unnecessary methodological constraints associated with certain other genres (e.g. midrash, targum, pesher or rewritten Bible).

<sup>4</sup> Watson, *Hermeneutics*, 394-404, 411.

<sup>5</sup> Watson, *Hermeneutics*, 399. See also Siebeneck ('The Midrash of Wisdom 10-19', 178): 'the sacred word is not merely copied but rather enlarged upon, toned down, or even suppressed in order to bring out better the theological themes which are the present preoccupation'.

<sup>6</sup> Most commentators are content with this two-fold division (e.g. Schmitt, *Das Buch Der Weisheit - Ein Kommentar* [Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1986], 101; Winston, *The Wisdom of Solomon* [AB, 43; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1979], 224), but there is some debate about where to locate the transitions (McGlynn, *Divine Judgment and Divine Benevolence in the Book of Wisdom* [WUNT II, 139; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001], 25). Larcher, however, appears to see 11.15-15.19 as organically linked to the diptychs and therefore not (strictly) digressions or excursuses (*Le Livre de la Sagesse, ou La Sagesse de Salomon* [Paris: Gabalda, 1983], 224). As will be argued below, the term digression indicates both thematic disconnectedness and insignificance, neither of which can properly be

### *The First Reflection: the ‘Mercy Dialogue’*

To label the ‘Mercy Dialogue’ (11.17-12.27) and the related polemic against false worship (13.1-15.19) digressions is to risk the potentially distorting implication that they are thematically insignificant.<sup>7</sup> Standing between the first and second diptychs, these interconnected reflections certainly intrude upon the narrative progression of the larger unit; but they do so because they contain the theological rationale which explains the structural and theological shape of *Wisdom’s* reading of scriptural history (11.1-11.14; 16.1-19.21).<sup>8</sup> *Wisdom* 11.15-16 functions both as a summary of 13.1-14.31; 15.5-19 and as an invitation to reflect on the benevolence of divine justice (11.17-12.27). The animal plagues, which constitute the negative side of the second and third diptychs (16.1-4; 16.5-14), are presented as the appropriate divine response to the irrational and unrighteous reasoning (λογισμῶν ἀσυνέτων ἀδικίας, 11.15) which led the ungodly Egyptians to idolise senseless reptiles and worthless beasts (ἐθρήσκευον ἄλογα ἔρπετὰ καὶ κνώδαλα εὐτελεῖ, 11.15). Thus, the seemingly impotent exercise of judgment connoted by the sending of paltry creatures (11.5; 16.1-4, 5-14) is in reality an expression of judicial equilibrium: δι’ ὧν τις ἀμαρτάνει διὰ τούτων κολάζεται (11.16).<sup>9</sup> For *Wisdom*, however, this symmetry between crime and punishment is not just a manifestation of moral stability and cosmic orderliness. Detecting a pattern of patience and gentleness in the apparent trivialness of the animal plagues, *Wisdom* breaks from its narrative re-arrangement in order to locate the hermeneutical logic of its reading of the Pentateuch within the merciful justice of an all-powerful God (11.17-12.27).

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applied to these crucial units. For this reason Angelo Passaro’s suggested label (‘reflection’) will be employed throughout (‘The Serpent and the Manna or the Saving Word: Exegesis of Wis 16’, in *The Book of Wisdom in Modern Research: Studies on Tradition, Redaction, and Theology* [DCLY 2005; ed. A. Passaro and G. Bellia; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2005], 179- 93).

<sup>7</sup> Watson, *Hermeneutics*, 396 n. 69 correctly notes that the two digressions, a label he is not particularly satisfied with, occur within a single discussion of the animal plagues (11.15-16.14).

<sup>8</sup> McGlynn, *Divine Judgment*, 25-53 argues that the ‘Mercy Dialogue’ is the ‘interpretative key’ to the entire book.

<sup>9</sup> The οὐ γάρ which opens 11.17 and a parallel discussion of the divine motivation for the use of insignificant animals in Philo (*Mos* 1.109-12) may indicate that the relationship between this episode and God’s justice was, as Barclay remarks, ‘a traditional topic of debate in Jewish philosophy’ (‘Unnerving Grace’, 102 n. 18). Philo solves this canonical riddle by, first, arguing that God wished to admonish rather than annihilate the Egyptians (*Mos*. 1.110) and, second, by contrasting the human need to compensate for weakness by choosing the strong with the omnipotent God who demonstrates his divine power by waging war with that which is not fit for battle (ἄμαχος, *Mos*. 1.111-12).

It is self-evident that the all-powerful hand (παντοδύναμος χεῖρ, 11.17) that created the cosmos (κτίσασα τὸν κόσμον, 11.17) is capable of an annihilating exercise of strength (11.17-20c, 21-22); but (ἀλλά) this creative power is self-constraining, operating within the ordered universe it established: πάντα μέτρῳ καὶ ἀριθμῶ καὶ σταθμῶ διέταξας (11.20d).<sup>10</sup> Correspondingly, the goodness of God is comprehended within the ultimate proportionality and retributive fairness of divine justice. As such, the activity of mercy, which is *Wisdom's* essential answer to the apparent irrationality and powerlessness of the animal plagues, is located within (and is an expression of) this orderly justice. It must be emphasised, however, that this contextualisation of mercy is in no way a disqualification of its authenticity. Precisely because God's capability is infinite (ὅτι πάντα δύνασαι, 11.23) he lovingly (ἀγαπάω, 11.24; cf. φιλόψυχος, 11.26) extends a universal mercy (ἐλεεῖς δὲ πάντας, 11.23) which patiently overlooks human sin in order to allow for repentance (παρορᾷς ἁμαρτήματα ἀνθρώπων εἰς μετάνοιαν, 11.23). As the God of limitless power God is necessarily (ὅτι) the God of limitless mercy and love (11.23-24). What is more, the act of creation itself implies the unquestionable anti-hate (οὐδὲ μισῶ, 11.24) of the creator towards the created. Derivative existence presupposes a unilateral act of ontological giving: 'How would anything have remained if you had not desired it? Or how would anything not called forth by you (τὸ μὴ κληθὲν ὑπὸ σοῦ) have been preserved?' (11.25). In common with much of the Septuagint usage,<sup>11</sup> καλέω denotes the creative activity of God, thereby establishing an ontological link (12.1) between created and uncreated being that requires a corresponding love from the latter to the former (11.26). In short, God loves life (φιλόψυχος, 11.26).

It is within this portrait of the divine personality that the pattern of unhurried and progressive judgment evident in the animal plagues makes stable sense. Those who trespass are reprov'd little by little (κατ' ὀλίγον), thereby being reminded and warned about the things through which they sin (οἷς ἁμαρτάνουσιν, 12.2) so that they might be freed from wickedness and trust the Lord (ἵνα ἀπαλλαγέντες τῆς κακίας πιστεύσωσιν ἐπὶ σέ, κύριε, 12.2). This maxim,

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<sup>10</sup> For a discussion of the debated echoes of Neo-Pythagorean philosophy in this formula see Larcher, *Le Livre de la Sagesse*, 218-232; McGlynn, *Divine Judgment*, 39-42.

<sup>11</sup> Especially in second/third Isaiah (e.g. 42.6; 43.1; 46.11; 48.15; 51.2) καλέω is often used to express the divine act of creation. Cf. S. Chester, *Conversion at Corinth: Perspectives on Conversion in Paul's Theology and the Corinthian Church* (London: T & T Clark, 2003), 65: 'the God who calls is the creator God'. For a full discussion of καλέω in the Septuagint, see Chester, *Conversion at Corinth*, 64-70.

‘little by little’, is then illustrated by the biblical account from which it is lifted.<sup>12</sup> Despite the genetic and ineffaceable wickedness of the Canaanites (12.10-11), a depravity manifested in the most repulsive of actions (e.g. child-sacrifice and cannibalism, 12.3-7), God – though capable of swift and total destruction (12.9) – exercised his merciful judgment by sending wasps (σφήκας, 12.8; LXX Exod 23.28) to destroy (ἐξολεθρεύω, 12.8) and judge (κρίνω, 12.10) them little by little (κατὰ βραχύ, 12.8, 10). The stated reason for this gradual judgment – an opportunity to repent – is logically superfluous in view of the content of the divine foreknowledge: ‘you were not unaware that their origin was evil (πονηρὰ ἡ γένεσις αὐτῶν) and their wickedness inborn (ἔμφυτος ἡ κακία αὐτῶν), and that their way of thinking would never change (οὐ μὴ ἀλλαγῆ, 12.10). *Wisdom’s* willingness to permit this logical tension, however, demonstrates the author’s dual commitment to justice and mercy, both of which qualify the exercise of the other.<sup>13</sup> Justice prevents mercy from overriding the necessity of judgment; mercy prevents justice from destroying the ungodly (ἀσεβής) by a single blow (ἀποτόμῳ ὑφ’ ἐν ἐκτριψαι, 12.9).

There is a rather abrupt rhetorical transition in the middle of 12.11.<sup>14</sup> *Wisdom* seems to be preemptively countering a possible reading of the Canaanite episode. Perhaps this somewhat risible exercise of divine power was motivated by fear of some unnamed party. *Wisdom*, however, will have none of it: οὐδὲ εὐλαβούμενός τινα ἐφ’ οἷς ἡμάρτανον ἄδειαν ἐδίδου (12.11b). This rhetorical suggestion generates a confrontational apology for the unrivaled power and unquestionable justice of God (12.12-18). Divine power is the source of divine righteousness (12.16). Together these complementary attributes ensure both the rightness (δίκαιος, 12.15) and the gentleness (ἐπιείκεια, 12.18) of God’s judgment. The sovereign freedom which enables divine forbearance (12.18), however, functions within the parameters established by this creative power. Thus, it is unthinkable that the δίκαιος God who rules all things righteously (δικαίως τὰ πάντα διέπει) would either punish the undeserving (12.15) or acquit the unrighteous (12.12c). This observation raises a crucial question about the definition of mercy within *Wisdom’s* theological vocabulary.

<sup>12</sup> See Exodus 23.30 and Deuteronomy 7.22: κατὰ μικρὸν μικρόν.

<sup>13</sup> Barclay too notices the paradox and correctly detects an emphasising of mercy within it: ‘There is some cost to the logic: if God knew in advance that they could not change, it makes little sense for him to give them time to do so. That our author risks this logical incoherence is a sign of the stress he [the author of *Wisdom*] wishes to lay on God’s boundless mercy’ (‘Unnerving Grace’, 102 n. 20). Barclay also notes a parallel between the ‘little by little’ motif and the ‘philosophical discussion concerning time-delays in God’s justice’. He cites Plutarch (*Mor.* 550d-551c) as an example of mercy as a possible solution to this problem (‘Unnerving Grace’, 102 n. 19).

<sup>14</sup> Schmitt, *Das Buch der Weisheit*, 107.

As Barclay observes, ‘one could hardly ask for a stronger emphasis on the love and mercy of God – a love that explicitly excludes hatred (11.24; though cf. 12.4), and a mercy that always operates within and alongside God’s judgment’.<sup>15</sup> In fact, this correlation of mercy and justice is precisely the divine quality that Israel is summoned to reflect: ‘you have taught your people that the righteous must be kind’ (δεῖ τὸν δίκαιον εἶναι φιλόανθρωπον, 12.19-22). This mercy, however, in no way oversteps or opposes the symmetrical and rational principles of divine justice. It may temper the pace and intensity of judgment, but it cannot, as Barclay argues, ‘exclude or overrule judgment’.<sup>16</sup> Thus, rather than conceiving of mercy and justice in a dialectical tension, *Wisdom* envisages a synthesis in which mercy is properly understood as a qualifying feature of justice (e.g. merciful justice).<sup>17</sup> The exercise of this divine benevolence, therefore, rather than unsettling the righteous balance, actually ensures that the operations of justice and judgment are carried out fairly. This synthetic perspective is evident in the care with which God punishes those deserving of death (ὀφειλομένους θανάτῳ, 12.20) and in Israel’s expectation of mercy in judgment (κρινόμενοι δὲ προσδοκῶμεν ἔλεος, 12.22). But this merciful justice also means that those who fail to respond to God’s mild rebukes will experience fitting divine judgment (ἀξίαν θεοῦ κρίσιν, 12.27). Thus, as in 12.12c, mercy does not, indeed cannot, entail the acquittal of the unrighteous (ἀδίκαι ἀνθρώποι).

It is important to recall that this text is addressed to a group in crisis who are expected to make a rhetorical association between, on the one hand, their own ‘in crowd’ and the righteous and, on the other hand, their persecutors and the ungodly. Within this rhetorical narrative, a theology of the justification of the ungodly would be fundamentally bad news. From the perspective of the righteous, the goodness and mercy of God is evident not in the divine maintenance of the status quo – a status quo in which the wicked prosper at the expense of the righteous (cf. *Wis.* 2-5) – but rather in an act of grace which precisely as such restores the balance of justice.<sup>18</sup> This harmonisation of divine judgment and mercy, counter-intuitive though it may be to Paulinists, reflects at least one influential canonical pattern of justice. According to Exodus 34.6-7, the God of abounding mercy (πολυέλεος), compassionate (οἰκτίρμων) though he is, will in no way clear the guilty (οὐ καθαριεῖ τὸν ἔνοχον). As in

<sup>15</sup> Barclay, ‘Unnerving Grace’, 103 (italics removed).

<sup>16</sup> Barclay, ‘Unnerving Grace’, 103 (italics removed).

<sup>17</sup> As argued above, it is equally true that for *Wisdom* justice is a qualifying feature of mercy such that it is correct to speak both of ‘merciful justice’ and ‘just mercy’.

<sup>18</sup> See the discussion of deuteronomic theodicy and eschatology in the *Epistle of Enoch* in chapter two.

*Wisdom*, this is a patient (μακρόθυμος) and forgiving (ἀφαιρέω) brand of mercy; but it is nevertheless a *just* mercy – a divine ἔλεος that necessarily redeems and rewards the righteous rather than the ungodly.

### *The Second Reflection: Idolaters and Israel in Wisdom 13-15*

That the wicked are necessarily the objects of fitting divine judgment (ἀξίαν θεοῦ κρίσιν, 12.27) rather than ‘merciful’ acquittal is plainly demonstrated in the case of those who idolise creatures (12.24) – a passing comment that invites *Wisdom’s* extended and unrelenting polemic against aberrant worship and the subsequent decline into immorality (13.1-14.31, 15.7-19). Unleashing his rhetorical attack in three stages, our author moves from the folly of nature worship (13.1-9) to idolatry and the ethical corruption it causes (13.10-15.17) and finally on to the particularly foolish and debased cultic praxis of the Egyptians (15.18-19). Worshipping the created, it seems, reflects an inexcusable intellectual inability (μάταιοι φύσει, 13.1) to reason from creation to creator: ‘Not even they are to be excused (οὐδ’ αὐτοὶ συγγνωστοί), if they had the power to know so much as to try to understand the material world (αἰών), how did they not find the Lord of these things more quickly?’ (13.8-9). As in much of *Wisdom’s* polemical discourse, the essential fault is grounded in intellectual error (cf. 2.1, λογισάμενοι οὐκ ὀρθῶς). This religious stupidity is also evident in the morally destructive practice of idolatry. Though originating from feelings of loss and/or attempts at homage (14.12-21), the idolater is fundamentally dim-witted, requesting as he does safe travel from that which cannot move, strength from that which lacks functioning limbs and, most absurdly, life from an object that is dead (13.18-19).<sup>19</sup> As in the ‘Book of Eschatology’, religious stupidity inevitably leads to immorality, such that, for *Wisdom*, ‘the worship of unnamable idols is the beginning, cause, and end of every evil (παντὸς ἀρχὴ κακοῦ καὶ αἰτία καὶ πέρας ἐστίν, 14.27). This may appear unduly harsh or inadequately nuanced, but *Wisdom* does not hesitate in its invective, certain that ‘the ungodly person and his ungodliness (ὁ ἀσεβῶν καὶ ἡ ἀσέβεια αὐτοῦ) are equally hateful to God (μισητὰ θεῶ, 14.9). This is especially true of the Egyptians who, in an

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<sup>19</sup> If 13.11-14.7 focuses on idols of wood, 15.7-17 expands *Wisdom’s* polemical scope to include objects of clay. This sub-section is introduced with a description of a potter making some vessels for clean (καθαρός) uses and others for contrary (ἐναντίος, 15.7) purposes. The overlap between this passage and Paul’s employment of the potter metaphor in Romans 9.19-24 will be examined in chapter eight.

unmatched lack of intelligence, worship the most hateful and ugly animals, those which managed to avoid even the praise and blessing of the creator (15.18-19).

Sandwiched between this rhetorical onslaught, *Wisdom* offers a brief reminder of the immunity of the Jews to this otherwise universal indictment (15.1-6). Just as unintelligence was the root of idolatry leading to immorality, *Wisdom* anchors Israel's uniqueness in her proper knowledge of God. The immortality which the sin of the Gentile world forfeits remains on Israel's eschatological horizon because Israel knows (ἐπίσταμαι) God, which is the sum of righteousness (δικαιοσύνη), and recognises (οἶδα) his power, which is the root of immortality (ἀθανασία, 15.3). In language evocative of Exodus 34,<sup>20</sup> *Wisdom* confidently celebrates God's graciousness, which, as promised by Moses (Exod 34.9, LXX), will mean the forgiveness of potential sin (15.1-2). But such potential iniquity is an actual impossibility: 'we will not sin' (15.2). This is a bold employment of Exodus 34. The 'if we sin' (ἐὰν ἀμάρτωμεν) of 15.2 anchors its (unneeded) hope of future forgiveness in Moses' words spoken in reference to the Golden Calf debacle, thereby activating language from Israel's paradigmatic act of idolatry in service of an argument for the essential non-idolatrousness of Israel.<sup>21</sup> It thus comes as no surprise that *Wisdom* has, both here and elsewhere, avoided all mention of the disaster of Exodus 32.<sup>22</sup> As stupidity leads to idolatry (13.1-7) so knowledge of God keeps Israel from it (15.3-4). Thus, moving from Israel's privileged epistemological position to her subsequent moral purity, *Wisdom* is able to conclude that Israel's past is untainted by the idolatry that characterises the ungodly objects of God's fitting judgment. This inserted discussion of the mental and moral immunity of Israel, coupled with the explicit focus on Egyptian idolatry which closes the digression (15.14-19), effectively casts Israel and Egypt as, respectively, the righteous and the ungodly, thereby preparing the reader to detect in the forthcoming diptychs the symmetrical and merciful operations of divine justice.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> H. Hübner, *Die Weisheit Salomons* (ATD Apokryphen 4: Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1999), 183-84.

<sup>21</sup> J.M.G. Barclay, "'I will have mercy on whom I have mercy': The Golden Calf and Divine Mercy in Romans 9-11 and Second Temple Judaism", *EC* 1 (2010): 82-106.

<sup>22</sup> This includes both the worship of the Golden Calf and the equally unpalatable slaughter of the 3,000 that immediately followed.

<sup>23</sup> An extended discussion of the second reflection is not necessary at this point because, strictly speaking, it is an expansion of 11.15 and 12.23-34. Though it is thematically related to the animal plagues that follow (16.1-14), its disproportionate length and rhetoric seem to result less from careful structural planning than from the author's inability to ignore the polemical opportunity provided by the passing references to animal worship and therefore he launches, as Barclay describes it, 'the most devastating broadside he can direct against

## *In and Out of Egypt: Reading and Writing Justice in(to) Scriptural History*

As the 'Mercy Dialogue' has laboured to emphasise, the judgment of God, precisely because it is just and benevolent, must condemn the ungodly and rescue the righteous. This Exodus-shaped reading of reality, which is itself reflective of a deep pre-creational pattern, shapes *Wisdom's* construal of the canonical material.<sup>24</sup> As Siebeneck points out, Israel's formative history functions as 'the strata on which the crystallization of the universal maxims take place'.<sup>25</sup> This, however, implies that pentateuchal history, if and when it appears to contradict the principles of balanced and orderly justice, must be manipulated and re-presented in such a way as to demonstrate rather than problematise the stability of *Wisdom's* vision of moral symmetry. The remainder of this section will argue that this hermeneutical dynamic is the generative force behind *Wisdom's* rearranged reading of Israel's scriptural past.<sup>26</sup> Classic history is poured through the hermeneutical filter of the 'Mercy Dialogue' and this process of theological purification produces an imaginatively re-presented canonical witness to *Wisdom's* basic theological commitments:

- (i) Only the deserving are condemned: 12.15, 20
- (ii) There is an appropriate causal link between punishment and crime: 11.16
- (iii) The righteous benefit from that which afflicts the ungodly: (11.5)<sup>27</sup>

The first diptych (11.1-14) pairs the Exodus accounts of the defiling of the Nile (Exod 7.14-24) and water from the rock (Exod 17.1-7). The linking of these canonically distant episodes reflects a non-linear handling of sacred tradition which indicates an essentially theological reactivation of the text. This careful connecting of scriptural events provides a complete historical expression of the themes of the 'Mercy Dialogue'. Egyptians deservingly received their fitting judgment (i.e. a polluted river) because of Pharaoh's abhorrent edict to

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non-Jewish religion' (*Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, 186). A closer analysis of this reflection will be provided in dialogue with Romans 1.18-2.5 in chapter five.

<sup>24</sup> Noting that two recollections of the Red Sea crossing frame *Wisdom* 10.15-19.22, Watson (*Hermeneutics*, 386) argues that 'the two exodus passages represent a line of demarcation between divine acts of judgment (the plague traditions) and of mercy (the wilderness traditions)'.

<sup>25</sup> Siebeneck, 'The Midrash of *Wisdom* 10-19'.

<sup>26</sup> For extended treatments of *Wisdom's* reworking of sacred history in chapter 10-19 see especially Cheon, *The Exodus Story*; P. Enns, *Exodus Retold: Ancient Exegesis of the Departure from Egypt in Wis 10:15-21 and 19:1-9* (HSMM 57; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997); Siebeneck, 'The Midrash of *Wisdom* 10-19'; Lietaert Peerbolte, 'The Hermeneutics of Exodus'; Watson, *Hermeneutics*, 380-411; McGlynn, *Divine Judgment*, 170-219.

<sup>27</sup> Enns argues that many of *Wisdom's* exegetical innovations are evident in earlier Jewish literature. Thus, for Enns, *Wisdom* is 'not so much an interpreter of Scripture.... He is, rather an inheritor [*sic*] of an interpreted Bible' (*Exodus Retold*, 142). However, as Enns concedes (*Exodus Retold*, 144), *Wisdom's* peculiar rearrangement of the canonical material and unparalleled emphasis on idolatry (cf. Lietaert Peerbolte, 'The Hermeneutics of Exodus') demonstrates that our author is a creative re-interpreter of his interpreted textual heritage.

drown the male children of the Israelites in the Nile (*Wis.* 11.7). In contrast, Israel, though mercifully disciplined (ἐν ἑλέει παιδευόμενοι, 11.9) with an educational thirst ('they learned how the ungodly were tormented'), received the divine gift of potable water (11.4). In addition to pairing these textually remote passages, *Wisdom* conveniently omits Exodus's description of Israel's rather whiny lamentation about their thirst (Exod 17.1-7; cf. Neh 9; Ps 78), following instead the somewhat white-washed recollections of Psalm 105.<sup>28</sup> These hermeneutical tactics unite the voices of isolated texts in a common refrain: 'divine agency is supremely rational in its workings'.<sup>29</sup>

Following on from the thematically related reflections, the second and third diptychs creatively reconfigure the canonical presentation of the animal plagues (*Wis.* 16.1-14). Here, however, *Wisdom* is forced to hunt for the positive elements of its antithetical pairs in the theologically inhospitable terrain of Numbers. Relating the animal plagues to the Egyptians' animal worship provides a clear demonstration of *Wisdom's* perceived symmetry between crime and punishment. This is the criterion which enables *Wisdom* to assert unqualifiedly the deservedness (ἀξίως, 16.1) and inevitability (δεῖ, 16.4) of the Egyptians' punishment. Two of *Wisdom's* axioms are evident. The Egyptians' idolatry warranted their punishment (cf. 12.15) and the mode of that condemnation matched the specific form of their unrighteousness (cf. 11.16). What is less obvious is how Israel's corresponding blessing can be canonically substantiated. *Wisdom* pairs the animal plagues with the (super)-abundance of quail (*Wis.* 16.1-4; Num 11.4-35)<sup>30</sup> and the incident of the poisonous snakes (*Wis.* 16.5-14; Num 21.5-9). In order to make the diptychs work, however, the moral ambiguity of Israel and the references to divine wrath associated with the quail account (Num 11.19-20, 31-34), along with the death motif which dominates the snake narrative (Num 21.6), have to be extracted and relocated. *Wisdom* solves this hermeneutical crisis through an exegetical surgery of sorts, performing a textual transplant of the troublesome material that problematises the Israel episodes and, to

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<sup>28</sup> It is often noticed that *Wisdom's* morally clean reading has canonical predecessors in, for example, Deuteronomy and Psalm 105 (Barclay, 'Unnerving Grace', 100; Watson, *Hermeneutics*, 383-84); but these hermeneutical forerunners, however influential and legitimating, cannot sufficiently account for *Wisdom's* dramatic rearrangement of pentateuchal texts. The basic aetiological factor is not exegetical tradition but theological conviction.

<sup>29</sup> Watson, *Hermeneutics*, 395.

<sup>30</sup> McGlynn, *Divine Judgment*, 191-92 argues that this allusion to the quail episode echoes the positive gift of Exodus 16.8, 12-13, but as Watson rightly observes the language of the 'quails coming up from the sea' (*Wis.* 19.12) and the 'desire' motif both come from Numbers 11 (*Hermeneutics*, 398).

use Watson's term, 'displaces' it onto the Egyptians.<sup>31</sup> Thus, the overflow of quails is recast as an unambiguous exercise of divine beneficence (*Wis.* 16.1-4), free from the taint of Israelite complaint and divine judgment, the latter being replanted in the appetite-suppressing effects of the animal plagues (16.3). The punitive character of the deadly snakes is a bit more difficult to maneuver around, but *Wisdom* effectively reinterprets this brief (πρὸς ὀλίγον) trial as a pedagogical necessity (16.6, 11),<sup>32</sup> which is inseparably tied to its soteriological counterpart.<sup>33</sup> Ignoring the scriptural claim that 'many of the children of Israel died' (Num 21.6), *Wisdom* boldly claims that, in contrast to the Egyptians who were killed by the relatively innocuous bites of flies and locusts (16.9),<sup>34</sup> the fangs of venomous serpents (ἰοβόλων δρακόντων, 16.10) did not claim the lives of any Israelites (16.7, 10-14). In this way, the snake incident is read as an instantiation of the Exodus paradigm - both in the symmetry of judgment for Egypt and salvation for Israel and in the more subtle presentation of this plague and its corresponding salvific solution as, in Watson's words, 'a single event that is both warning and reminder, with the result that judgment is subordinate to salvation and God is manifested as "the Saviour of all"' (16.7).<sup>35</sup> A theology shaped by a reading of a text (Exodus) trumps the content of another text (Numbers). This, however, is not simply some imposition of ideology; this is a more complex instance of a canon within the canon: Exodus provides the hermeneutical vantage point from which to properly read and, if necessary, re-read scripture.

The next two diptychs allow *Wisdom* to return to the safer waters of Exodus before venturing into the hermeneutical riptide of Numbers one last time. Because the Book of Exodus is itself shaped by the bipartite divine activity paradigmatically evident in the Exodus event, its contents are naturally amenable to a symmetrical presentation.<sup>36</sup> The crop-destroying plague of fiery precipitation (*Wis.* 16.15-29; Exod 9.13-35) is straightforwardly contrasted with the provision of flame-retardant manna (Exod 16). In the one case, the ungodly (ἄσεβής), once again defined in terms of their intellectual error (ἄρνούμενοι εἰδέναι,

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<sup>31</sup> Watson, *Hermeneutics*, 397-404.

<sup>32</sup> Cheon, *The Exodus Story*, 56.

<sup>33</sup> Watson, *Hermeneutics*, 400: 'The author's initial interpretative move is to connect the onset of the snakes as closely as possible to the divinely ordained means of healing, both being planned in advance with a single goal in mind'.

<sup>34</sup> This is an expansion of the canonical material which knows nothing of the flies and/or locusts biting let alone killing the Egyptians (Exod 10.12-20; LXX 8.16-28). This is rightly noted by Cheon, *The Exodus Story*, 54.

<sup>35</sup> Watson, *Hermeneutics*, 400 (italics removed).

<sup>36</sup> The glaring exception to this is the Golden Calf incident (Exod 32) which significantly, though not surprisingly, is absent from *Wisdom's* reading.

16.16), were pursued by the judgment of God (θεοῦ κρίσει, 16.18) in the form of unquenchable fire. The righteous by contrast, enjoyed the unburnable manna which altered its ‘accidents’ in accordance with the preferences of each person’s palate (πρὸς ὃ τις ἐβούλετο μετεκρινᾶτο, 16.21). This particular pairing indicates that the very structures of creation, acting in service to the will of the creator (16.24a), exhibit and proactively enforce the principles of cosmic balance and moral order.<sup>37</sup> The universe is the defender of the righteous (ὑπέρμαχος γὰρ ὁ κόσμος ἐστὶν δικαίων, 16.17) and exerts itself to punish the unrighteous (ἐπιτείνεται εἰς κόλασιν κατὰ τῶν ἀδίκων, 16.24a) even while it benevolently loosens its punitive grip on those who are rightly persuaded to trust the creator (ἀνίεται εἰς εὐεργεσίαν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἐπὶ σοὶ πεποιθότων, 16.24b).<sup>38</sup> This creational metamorphosis, moreover, has a two-sided pedagogical purpose that mirrors the two-sidedness of the single divine act of judgment and grace. The unnaturalness is intended to teach (μανθάνω, 16.26) the righteous and ensure that the ungodly know (οἶδα, 16.18) that it is God who delivers and destroys. As 16.13 confesses – probably alluding to Deuteronomy 32.39 – σὺ ζωῆς καὶ θανάτου ἐξουσίαν ἔχεις.<sup>39</sup>

The brief doxology that introduces the fifth diptych highlights both Egyptian stupidity (ἀπαίδευτος) and the unimpeachable judgments of God: ‘Great are your judgments and hard to describe, therefore uninstructed souls have gone astray’ (17.1). This functions as an appropriate opening for the contrast between the plague of darkness (*Wis.* 17.1-18.4; *Exod* 10.21-29) and the divine guidance offered Israel in the pillar of fire (*Exod* 13.21).<sup>40</sup> *Wisdom* seems almost to enjoy the irony implicit in the terrifying exposure of the Egyptians’

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<sup>37</sup> M. Kolarcik, ‘Creation and Salvation in the Book of Wisdom’ in *Creation in the Biblical Tradition* (ed. R.J. Clifford and J.J. Collins, CBQMS 24; Washington: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1992), 97-107; D. Winston, ‘The Book of Wisdom’s Theory of Cosmogony’, *HR* 11 (1971), 185-202. This theme of creational justice looks back to 1.14 and, as we shall see below, ahead to 19.18-20.

<sup>38</sup> This image of creation relaxing its penal personality for the sake of those who have confidence in God reflects the ‘Mercy Dialogue’s’ depiction of a merciful judgment which is necessarily tied to some condition; in this case being persuaded of God’s trustworthiness. According to J.J. Collins, ‘Pseudo-Solomon draws here on Stoic cosmology, in which the elements admit of different degrees of tension or relaxation’ (‘The Reinterpretation of Apocalyptic Traditions in the Wisdom of Solomon’, in *The Book of Wisdom in Modern Research: Studies on Tradition, Redaction, and Theology* [DCLY 2005; ed. A. Passaro and G. Bellia; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2005], 143-57 [151]).

<sup>39</sup> The divine power over life and death evident in 16.13 is immediately contrasted with the powerlessness of a depraved (κακία) humanity that, while able to take life, ‘cannot bring back a departed spirit’ (ἐξελεθὸν πνεῦμα οὐκ ἀναστρέφει, 16.14). Passaro’s overtly theological reading detects ‘an absolute contrast between the power of God and the impotence of man; between what God does in his kindness for man and what man in his wickedness can do to his fellow man’ (‘The Serpent and the Manna or the Saving Word’, in *The Book of Wisdom in Modern Research: Studies on Tradition, Redaction, and Theology* [DCLY 2005; ed. A. Passaro and G. Bellia; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2005] 179-93 [192]).

<sup>40</sup> Larcher, *Le Livre de la Sagesse*, 945.

uneducated presumptions. Fancying themselves master of God’s people (17.2) and their sins undetectable (17.3), the horrifying darkness overturned their irrational presumptions and cast them into the fearful prison of psychological paralysis (17.2-21). Thus, while Israel, described here as the holy ones (τοῖς ὁσίοις, 18.1), followed a great light (μέγιστον ἦν φῶς, 18.1), the nation which imprisoned God’s elected broker of the imperishable light of the law (τὸ ἄφθαρτον νόμου φῶς, 18.4) deservedly (ἄξιος) experienced the jail of darkness. Canonically, these two episodes are unrelated, but *Wisdom* exploits the common theme of light and darkness to unite these narratives in further validation of its theological vision of judicial symmetry.

Returning to Numbers, *Wisdom* confronts what is perhaps its most formidable canonical hurdle: the death of 14,700 Israelites in the aftermath of Korah’s rebellion (Num 16.41-50; LXX 17.6-15; *Wis.* 18.5-25). Pairing this problematic event with the slaughter of the Egyptian first born (Exod 12.1-32) blunts the sharpness of what appears to be an obvious canonical contradiction to *Wisdom*’s theology; but connecting the death of the Egyptian heirs with their murder of the Israelite infants (18.5), while reflecting two of *Wisdom*’s symmetries (11.16; 12.15; cf. 18.7-8), does not solve the riddle of a parallel plague upon Israel. Aware of the severe strain this enigmatic episode places upon its central thesis, *Wisdom* extracts all possible theological leverage from the Passover events before facing the wilderness plague head on. The Exodus paradigm is prefigured in the diametrical symmetry of the destruction of the Egyptians guilty of infanticide (18.5-8) and the protection of the ritually pure and law-observant Israelites (18.7-9).<sup>41</sup> Moreover, the manner in which God acts in judgment is cast in overtly mythic terms. The omnipotent Logos (ὁ παντοδύναμος λόγος) is depicted as a relentless warrior, leaping from heaven and filling all things with death (ἐπλήρωσεν τὰ πάντα θανάτου, 18.15-16).<sup>42</sup> The presence of this divine executioner is accompanied by dreadful dreams (ὄνειρων δεινῶν) that

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<sup>41</sup> There is some debate about the implied form of worship and the intended referent of νόμος in 18.9. Larcher, *Le Livre de la Sagesse*, 992 rightly notes that the event in question (i.e. the Passover) is, in canonical form, prior to the giving of the law at Sinai. As we have seen, however, *Wisdom* is unconcerned with chronological precision and narrative sequencing. Contextually, it is natural to hear the νόμος of 18.9 as referring back to the law of 18.4 – a clear reference to Torah (Winston, *Wisdom*, 311-12) – which, though imprisoned by Egypt, Israel was commissioned to carry to the world.

<sup>42</sup> See J.R. Dodson, *The ‘Powers’ of Personification: Rhetorical Purpose in the Book of Wisdom and the Letter to the Romans* (BZBW 161; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 83-84 for more on *Wisdom*’s personification of the divine Logos.

force the terrified Egyptians to confront the cause of their destruction (18.17-19). The awfulness of this night appears unparalleled, but diptychs, by definition, require a parallel.

It seems that in searching for a textual partner for this holocaustic event, *Wisdom* is forced to confront the horror of Numbers 16: ‘The experience of death also touched the righteous, and destruction came upon the multitude in the desert’ (18.20; cf. 18.23). The task of re-presenting this incident as an expression of rational justice and moral order requires *Wisdom*, much like enrobed Aaron in his battle against the destroyer (*Wis.* 18.21-22), to don and deploy its full quiver of hermeneutical armour and arrows. First, ignoring the canonical calculation of the dead (14,700, Num 16.9; LXX 17.4), *Wisdom* contrasts the innumerable (ἀναρίθμητος, 18.12) Egyptian victims of the Passover massacre with the brevity of wrath in the wilderness (ἀλλ’ οὐκ ἐπὶ πολὺ ἔμεινεν ἡ ὀργή, 18.20c). Additionally, omitting any reference to the rebellion that incited the divine wrath in Numbers 16, *Wisdom* makes the non-canonical claim that this, rather than being an expression of punitive justice, was a mere test (ἦν γὰρ μόνη ἡ πείρα, 18.25). Recasting the narrative along these lines, our author is able to reemploy the strategy that helped him navigate the exegetical maze of the snake plague (*Wis.* 16.5-14), moving swiftly from the acknowledgment of death to the divine act of deliverance – in this case Aaron’s intercessory combat against the personified destroyer (ὁ ὀλεθρεύων; cf. τὸν κολάζοντα, 18.22). Watson astutely observes that a form of reverse displacement is required to make this move, transplanting the ‘angel of death’ from Exodus 12.23 into the Numbers account in the place of impersonal wrath (ὀργή).<sup>43</sup> Following Exodus’s subtle differentiation of the agency of ‘the destroyer’ and the person of the Lord (Exod 12.23), this clever character swap allows *Wisdom* to cast Aaron as God’s warrior, whose battle against the agent of death slyly transfers God’s active role in the episode from the negative exercise of punitive wrath (Num 16, LXX 17) to the more positive and palatable portrait of redemption and rescue (*Wis.* 18.20-25).<sup>44</sup> This combination of hermeneutical moves reflects *Wisdom*’s unshakable

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<sup>43</sup> Watson, *Hermeneutics*, 403.

<sup>44</sup> It is possible that a two-way character exchange is implied in the association of the deaths of the Egyptian heirs and the agency of God’s all-powerful Logos (ὁ παντοδύναμός σου λόγος, 18.5). If this is the case, especially if Logos here is to be equated with divine Wisdom (McGlynn, *Divine Judgment*, 209; Dodson, *The ‘Powers’ of Personification*, 86-87), then *Wisdom* has creatively restructured the Passover and wilderness plague to, as a pair, reflect the Exodus paradigm: God, through the Logos/Wisdom, destroys the Egyptians and, through Aaron’s priestly combat, delivers Israel (Watson, *Hermeneutics*, 403-04).

commitment to a theology of orderly justice. As Watson argues, ‘If scripture seems to contradict [*Wisdom’s* theological] principles...then scripture must be rewritten’.<sup>45</sup>

The seventh diptych provides a suitable finale for *Wisdom’s* rereading of pentateuchal history and, more broadly, the book’s entire hermeneutical project. Returning to the Red Sea, *Wisdom* again contrasts the safe passage of the Israelites with the deserved (ἄξιος, 19.4) drowning of the Egyptians (19.1-9). This time, however, the crossing is situated within a larger retrospective discussion of the Exodus events (19.10-21). Gathering the various injustices of the Egyptians against Israel under the meta-sin of unprecedented inhospitality (19.13-17), *Wisdom* is able to label the Egyptians sinners (ἁμαρτωλός, 19.13), thereby establishing the justness of their sufferings (δικαίως ἔπασχον, 19.13). Foolishly (ἄνοια, 19.3) – though in accordance with the divine foreknowledge (19.1) – the Egyptians, moved by the unseen hand of retributive fate (ἀνάγκη), pursued those whom they had recently manumitted so that (ἵνα) τὴν λείπουσαν ταῖς βασάνοις προσαναπληρώσωσιν κόλασιν (19.4).

As in 16.17, 24, this moral equitability is evident at an elemental level as creation, in defense of God’s children (οἱ σοὶ παῖδες, 19.6), refashioned its nature (ἢ κτίσις ἐν ἰδίῳ γένει πάλιν ἄνωθεν διετυποῦτο) and transposed its elements (τὰ στοιχεῖα μεθαρμοζόμενα, 19.18).<sup>46</sup> Philo similarly suggests that God can change the elements into instruments for the destruction of the ungodly at a whim (Mos. 1.96). Here, however, *Wisdom’s* emphasis is the other side of the Philonic coin: ἵνα οἱ σοὶ παῖδες φυλαχθῶσιν ἀβλαβεῖς (19.6). Dodson captures the drama: ‘Creation itself moves from order to chaos as it unravels in the face of God’s enemies, but it complies with God’s command so that it is refashioned from chaos to order for the benefit of the pious’.<sup>47</sup> This salvation via creation confirms *Wisdom’s* earlier claim about the soteriological character of the world’s generative forces (σωτήριοι αἱ γενέσεις τοῦ κόσμου, 1.14). At work here is a subtle reactivation of Genesis 1. As Pierre Beauchamp has observed, the process of recreation (19.6) mirrors the Genesis sequence: darkness (19.7) gives way to the emergence of

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<sup>45</sup> Watson, *Hermeneutics*, 401-02.

<sup>46</sup> The musical metaphor is correctly noted by Winston, *Wisdom*, 330-32. A fuller exploration is provided by R. Pistone who concludes, ‘Connected to what precedes by the initial γάρ, the text has, together with vv. 19-22, the function of *anakephalaíosis*, of recapitulating in closure of the work’ (‘The Lyre and the Creation: Music Theory and Persuasive Strategy in *Wisdom* 19’, in *The Book of Wisdom in Modern Research: Studies on Tradition, Redaction, and Theology* [DCLY 2005; ed. A. Passaro and G. Bellia; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2005], 195-217 [215]).

<sup>47</sup> Dodson, *The ‘Powers’ of Personification*, 78.

dry land out of the water (19.7b), which is then followed by the appearance of animals'.<sup>48</sup> Here, Genesis 1 is recast in an explicitly Exodus-shaped mold. Recreation (19.6), like creation itself (1.14), is soteriological – it punishes the wicked (19.13-17) and rescues the righteous (19.6-12).<sup>49</sup> Thus, working from end to beginning or, more accurately, from eschatology (final judgment) to protological history (creation and Exodus), the sage grounds his hope for a future creational soteriology (*Wis.* 5.17-23) in creation's historical salvation of the righteous (*Wis.* 10-19; esp. 16.15-29; 19.6-10, 18-22). As Dodson concludes:

For *Wisdom*, Creation's activity at the future apocalypse is founded upon its past activity in the Exodus. In *Wisdom* 1-6, the sage places the fools in juxtaposition with the righteous; in *Wisdom* 10-19, the sage places the foolish Egyptians over against righteous Israel. The critical role Creation had played in the Exodus event dictates the role it will play at the visitation of God.<sup>50</sup>

It is only from this retrospective vantage point that we can address a *prima facie* tension noted earlier: Is justice historically realised as *Wisdom* 10-19 indicates, or is it postponed until the eschaton as chapters 2-5 suggest? Assessing *Wisdom* from its conclusion, what appeared as a tension recedes to reveal a coherent theology of history. Grounding his eschatological hope in the patterns of the canonical past, our author is implicitly affirming a common theological maxim: the end will be like the (canonical) beginning.<sup>51</sup> As Giuseppe Bellia and Angelo Passaro remark, for *Wisdom*, 'salvation lies in bringing the world back to the original plan of the Creator'.<sup>52</sup> The tension, then, is not between scriptural history and unrealised eschatology. The tension is located in the mismatch between the injustices of the present and the justice established by the canonical and eschatological poles. For *Wisdom*, the canonical contours of moral order and divine justice that shape the eschatology of chapter 1-6 are derived from a reread and rewritten textual canon – or at least, as hinted above and argued below, a canon

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<sup>48</sup> P. Beauchamp, 'Le Salut corporel des justes et la conclusion du livre de la Sagesse', *Bib* 45 (1964): 491-526. Beauchamp also detects a reference to plants somewhere within 19.9-11. Such a reference, however, is unlikely. The text does refer to the earth producing (19.10), but the reference is to the normal production of animals in contrast to the atypical gnats. Also, the somewhat ambiguous reference to luxurious food (ἐδέσματα τροφῆς, 19.11) is lexically more likely to refer to meat (ἔδεσμα), which seems to be confirmed by the provision of quail in 19.12.

<sup>49</sup> Collins, 'The Reinterpretation of Apocalyptic Traditions in the Wisdom of Solomon, 152-53: 'We might infer from these statements about the role of nature in the Wisdom of Solomon, that justice must ultimately prevail in the cosmos....The cosmos is programmed to deal with unrighteousness'.

<sup>50</sup> Dodson, *The 'Powers' of Personification*, 74.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Watson, *Hermeneutics*, 526: '*Wisdom* draws on narrative material from Genesis, Exodus and Numbers, and finds in this narrated past the key to God's definitive saving action in the eschatological future'.

<sup>52</sup> G. Bellia and A. Passaro, 'Infinite Passion for Justice', in *The Book of Wisdom in Modern Research: Studies on Tradition, Redaction, and Theology* (DCLY 2005; ed. A. Passaro and G. Bellia; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2005), 307-28 (321).

within the canon. It is therefore necessary to distinguish between canonical history and present history. For *Wisdom*, it seems, the two are of a different type, moving as it were on different planes that intersect at the point of theological appropriation. The canonical past, because it functions programmatically, is able to address the problems of the present because it provides the theological resources with which to construct a canonically legitimated eschatology. Far from problematising *Wisdom's* pastoral theodicy, its twin appeal to scriptural history and a scripturally-shaped eschatology attends to the problem of the present with retrospective and prospective reflections on a common theistic refrain: 'as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be'; or as *Wisdom* reworks it, it ever shall be as it was in the beginning even if it is not now. Together, these paradigmatic poles ensure present Israel of God's creational, canonically historical and ultimately eschatological commitment to Israel.

### *All Israel is Israel, but Why?*

*Wisdom* has concluded the argument. The principles of divine justice and moral order are detectable at the canonical and cosmic levels. The only thing left to do is to celebrate the basic homiletical point towards which this sustained theological rereading has been moving: 'For in everything, O Lord, you have exalted and glorified your people, and you have not neglected to help them at all times and in all places' (19.22). This doxology, however, raises one last interpretative question which has been put off until now. It is regularly observed that throughout *Wisdom's* engagement with scriptural history the canonical characters are never named. The most common interpretation of this rhetorical curiosity is the suggestion that *Wisdom* employs the technique of anonymity to departicularise the theological motifs attached to the various stories.<sup>53</sup> According to this reading, *Wisdom's* paradigmatic presentation of canonical characters indicates a universalizing interest that creates an anthropological dualism between the 'righteous' and the 'ungodly'.<sup>54</sup> This, however, insofar as it displaces Israel's particularity, is only half right. *Wisdom* draws its anthropological dividing-line along

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<sup>53</sup> Cf. S. Schroer, 'The Book of Sophia' in *Searching the Scriptures: A Feminist Commentary* (ed. E. Schüssler Fiorenza; London: SCM Press, 1994), 17-38.

<sup>54</sup> A. Schmitt, 'Struktur, Herkunft und Bedeutung der Beispielreihe in Weish 10', *BZ* 21 (1977): 1-22; J.J. Collins, 'Cosmos and Salvation: Jewish Wisdom and Apocalyptic in the Hellenistic Age', *HR* 17 (1977): 121-42. More recently, however, Collins has qualified his position a bit: 'the author of *Wisdom* had a stubborn streak of ethnic particularism that was not entirely dissolved by his universalizing philosophy' ('The Reinterpretation of Apocalyptic Traditions in the *Wisdom of Solomon*', 153).

moral and religious criteria; but rather than relativising Israel, this indicates the rational and judicious basis on which Israel is justifiably regarded as God's people. *Wisdom's* entire argument has been aimed at the doxological celebration of God's perpetual care for his people (τὸν λαόν σου, 19.22); but in order to prevent this preferential treatment from appearing arbitrary, Israel has been exonerated at every turn.<sup>55</sup> This textual purging makes little sense if it is not *Israel* who is perceived as righteous over against their non-Jewish oppressors. By employing non-ethnic labels, *Wisdom* indicates that it is not Israel *qua* Israel that is the object of divine benevolence; but rather that God's people are established as such (i.e. as Israel) in accordance with moral and rational criteria. As Barclay argues, 'God's people are saved, and their enemies punished, not because of their ethnicity...but because in moral and rational terms they deserve it'.<sup>56</sup> There is a universal paradigm here – God saves Israel because they are righteous and condemns her oppressors because they are ungodly – but at no point in *Wisdom* is this pattern transferred from Israel to other nations or persons. *Wisdom's* message to Jews in crisis is that God always saves Israel, not because Israel is Israel, but because Israel is righteous. This message is trans-temporal, but it is not trans-national.

### *A Canon within the Canon*

Passaro summarises *Wisdom's* hermeneutical project:

[The author] collects Exodus themes with originality and freedom but eliminates the violent aspects of the accounts...in an effort to construct an organic discourse which does not indulge in facile eirenicism.... the remembrance of past events, re-read and re-presented but faithful to the Scripture of the ancestors serves...to portray the tender concern and the powerful mercy of God for his people.<sup>57</sup>

This carefully nuanced description, while helpful on the whole, does perhaps betray a bit of the hermeneutical eirenicism Passaro praises *Wisdom* for avoiding. 'Re-reading' and 're-presenting' the canonical past in a way that is 'faithful' to the 'Scripture of the ancestors' is a necessarily dynamic hermeneutical process, one which includes, as Passaro recognises, textual fidelity and textual manipulation. The tension here is real, but as T.S. Eliot would have expected, it is here, in the to and fro between textual tradition and the theology of a talented

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<sup>55</sup> Note especially the stress on Israel's abstention from idolatry in 15.1-4 and the white-washing of the wilderness traditions, including the complete omission of the Golden-Calf incident.

<sup>56</sup> Barclay, 'Unnerving Grace', 99; see also Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, 183-84.

<sup>57</sup> Passaro, 'The Serpent and the Manna', 179.

individual, that our author is at his most original and his best. Perhaps Passaro catches the subtlety of *Wisdom's* theological hermeneutic more fully in his essay with Giuseppe Bellia: The author of *Wisdom* 'wishes to incorporate in his pages the preceding sacred books of Israel in an attempt at a theological re-understanding of a salvation which from history journeys towards an eternity which hangs over the present'.<sup>58</sup> But even here a distinction needs to be made between the sacred pages that are constitutive of *Wisdom's* theology and those that require emendation in consequence of that theology.

To borrow Watson's phrasing, *Wisdom's* theology is its reading of a text – not the composite text of the Pentateuch but rather the paradigmatic text of Exodus which establishes the meaning of the Pentateuch.<sup>59</sup> The dance of *Wisdom's* hermeneutical theology is a waltz of sorts, a three step movement from the text of Exodus to an Exodus-shaped theology to an Exodus-determined reading of Numbers and Genesis. The extraction of the Golden-Calf incident might appear to problematise this conclusion, but in fact this rather extreme case of *Sachkritik* is the exception which proves the rule: even the text of Exodus is subject to criticism on the basis of the theology expressed in its central event. From this perspective, the theological principles articulated in the 'Mercy Dialogue' can properly be seen both as a product of reading a text (Exodus) and as the hermeneutical lens through which other texts are read (Numbers and Genesis).

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<sup>58</sup> Bellia and Passaro, 'Infinite Passion for Justice', 328.

<sup>59</sup> See Watson, *Hermeneutics*, 514. Watson's comments are made in relation to Pauline theology.

## Chapter 5

### A Rational Reading, in Retrospect

*Wisdom of Solomon*, to risk an overused turn of phrase, is a hermeneutical *tour de force*. Beginning at the end and ending at the beginning, reality is read within a comprehensive vision of cosmic order and moral symmetry which is primarily evident in the deserved destruction of the ungodly and the suitable salvation of the righteous. The illuminating aid of divine Wisdom – God’s fitting gift (*Wis.* 6-10) – allows this Exodus-shaped construal to peel back the hermeneutically distorting veil of the empirical injustice of death (*Wis.* 1-6) and the apparent canonical contradictions of the pentateuchal narrative (*Wis.* 10-19) to reveal a stably structured universe in which history, from cosmogony to eschatology, follows a predictable pattern of divine activity. Detecting an ever present correspondence between the content of divine action – either judgment or salvation – and the moral, rational and/or social suitability of the objects of that agency, *Wisdom* effectively locates God’s soteriological action within the cosmological operations of moral order and divine justice. This synthetic conclusion implies that this deep and pre-creational pattern is the generative and organising nucleus of *Wisdom’s* theology. Put this way, however, our conclusion is little more than a confirmatory restatement of our opening thesis: *Wisdom’s* reading of text and world operates within the theological boundaries marked off by a vision of cosmic order that σοφία fashioned, manages and reveals and in which the operations of divine justice ensure the stable and rational distribution of fitting salvation and judgment. Summation, however, needs to move beyond affirmation. This chapter intends to address this need by gathering the various theological threads from the preceding three chapters under three thematic rubrics: 1) the irreducible anthropological distinction between Jew and non-Jew, 2) the definition of and relationship between divine justice and God’s gifts, and 3) the Exodus-shaped and protologically-grounded hermeneutic evident in *Wisdom’s* rereading and rewriting of pentateuchal history. The hope is that this topical distillation will both sharpen the profile of *Wisdom’s* sweeping theological vision and, in so doing, prepare the way for the forthcoming dialogue between *Wisdom* and Paul’s letter to the Christians in Rome.

### *There is a Distinction: Israel and Idolaters*

Whatever Paul may conclude in Romans 3.22, for *Wisdom* there is an anthropological distinction. In fact, there has to be. The logic of the Exodus demands a two-group anthropology which necessarily corresponds to the bipartite divine action: salvation for the righteous; judgment for the wicked. For *Wisdom*, this dialectic shapes both the problem of the present and the eschatological solution. *Wisdom's* theological crisis is a result of the present imbalance between these anthropological and soteriological dualisms. In contrast to the symmetry of the Exodus event, *Wisdom's* present is characterised by the flourishing of the wicked and the empirical suffering of the righteous (cf. 3.13-4.9). This means that the problem of the present – to anticipate a tension with Pauline theology – can be stated in terms of the unjust connection between sinners and soteriological blessing and the corresponding link between the righteous and the covenant curses. Grounding its eschatological hope in the just mercy of God paradigmatically exemplified in the Exodus, *Wisdom's* solution to this felt theodicy is to assert the eschatological reestablishment of the just lines between, on the one hand, the righteous and blessing and, on the other hand, the wicked and curses. The gospel according to *Wisdom*, then, is not that the ungodly will be blessed – that is today's horrifying headline! – but rather that the righteous will be delivered *from* the ungodly. This distinction between the injustice of the present soteriological blessing *of* the ungodly and the justice of the eschatological salvation of the righteous *from* the ungodly lies at the very centre of *Wisdom's* pastoral theology (cf. 10.15). The goodness of God consists in his canonical portrayal as the one who in mercy rescues the righteous and in judgment destroys the sinners. *Wisdom's* comforting word to his suffering kinsfolk is that the God who acted with perfect justice in the Exodus will again act with soteriological symmetry at the eschaton.

Crucially, then, it must be the righteous who are blessed and the wicked who are cursed. Or even more fundamentally, the righteous and the wicked *must be*. This theodicy demands a rational soteriology. But a soteriology whose rationality is Exodus-shaped demands a dualistic anthropology. For *Wisdom*, the distinction between the righteous and the wicked corresponds to the distinction between Israel and non-Israel. As argued in the previous chapter, however, this is an ethical and religious claim, not merely an ethnic one. Watson is right to observe that *Wisdom's* re-narration of Exodus and Numbers is shaped by the Exodus event: '[*Wisdom*] finds here a virtually unqualified distinction between God's saving action

towards the holy people and his punitive action towards their enemies'.<sup>1</sup> But in order for this overtly Exodus-shaped historiography to function as an Exodus-shaped theodicy, Israel, as the object of divine rescue, must be re-presented as consistently righteous in contradiction to their unrighteous oppressors. *Wisdom* 13-15 establishes this contrast by juxtaposing Israel's innocence with respect to idolatry and immorality with the false worship and sinfulness that characterises the Gentile world: the function of the polemic against false worship is to reinforce the distinction between Israel and non-Israel on the basis of their respective identifications as non-idolaters and idolaters. That *Wisdom* is willing to remove incidents like the Golden Calf from Israel's canonical history in an effort to preserve the justice implied by the correspondence between divine action and anthropological status demonstrates the hermeneutical pressure exerted by the theological grammar of the Exodus event. For *Wisdom*, the Exodus is not simply the salvation of Israel and the destruction of Egypt; it is the salvation of Israel *because* they are a 'holy people' and the destruction of Egypt *because* their idolatry and immorality required it (16.1; 19.4). In other words, the Exodus event is the paradigm of divine justice precisely because in it God's bipartite act of mercy and judgment corresponds to the two anthropological options of righteousness and wickedness.

### *Divine Justice and God's Pre-conditional Χάρις*

The semantic range of 'justice' and 'grace' are determined by the theological pattern of the Exodus event. This means that divine justice operates as a duality of divine action: judgment is an act of justice directed towards those worthy of death (cf. 1.16); grace is a just act directed towards those worthy of Wisdom (cf. 6.16).

For *Wisdom*, the Exodus is the paradigmatic instantiation of an anthropological distinction and a corresponding soteriological distinction. As *Wisdom* retells the story (10.15-21; 19.1-21), a bipartite humanity (δίκαιοι and ἀσεβεῖς, 10.20) encounters, respectively, deliverance and destruction (cf. 10.18-19). The Red Sea crossing is thus the principal exemplification of divine justice *because* it is the righteous who are rescued and the wicked who are drowned. Implied in this reading of righteousness is a particular definition of God's

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<sup>1</sup> F. Watson, *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith* (London: T & T Clark, 2004), 411.

justice: the righteousness of God is located in the *correspondence* between divine action and the human subject(s).<sup>2</sup>

As observed in the preceding chapters, the single criterion of correspondence can be met by a range of moral, rational and social criteria. Wisdom rescues those who are righteous (10.4-14), is found by those who seek and love her (6.12), and protects the first-formed father of the world (10.1). Conversely, it is the ungodly (3.10) and the irrational (2.1) that Wisdom avoids and who are therefore the objects of divine judgment. However, while this catalogue of criteria specifies the various points of correspondence, *Wisdom's* usual manner of signaling the congruence between the form and object of divine action is ἄξιος-terminology (1.16; 3.5; 6.16; 9.12; 12.7; 12.26; 16.9; 18.4; 19.4).<sup>3</sup> As the one who rules righteously, God can be said to be righteous (δικαίος ὧν δικαίως τὰ πάντα διέπει, 12.15) because his judgments operate according to 'fit' (ἄξιαν θεοῦ κρίσιν, 12.26). In other words, the rightness of divine action is identifiable in and as the affinity between what God does and the worth of those towards whom that action is directed. This, however, does not translate into an un-nuanced *iustitia distributiva*. As argued in chapter four, the 'Mercy Dialogue' (11.17-12.27) insists that divine judgment is always accompanied and tempered by a non-salvific mercy that reflects God's universal love (11.23-12.11). Thus, while mercy cannot exclude, overturn or in any way oppose the exercise of justice, it does complement and qualify its execution. At this point, *Wisdom's* determined insistence on the universality of divine love pushes it beyond the strict symmetry of the Exodus event to the details of the text. The gradual judgment of the plague cycles indicates that even the necessary exercise of judgment is flooded with mercy. In this way, mercy and justice appear as qualifying rather than competing phenomena – cooperative and inseparable aspects of God's operations in the world. This means that mercy, rather than interrupting or unsettling the patterns of justice by linking sinners with soteriological blessings, operates in the coincidence between the anthropological and soteriological symmetries seen in the Exodus event. Mercy affects the execution of judgment, not the objects of judgment.

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<sup>2</sup> Philo makes a similar point by insisting that δικαιοσύνη works κατ' ἀξίαν (*Leg.* 1.87; *Mos.* 2.9; *Sobr.* 40). For more on this, see chapter seven.

<sup>3</sup> Even in 12.15, where *Wisdom* departs from its typical ἄξιος-language, ὀφείλω is used almost synonymously as it serves to indicate the point of correspondence between the divine act of judgment and the objects (or non-objects) of that judgment, thereby grounding God's forensic fairness (cf. 12.20)

Thus, precisely while emphasising the mercy and love of God, *Wisdom's* author maintains the Exodus-shape of God's saving activity: the unrighteous (ἄδικος) cannot be acquitted (12.12) and the undeserving (τὸν μὴ ὀφείλοντα) cannot be condemned (12.15).<sup>4</sup> For this reason, mercy as the rescue of the unrighteous or, to borrow the Pauline parlance, the justification of the ungodly would, within *Wisdom's* moral reasoning, be an oxymoronic absurdity – a disqualification of God's goodness because it would destabilise the moral structures of the cosmos that *Wisdom* fashioned and orders. A deviation from the moral and rational symmetry concretised at the Red Sea is not, for *Wisdom*, an expression of mercy; it is a disruption of the elemental order of the universe and thus an aberrant indication that the cosmos is governed not by the stability and goodness of divine justice but by the anarchic horrors and chaos of irrationality. *Wisdom's* homiletical word of hope to the suffering righteous is finally a promise that, as in the canonical past, divine justice will be eschatologically evident in the overcoming of chaos with correspondence – that is, God will act in saving justice to reconnect the congruence between righteousness and redemption and ungodliness and judgment. Grace lives on the salvific side of this just duality.

According to Giuseppe Bellia and Angelo Passaro, sapiential theology must compare 'itself loyally both with its cultural context and in continuity with the theological heritage carried from the fathers'.<sup>5</sup> This dual comparison is clearly present in *Wisdom's* employment of Middle-Platonism to explicate and re-narrate Jewish theology and history, but it is also evident, perhaps less obviously, in *Wisdom's* portrayal of the gift of divine Wisdom. As argued in chapter three, *Wisdom's* insistence on the rational correspondence between gift and recipient – σοφία, the gift (8.21), seeks those who are worthy (ἄξιος) of her (6.16) – is at home in the ancient economy of gift-exchange. Just as Seneca and Philo insist on the social and theological necessity of an affinity between benefit and beneficiary, so in *Wisdom* God's χάρις is directed towards 'his holy ones' (τοῖς ὁσίοις αὐτοῦ, 4.15; cf. 3.9) and it is the law-observant (ὁ

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<sup>4</sup> A similar point could be made from *Wisdom's* dramatic rewriting of the Exodus-Numbers narrative in *Wisdom* 10.15-19.21. In this context, God's favour towards Israel is qualified by moments of punitive testing (18.25) and pedagogical discipline (16.6, 11), but these 'qualifications' are situated within a redactional procedure that consistently presents the recipients of divine blessing (Israel) as οἱ δίκαιοι in contradistinction to the targets of God's wrath (Egypt) who are both called and depicted as οἱ ἄσεβεῖς.

<sup>5</sup> G. Bellia and A. Passaro, 'Infinite Passion for Justice', in *The Book of Wisdom in Modern Research: Studies on Tradition, Redaction, and Theology* (DCLY 2005; ed. A. Passaro and G. Bellia; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2005), 307-28 (307).

μη ἐργασάμενος ἐν χειρὶ ἀνόμημα) and faithful eunuch to whom God gives (δίδωμι) his χάρις (3.14).

Interestingly, however, *Wisdom's* cited authority for the shape of this divine benefaction is not some social custom or commonsense; it is the logic of the Exodus and the paradigmatic gifting of Wisdom to Solomon. As *Wisdom* rereads and rewrites the Exodus event, the objects of Wisdom's gracious Red Sea rescue (ρύομαι) are identified as a 'holy people and blameless race' (λαὸν ὅσιον καὶ σπέρμα ἄμειπτον, 10.15) and their deliverance is therefore describable as a 'reward' (μισθός, 10.17) for their labours. It is important to insist, however, that the use of μισθός here does not indicate a mixing of metaphors or a transition from a gift to a pay economy. In this context, the 'reward' of rescue is emphatically a gift – or more precisely the saving work of *the* gift (8.21; 10.15) –, but because it is a good gift – that is, because it finds fitting recipients – it is classifiable as both χάρις and μισθός, the former term indicating the unearned beneficence of God and the latter term signaling the equitability and rationality of that beneficence.<sup>6</sup> This double-stress on the graciousness and fittingness of God's gifts is exemplified in the giving of σοφία to Solomon. This paradigmatic gift is both explainable – Solomon was good (ἀγαθός) – and unearned – σοφία is genuinely a gift (χάρις) and thus her bestowal requires an authentic act of divine giving (δίδωμι, 8.21).<sup>7</sup> The logic here, as argued in chapter three, is not properly described as synergistic as *Wisdom's* material interest is less (cooperative) agency than affinity. That the insistence on the congruence of gift and recipient is contextually locatable within the economy of ancient gift-exchange and theologically anchored in a scriptural pattern confirms Barclay's claim that the expectation of an affinity between divine action, whether judgment or salvation, and the object of that action 'expresses the absolutely basic universal theistic presumption that the universe is fitly and morally ordered'.<sup>8</sup> In this sense, *Wisdom's* emphasis on the patterned coincidence between God's benefits and their human beneficiaries is not a qualification of some univocal definition of grace as unconditioned and unfitting; it is an emphatic celebration of the gift-giving God that preserves his goodness and justice by addressing the theodicy question that discriminant benefaction raises: why does God give to some and not others? To insist that God's χάρις is pre-

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<sup>6</sup> For more on the use of μισθός in a gift-economy, see chapter seven.

<sup>7</sup> *Wisdom* 9.5-6 suggests that even though Solomon can be considered a 'fitting' recipient of God's gift, he is nevertheless an undeserving object of divine grace. Cf. Philo's appeal to Deuteronomy 9.5 in *De sacrificiis Abel et Caini* 57.

<sup>8</sup> Barclay, 'Unnerving Grace', 104.

conditional – that there is a necessary fit between gift and recipient – is to insist that all God’s actions, rather than being arbitrary and unfair, are good and loving and just. For *Wisdom*, grace does not trump or disrupt the ordered and equitable universe σοφία fashioned and manages; grace, because God is just and good, instantiates the essential cosmological and theological reality that God ‘arranged all things by measure and number and weight’ (11.20).

### *Σοφία and Sachkritik*

The old riddle about the ontological priority of the chicken or the egg can be applied to *Wisdom*’s hermeneutic: what came first, theology or reading? As with the ornithological enigma, simple questions do not necessarily invite straightforward answers. A chicken both comes from and creates an egg. And so it is with hermeneutics – theology is both a product and producer of readings. Consequently, a theological reading of a theological reader can only hope to assess the hermeneutical circle by entering it.

*Wisdom*’s hermeneutical roundabout (forgive the mixing of metaphors) has three entrances. The first approaches *Wisdom* from the end – that is, from eschatology (*Wis.* 1-6). Starting here, which admittedly is where *Wisdom* starts, *Wisdom* appears to have a pre-existent eschatology whose soteriological symmetry is confirmed by the education of the divine σοφία (*Wis.* 6-10) and the canonical pattern of the Exodus event (*Wis.* 10-19). Read this way, theology comes first. On the other hand, if approached from the beginning – that is, from canonical history (*Wis.* 10-19) – the impression is rather different. The readings of the Exodus event that frame this re-narration of the scriptural past (10.15-21; 19.1-21) appear to provide the paradigm of dialectical divine action which then finds an antecedent analogy in the primeval activity of *Wisdom* (*Wis.* 6-10) and therefore generates the eschatological hope of a future divine act of salvation and judgment (*Wis.* 1-6). Within the logic of this construal, reading comes first.

There is, however, a third entrance, restricted to the worthy and entering the hermeneutical scene neither from the end nor the beginning, but, as it were, from above. This is the educational agency of divine *Wisdom*, the one who is ‘the fashioner all things’ and from whom the author of *Wisdom* was gifted ‘unerring knowledge’ (*Wis.* 7.17-22). As Watson remarks, ‘In the *Wisdom of Solomon*, the writer has himself experienced *Sophia*’s transforming illumination, reading scripture in light of it.... [he] moves freely between the transforming

event, its attestation in scripture, and its eschatological realization'.<sup>9</sup> It is because the sage has learned 'the beginning and end and middle of times' (7.18) from the one who 'orders all things well' (8.1) that he knows to read history in past and future tenses as a recurrent concretion of the theological and cosmological fact that God 'has arranged all things by measure and number and weight' (11.20). In other words, the 'all things' which Wisdom fashioned (7.22) includes hermeneutical competence: Wisdom teaches the sage how to read. By unveiling the judicial symmetry that structures the protological order and by exposing her own agency in and under the Genesis narrative, Wisdom points to the Exodus as the paradigmatic instantiation of a deep and ultimately ineluctable pre-creational pattern: divine justice is defined by the correspondence between God's actions and human subjects and so enacted as the rescue of the righteous and the judgment of the ungodly. This is both a theological and a hermeneutical lesson: the Exodus pattern, because it exemplifies the protological order, functions as the canon by which all other assertions, whether canonical or contemporary, are to be tested. Put another way, within *Wisdom's Sachkritik*, the *Sache* is the pre-creational pattern that is principally see-able in the Exodus event. This explains both *Wisdom's* rejection of the empirical rationality of the ungodly (*Wis.* 2-5) and the radically reconfigured presentation of canonical history (*Wis.* 10-19). In both cases traditional dogmas are critiqued because they do not conform to the logic of the cosmos exemplified in the Exodus.

This suggests that within *Wisdom's* hermeneutical grammar, Wisdom comes first. The formal content of Wisdom's instruction is a reread Pentateuch, but the material content is Wisdom herself – the one who fashions, orders and teaches all things. In other words, while the divine gift of σοφία comes wrapped in the pages of Genesis, the pages have been infiltrated by the gift. *Wisdom* is now the subject of a programmatic narrative sequence and her acts of rescuing the righteous and avoiding the wicked anticipate and point to the paradigmatic function of the Red Sea crossing. In this way, reading comes second; but it also comes fourth. If Wisdom teaches the worthy to properly read the Exodus pattern as the principal exemplification of the protological order, then the theology produced by this reading is in turn the producer of the canonical re-presentation of *Wisdom* 10-19 and the counter-empirical eschatology *Wisdom* 1-6. We can thus summarise the hermeneutical process: 1) Wisdom teaches the worthy. 2) The education of the worthy includes a hermeneutical lesson in rereading the

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<sup>9</sup> Watson, *Hermeneutics*, 530.

Exodus as the paradigmatic instantiation of the pre-creational order. 3) This paradigmatic rereading grounds and generates an Exodus-shaped theology. 4) This Exodus-shaped theology functions as the hermeneutical touchstone for subsequent readings of canonical texts and contemporary and future history. If canonical history or contemporary crises contradict the structures of moral order and divine justice disclosed (by σοφία) in the Exodus event, then they are necessarily subject to theological criticism (*Sachkritik*). The protological principle determines the hermeneutical pattern: the God of illimitable love is immutably just.

Part II

*Wisdom* and Romans in Conversation

## Chapter 6

### Announcing the Human: Israel Against and As the Ungodly in *Wisdom* 13-15 and Romans 1.18-2.11<sup>1</sup>

Part two of this thesis will reread pivotal sections of Romans in conversation with the author of *Wisdom*. While the dialogue is neither dependent nor based on Paul's use or indebtedness to *Wisdom*, the conversation will begin at the point where most readers of Romans and *Wisdom* have heard the texts talking to each other. This chapter will therefore compare and reconsider the relationship between the polemics against idolatry and immorality in *Wisdom* 13-15 and Romans 1.18-2.11. Chapter seven will then consider the theological location, definition and relationship of divine justice and God's grace, two concepts that are central to both texts. Finally, chapter eight will compare the rereadings of Israel's scripture in *Wisdom* 10-19 and Romans 9-11 in an effort to uncover their respective hermeneutical rationales and theological contours.

#### *Us and Them, or Us: Wisdom 13-15 and Romans 1.18-2.5*

The story of sin starts in Eden (*Wis.* 2.23-24; *Rom* 5.12). If the beginning of a story was the whole story, then Romans and the *Wisdom of Solomon* would have a similar tale to tell; and many have assumed that they do. Since Eduard Grafe alerted the world of Pauline scholarship to the unusually close connection between Romans 1.18-32 and *Wisdom* 13-14,<sup>2</sup> readers of Romans have typically read Romans 1.18-32 as a condensed but consistent restatement of *Wisdom's* anti-idolatry polemic. Anders Nygren's Romans commentary problematised this textual relationship by extending the comparison into Romans 2 and *Wisdom* 15, but even here

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<sup>1</sup> A revised and compressed version of this argument appeared as J.A. Linebaugh, 'Announcing the Human: Rethinking the Relationship Between Wisdom of Solomon 13-15 and Romans 1.18-2.11', *NTS* 57.2 (2011): 214-37.

<sup>2</sup> E. Grafe, 'Das Verhältniss der paulinischen Schriften zur Sapientia Salomonis' in *Theologische Abhandlungen: Carl von Weizsäcker zu seinem siebenzigsten Geburtstage 11. December 1892 gewidmet* (Freiburg: Mohr Siebeck, 1892), 251-86. W. Sanday and A.C. Headlam, *The Epistle to the Romans* (ICC; New York: Scribner's, 1896), 51-52, 267-69 introduced these parallels to English-speaking scholarship. For a detailed survey of scholarship, see J.R. Dodson, *The 'Powers' of Personification: Rhetorical Purpose in the Book of Wisdom and the Letter to the Romans* (BZNTW 161; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 4-13.

the theological affinity between Romans 1.18-32 and *Wisdom* 13-14 was affirmed and exploited.<sup>3</sup> According to his programmatic reading – a reading that dominates modern commentaries<sup>4</sup> – Romans 1.18-32 reactivates *Wisdom*'s polemical attack on *Gentile* idolatry and immorality and *then* (Rom 2.1-11), in what Richard Hays calls a rhetorical 'sting operation',<sup>5</sup> establishes the hamartiological equality of Jew and Gentile. Interpreted this way, Romans 1.18-32 is still about Gentile sin; 2.1-11 simply undermines *Wisdom*'s immunization of Israel (*Wis.* 15.1-4) by pointing to the impartiality of divine judgment (2.6-11) and the presence of sin within the elect nation (2.1-5, 21-24). Douglas Campbell, following the unpopular proposals of Schmeller<sup>6</sup> and Porter,<sup>7</sup> has recently radicalised this interpretative trend, arguing that the affinities between Romans 1.18-32 and *Wisdom* 13-14 contribute to his conclusion that Romans 1.18-32 is 'an instance of προσωποποιία' in which Paul assumes the persona of his opponent – 'the Teacher' whose theology reflects a 'dependence on at least large parts' of *Wisdom* – and 'summarizes...the Teacher's usual opening – his arresting προοίμιον or *exordium*'.<sup>8</sup> The crucial point for our purposes is that these construals, despite their diversity, assume that while Paul critiques *Wisdom* 15.1-4 in Romans 2.1-11, Romans 1.18-32 stands as a compressed but theologically faithful re-presentation of *Wisdom* 13-14.

In this respect, Kathy Gaca is something of an outlier. As she reads Romans 1.18-32, Paul, while speaking within the 'tradition of Hellenistic Jewish polemic', has introduced a 'problematic innovation': whereas the polemical tradition charges the Gentiles with theological ignorance, Paul ascribes received theological knowledge to Gentiles, thereby accusing them not just of ignorance but of apostasy.<sup>9</sup> For Gaca, however, while Paul alters the accusation (apostasy not ignorance), the identity of the accused (Gentiles) remains unchanged.

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<sup>3</sup> A. Nygren, *Commentary on Romans* (trans. C.C. Rasmussen; London: SCM Press, 1952), compare page 112 with 114-17.

<sup>4</sup> J.D.G. Dunn, *Romans 1-8* (WBC 38a; Waco: Word, 1988), 82-83; J.A. Fitzmyer, *Romans* (AB 33; London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1992), 298; D.J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 133; E. Lohse, *Der Brief an die Römer* (KEK 4; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003), 86, 99.

<sup>5</sup> R.B. Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1996), 389.

<sup>6</sup> T. Schmeller, *Paulus und die 'Diatriben': Eine vergleichende Stilinterpretation* (Münster: Aschendorf, 1987), 225-86.

<sup>7</sup> C.L. Porter, 'Romans 1.18-32: Its Role in the Developing Argument', *NTS* 40 (1994): 210-28.

<sup>8</sup> D.A. Campbell, *The Deliverance of God: An Apocalyptic Rereading of Justification in Paul* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 2009), 542-93 (542, 595).

<sup>9</sup> K.L. Gaca, 'Paul's Uncommon Declaration in Romans 1.18-32 and its Problematic Legacy for Pagan and Christian Relations', *HTR* 92: 2 (1999): 165-98. Others (e.g. R. Bell, *No One Seeks for God: An Exegetical and Theological Study of Romans 1.18-3.20* [WUNT 106; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998], 76) have noticed that Romans 1.18-32 differs from *Wisdom* in a number of ways, but this has generally been used as evidence against Pauline interaction with

The terms in which Paul's rhetorical trap is sprung, however, invite a reconsideration of Paul's polemical target in Romans 1.18-32. The one who judges the other (κρίνεις τὸν ἕτερον, 2.1) – the other being the presumed target of the invectives of 1.18-32 – is liable to condemnation because he is guilty of the other's sins (τὰ αὐτὰ πράσσεις, 2.1; ποιῶν αὐτά, 2.3). The effect of this rhetorical move is to eliminate the self-imposed distance between the judge and the other, thereby subjecting the judge to his own condemnation (σεαυτὸν κατακρίνεις, 2.1). Functionally, then, the indictment of Romans 1.18-32 becomes, at least retroactively, an indictment of the Jew as much as the Gentile.<sup>10</sup> It is this implication that necessitates a reexamination of Romans 1.18-32, one which attends more closely to the *dramatis personae* Paul actually presents and exhibits a corresponding sensitivity to the inclusion of Israel within the scope of Israel's own polemical tradition.<sup>11</sup>

Because this reading is retrospective – occasioned as it is by the terms of the rhetorical turn at 2.1-11 – it is necessary to allow our argument to develop in parallel with Paul's own rhetorical strategy. For this reason, our (brief) first pass through Romans 1.18-32 will emphasise the similarities between this unit and *Wisdom* 13-14 in an effort to highlight the crucial break which occurs at 2.1. What makes this investigation unique, however, is that it intends to take up the invitation to reread Romans 1.18-32 in light of the polemical twist of Romans 2. This rereading will attempt to situate Paul's accusatory announcement of 1.19-32 within the kerygmatic progression of Romans 1.16-18 and will consider the rhetorical function and theological significance of Paul's alterations to the Hellenistic Jewish polemical tradition. It will be argued that the contextualisation of the Pauline polemic within the apostle's apocalyptic keryma (Rom 1.16-18), together with his 'supra-natural theology' (1.19-20), allusive inclusion of Israel within the history of sin (1.23), insertion of divine agency into the causal link between idolatry and immorality (1.24, 26, 28), and collapsing of *Wisdom's* differentiation

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*Wisdom*. However, as Francis Watson (*Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith* [London: T & T Clark, 2004], 405 n.77) notes, this assumption 'implies that "influence" and "differences" are mutually limiting.... In fact...the depth of Paul's engagement with this text is evident precisely at the points he also differs from it'.

<sup>10</sup> That the interlocutor of Romans 2.1-16 is the same figure explicitly identified as a self-proclaimed Jew in 2.17 will be argued below.

<sup>11</sup> R. Jewett, *Romans* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 152-54, like R. Dabelstein, *Die Beurteilung der "Heiden" bei Paulus* (BBET 14; Bern: Lang, 1981), 73-79 before him, argues for the inclusion of Israel within the polemical scope of Romans 1.18-32, but this argument is made at the expense of Paul's engagement with *Wisdom* rather than, as this chapter intends, on the basis of a close comparison between Romans 1.18-32 and *Wisdom* 13-15.

between types of idolatry (1.24-25) require an interpretation of Romans 1.19-32 according to which its polemical target includes, as 1.18 indicates, 'all...humankind'.

Thus, my thesis: Paul's polemic in Romans 1.18-32, rather than standing as a compressed but consistent restatement of *Wisdom* 13-14, serves the opposite rhetorical and theological function of *Wisdom* 13-15. This is not to say that these texts exhibit no continuity. On the contrary, the often noted lexical, thematic and argumentative parallels between Romans 1.18-2.5 and *Wisdom* 13-15 indicate an engagement which is situated within an antithetical argument. *Textual dependence* serves the rhetorical function of establishing *theological difference*. Whereas *Wisdom's* polemic serves to reinforce the anthropological distinction between Jew and Gentile (*qua* non-idolaters and idolaters), Paul reworks the aniconic tradition to establish the essential unity of humanity.<sup>12</sup>

### *Romans 1.19-2.5 and Wisdom 13-15: An Initial Reading*

The language of Diaspora Judaism, when directed towards its non-Jewish neighbors, often took the form of polemical denunciation. *Contra Apionem*, *De specialibus legibus*, the *Sibylline Oracles*, the *Letter of Aristeas*, *Ps-Phocylides* – these texts are part of a diverse polemical tradition within which Romans 1 and *Wisdom* 13-15 find their contextual voices. It is possible, therefore, that the thematic and lexical connections between Romans and *Wisdom*, though significant,<sup>13</sup> are a product of a shared tradition rather than evidence of any textual engagement. As will become clear, however, the links between Romans and *Wisdom* are not reducible to the common themes and vocabulary of what used to be called the 'propaganda literature',<sup>14</sup> but extend to the level of argumentative structure. In Watson's words, 'The argument of Romans 1.18-32 develops in parallel to *Wisdom* 13.1-14.31'<sup>15</sup> and, as Campbell correctly observes, 'the two argumentative progressions are unique to the *Wisdom* of Solomon and Romans 1'.<sup>16</sup> Both texts argue from a squandered creation-related knowledge of God to a

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<sup>12</sup> C.E.B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* [2 vols. ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1975], 104 n.1) seems to have intuited a similar reading, but he never developed it outside a footnote.

<sup>13</sup> For a detailed list of the lexical parallels between *Wisdom* and Romans 1.18-2.5, see Laato, *Paul and Judaism*, 94-95; cf. also Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, 51-52.

<sup>14</sup> G. Klein, *Der älteste christliche Katechismus und die jüdische Propaganda-Literatur* (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1909).

<sup>15</sup> Watson, *Hermeneutics*, 405.

<sup>16</sup> Campbell, *Deliverance of God*, 360. While this argumentative sequence is particular to Romans and *Wisdom*, Philo's *De decalogo* offers something of a parallel to *Wisdom* in that its denunciation of false-worship moves

corresponding turn to idolatry that in turn occasions a litany of social and moral perversities, thereby inviting an appropriate exercise of divine judgment. This broad structural continuity conceals a host of significant theological differences that will be explored after the rhetorical turn of Romans 2.1 has been considered. Situating this discontinuity, however, requires that the following analysis emphasise the points of contact between Romans and *Wisdom* in order to underline the dramatic twist of Romans 2, which will then point us back to Paul's unique reworking of the polemical tradition in Romans 1.

(i) *A (possible) creation-related knowledge of God has been squandered: Wisdom 13.1-9; Romans 1.19-20.* *Wisdom's* claim that the animal plagues function as the appropriate divine recompense for Egyptian animal worship (11.15-16; 12.23-27; 15.18-16.1) invites an extended reflection on the origin of idolatry and the corresponding divine judgment that confronts it (13.1-15.13).<sup>17</sup> Theological knowledge is universally available because, as *Wisdom* 13.5 states, 'the greatness and beauty of the created' (κτίσμα) provide an 'analogous perception (ἀναλόγως θεωρεῖται) of the creator' (ὁ γενεσιουργός). Similarly, Paul insists that the knowledge of God (τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ) has been evident since the creation of the world (ἀπὸ κτίσεως κόσμου) because his eternal power and divinity (θειότης, cf. *Wis.* 18.9) are perceivable in the things that have been created/done (τοῖς ποιήμασιν, Rom 1.19-20). In both texts, however, this (possible) knowledge of the creator is forfeited by worthless (μάταιος, *Wis.* 13.1; ματαιόω, Rom 1.21) fools who either fail to reason from creation to creator (*Wis.* 13.1-9) or neglect to honour the God they know (Rom 1.21-22). Stupidity, however, is 'no excuse'; both the ignorant idolaters of *Wisdom* and the rebels against revelation of Romans are ἀναπολόγητος (*Wis.* 13.8; Rom 1.20).

(ii) *This wasted opportunity to know the true God manifests itself in false religion: Wisdom 13.10-14.11, 15-21 (and 15.7-13); Romans 1.21-23.* Paul and *Wisdom* appear to agree that humans are fundamentally worshipers, and thus turning from true worship can only be a turning to its

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from the less deplorable act of worshiping heavenly elements or bodies (52-56; *Wis.* 13.1-9) to the absurd practice of worshiping created images (66-77, *Wis.* 13.10-10; 14.15-21; 15.7-13) that finds its most risible expression in Egyptian animal-worship (77-81; *Wis.* 15.18-19); cf. J.M.G. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Disapora: From Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE - 117 CE)* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 186.

<sup>17</sup> For a detailed analysis of this section see M. Gilbert, *La critique des dieux dans le Livre de la Sagesse (Sg 13-15)* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1973); cf. M. McGlynn, *Divine Judgement and Divine Benevolence in the Book of Wisdom* (WUNT II.139; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 132-69; D. Winston, *The Wisdom of Solomon* (AB, 43; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1979), 247-91.

opposite – idolatry. *Wisdom* offers a detailed review of the origin of idolatry: leftover lumber becomes a household god (13.10-19), a sailor’s fear of the sea provokes prayer to the powerless (14.1), an image designed to console a bereaved father gains religious momentum until it achieves legal apotheosis (14.15-16a), the absence of a monarch occasions the fashioning of his image which slips from respect to worship in the popular imagination (14.16b-21), profiteers trade in idols, actively capitalizing on the senseless piety of their customers (15.7-13) and, most deplorably, Egyptians worship animals that even God failed to bless (15.18-19).<sup>18</sup> Paul, choosing succinctness over subtlety, condenses this complex genesis of idolatry into a single sentence: καὶ ἥλλαξαν τὴν δόξαν τοῦ ἀφθάρτου θεοῦ ἐν ὁμοιώματι εἰκόνοσ φθαρτοῦ ἀνθρώπου καὶ πετεινῶν καὶ τετραπόδων καὶ ἔρπετων (Rom 1.23). Paul’s compactness has the advantage of emphasising the oppositeness of idolatry and true worship implicit in much of *Wisdom*’s rhetorical devaluation of the natural origin and impotence of idols. Artifacts which are created by human artisans are obviously, if only implicitly, not themselves creators (cf. Isa 44.9-20) and thus, as creatures of creatures, are powerless in response to prayer (*Wis.* 13.16-14.1 drawing on Ps 115.5-7). Paul captures this contrast between the creator and the creature in the antithetical presentation of the incorruptible God (ἄφθαρτος θεός) and the corruptible human (φθαρτὸς ἄνθρωπος). Furthermore, Paul’s focus on creaturely idolatry (i.e. animals rather than artifacts) appears to follow the distinctive emphasis of *Wisdom*’s aniconic polemic which ultimately has Egyptian animal worship as its target.<sup>19</sup>

(iii) *The turn to idols occasions a corresponding decline into immorality:* *Wisdom* 14.12-14, 22-29; *Romans* 1.24-31. The point is explicit in *Wisdom*: ‘For the idea of idols was the beginning of sexual perversion (ἀρχὴ πορνείας) and the discovery of them was the destruction of life’ (14.12); and again, ‘for the worship of nameless idols is the beginning and cause and end (ἀρχὴ καὶ αἰτία καὶ πέρασ) of every evil’ (14.27). Without compromising this basic aetiology (idolatry leads to immorality), Paul emphasises the divine agent within the causal process. God delivers idolaters over to sin because (διό, 1.24; cf. 1.26, 28) they exchanged his glory and truth and failed to acknowledge his divinity (1.23, 25, 28). The effect, in *Romans*, is an ethical decline, rooted in the meta-sin of idolatry, which spirals downwards into sexual sin (1.24, 26-27) and then

<sup>18</sup> For a detailed tracing of *Wisdom*’s polemic see Gilbert, *La critique*, 245-257; cf. C. Larcher, *Le Livre de la Sagesse, ou, La Sagesse de Salomon* (Paris: Gabalda, 1983), 1.122.

<sup>19</sup> Watson, *Hermeneutics*, 407.

overflows into a smorgasbord of non-sexual immorality (1.29-31). While *Wisdom* mixes sexual and non-sexual sins (14.23-26), the Pauline emphasis on gender/sexual denaturalization is reflected in *Wisdom*'s vice list as it repeatedly refers to the defilement of marriage (14.24), sex inversion (γενέσεως ἐναλλαγῆ), marital disorder (γάμων ἀταξία) and adultery (μοιχεία, 14.26).

The connection at this point is deeper than parallel content. Romans and *Wisdom* agree that idolatry leads to immorality, but they also reflect a similar theological understanding about the logic of this causal connection. It is axiomatic for *Wisdom* that 'one is punished by the very things by which one sins' (11.16). In relation to the anti-idolatry polemic of *Wisdom* 13-15, this penal *quid pro quo* is evident as the animal-worshiping Egyptians are said to be deservedly (ἀξίως) punished through the creatures they idolise (16.1). An analogous dynamic is evident in Romans 1. What Klostermann has described as 'die adäquate Vergeltung'<sup>20</sup> is expressed in a cluster of wordplays that exemplify the principle announced in 1.27: 'receiving back in themselves the necessary repayment for their sins' (τὴν ἀντιμισθίαν ἣν ἔδει τῆς πλάνης αὐτῶν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἀπολαμβάνοντες). In Romans 1.23-24, the exchanging of the glory (δόξα) of God results in the dishonouring (ἀτιμάζω) of the idolator's body.<sup>21</sup> This proportionality is even clearer in 1.25-27: idolaters exchanged (μεταλλάσσω) the truth of God and therefore are given over to a corresponding exchange (μεταλλάσσω) of natural sexual practice for that which is contrary to nature (τὴν φυσικὴν χρῆσιν εἰς τὴν παρὰ φύσιν). Equally obvious in the Greek, though difficult to capture in translation, is the contrast in Romans 1.28 between those who did not consider God worthy (οὐκ ἔδοκίμασαν τὸν θεὸν) and who are therefore handed over to an unworthy mind (ἀδόκιμον νοῦν).<sup>22</sup> In both texts, then, the causal movement from idolatry to immorality is, to borrow Campbell's terms, 'equivalent and proportional'.<sup>23</sup>

(iv) *A fitting divine judgment awaits those guilty of idolatry and the corresponding immorality: Wisdom 14.30-31; Romans 1.32.* Divine judgment upon sin is evident within the historical depreciation of

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<sup>20</sup> E. Klostermann, 'Die adäquate Vergeltung in Röm 1, 22-31', *ZNW* 32 (1933): 1-6.

<sup>21</sup> S.J. Gathercole ('Sin in God's Economy: Agencies in Romans 1 and 7', in *Divine and Human Agency in Paul and His Cultural Environment* [ed. J.M.G. Barclay and S.J. Gathercole; London: T&T Clark, 2006], 158-72) notes that the connection of δόξα and τιμή in Romans 2.7 confirms the lexical suspicion that these two words function as 'virtual synonyms' in Romans 1.

<sup>22</sup> J.D.G. Dunn (*Theology of Paul the Apostle* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998], 123) expresses this well: 'The consequence of thinking God unfit for human knowing is that the organ of human knowing...itself is rendered unfit'.

<sup>23</sup> Campbell, *Deliverance of God*, 361.

human religion and ethics, but in neither Romans nor *Wisdom* is God's confrontation with the sinner reducible to anthropological history. In *Wisdom*, those whose history is characterised by the movement from idolatry to immorality will be overtaken by 'just penalties' (τὰ δίκαια),<sup>24</sup> not because their idols are powerful, but because 'the just penalty' (ἡ δίκη) for their sins will 'always overtake the transgression of the unrighteous' (14.30-31). It is difficult to fix the juridical context for this coming judgment, but 14.11 appears to indicate that *Wisdom*, consistent with its earlier eschatology (*Wis.* 2-5), expects a future divine visitation upon idols/idolaters. According to Paul, idolaters, though theologically ignorant (1.22), are nevertheless aware of the divine decree 'that the ones who practise such things [i.e. the idolatry and immorality catalogued in 1.23-31] are worthy of death (ἄξιοι θανάτου, Rom 1.32; cf. *Wis.* 1.16). That the execution of this decree awaits an eschatological act of divine judgment is explicitly stated in Romans 2.5-10.

### *The Rhetorical Turn*

In Romans 2.1 Paul addresses a generic individual (ἄνθρωπος) who is characterised by an ironic combination of judging the people depicted in 1.19-32 and practising the vices of 1.19-32. The effect of this combination – a combination that is paradoxically expressed in the contrast between ἕτερος and αὐτός – is to remove the self-imposed distance between the judge and the other. The judge's condemnation of the other, because the judge does the same things (τὰ αὐτὰ πράσσεις), is necessarily self-condemnation (σεαυτὸν κατακρίνεις). To expose this identification of the judge and the other, however, Paul does not introduce a new set of criteria by which the judge's religion and morality is assessed. On the contrary, the judge's judgment is shown to be self-referential on the basis of the theological principles that shaped the polemic of 1.19-32.<sup>25</sup> The repeated use of πράσσω (2.1, 2) and ποιέω (2.3) in conjunction with αὐτός (2.1) and τοιοῦτος (2.2, 3) includes the judge within the pattern of idolatry and immorality outlined in 1.18-32 and, in particular, with the phrasing of 1.32 (οἱ τὰ τοιαῦτα πράσσοντες). Effectively, then, by the judge's own standards, he is an object of the revelation of divine wrath (1.18) and thus under the divine death sentence of Romans 1.32.

<sup>24</sup> Codex Alexandrinus (A) has ἀδίκαια instead of δίκαια; see McGlynn, *Divine Judgement*, 158 n.73.

<sup>25</sup> Campbell, *Deliverance of God*, 548 helpfully refers to this rhetorical tactic as 'universalization' – 'an argumentative concession that can be forced onto the proponents of any position by insisting that the principles within that position...be applied consistently to its proponents'.

The judge, however, appears to disagree. This raises the dual question of the judge's identity and the rationale behind his assumed immunity from both the logic of his own judgment and, more fundamentally, the judgment of God (τὸ κρίμα τοῦ θεοῦ, 2.3). As to identity, despite some continued scholarly protest,<sup>26</sup> the generic judge of 2.1-5 should be associated with the Jew of 2.17. While the evidence for this assertion includes matters of genre, scriptural quotation and the thematic links between 2.1-6 and 2.17-24,<sup>27</sup> the most compelling (and relevant) evidence is that Paul's argument assumes that the judge of 2.1-5 endorses his critique of false-religion in 1.18-32 and thus the entirety of 2.1-24 operates within the parameters of what Wischmeyer calls 'der innerjüdische Israel-Diskurs'.<sup>28</sup> More specifically, Romans 2.1-5, as will be demonstrated below, engages with *Wisdom* by arguing from theological principles articulated in *Wisdom*. Thus, to say that the judge is a Jew is only a partial answer. Paul's continued engagement with *Wisdom* in Romans 2.1-5 establishes both the Jewishness of his interlocutor's theology and, more specifically, forces us to say with Käsemann that 2.1-11 'ist einzig als Polemik gegen jene jüdische Tradition begreiflich, welche sich am deutlichsten und teilweise mit gleicher Begrifflichkeit in Sap. Sal 15,1ff. äußert'.<sup>29</sup> In other words, Paul's Jewish interlocutor is neither a generic human nor a generic Jew; he is a Jew in the theological tradition of the *Wisdom of Solomon*.

This association of the judge and the theology of *Wisdom* is evident in his implicit affirmation of the polemical content of 1.18-32, his presumed immunity from divine judgment and the language in which Paul launches his critique. Paul's indication that his interlocutor assumes he will 'escape the judgment of God' (Rom 2.3) alludes to and attacks one of *Wisdom's* central theological convictions: Israel is different because Israel is not idolatrous. Paul's polemical turn towards Israel in Romans 2.1 occurs at the same argumentative moment (and in much the same language) as *Wisdom's* polemical pause in relation to Israel at 15.1-4:

But you our God are kind (χρηστός) and true, patient (μακρόθυμος) and managing all things in mercy.  
For if we sin we are yours, knowing your power; but we will not sin, knowing that we are reckoned as yours.

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<sup>26</sup> See e.g. S.K. Stowers, *A Rereading of Romans: Justice, Jews, and Gentiles* (New Haven: Yale, 1994), 101-104.

<sup>27</sup> So Watson, *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles*, 198; S.J. Gathercole, *Where is Boasting? Early Jewish Soteriology and Paul's Response in Romans 1-5* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 198-99.

<sup>28</sup> O. Wischmeyer, 'Römer 2.1-24 als Teil der Gerichtsrede des Paulus gegen die Menschheit', *NTS* 52 (2006): 356-376 (359).

<sup>29</sup> E. Käsemann, *An die Römer* (HNT 8a; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1973), 49.

For to understand you is complete righteousness, and to know your power is the root of immortality.  
For neither has the evil intent of human art deceived us, nor the useless labour of painters...

Here, as in Exodus 34.6-9 which this paragraph echoes,<sup>30</sup> divine patience and mercy anchor an assurance that sin does not disqualify Israel from being God's people (cf. σοί ἐσμὲν, σοὶ λελογίσμεθα, *Wis.* 15.2 with ἐσόμεθα σοί, Exod 34.9, LXX). As Barclay notes, 'the reference to sin ("even if we sin") picks up Moses' confidence that "you will forgive our sins and our iniquities" (Exod 34.9, LXX)'.<sup>31</sup> However, whereas Moses utters these words in the wake of the Golden Calf episode, *Wisdom* contextualises this confidence within an assurance that Israel does not and will not worship idols because they know God' ('we will not sin', 15.2b; 'the evil intent of human art has not deceived us', 15.4). Thus, while *Wisdom* echoes Exodus 34.6-9, it decontextualises divine mercy: '*Wisdom* does not make, and could not make, reference to the Golden Calf'.<sup>32</sup> Unlike the ungodly who are ignorant of God (13.1) and thus caught in the inevitable movement from idolatry to immorality (14.12-14, 22-31), Israel knows God and therefore 'will not sin' (15.2b). The function of 15.1-4 within *Wisdom's* critique of false-religion is therefore to establish the irreducible difference between Jew and Gentile on the basis of the non-idolatry of the former and the false-worship of the latter. More concisely, *Wisdom's* anthropological dualism is built on Israel's immunity from idolatry. It is this foundational presumption that Paul challenges in Romans 1.18-2.5.<sup>33</sup>

Paul's reference to the kindness (χρηστότης) and patience (μακροθυμία) of God (Rom 2.4) echoes *Wisdom's* echo of Exodus 34. Paul, however is quick to remind his interlocutor of an essential element of *Wisdom's* theology: God mercifully 'overlooks human sin for the sake of repentance' (εἰς μετάνοιαν, *Wis.* 11.23; cf. Rom 2.4).<sup>34</sup> Whereas *Wisdom* 15.1-4 suggests that an awareness of the divine attributes renders potential sin an actual impossibility, Paul, like Exodus 34, locates the operations of divine kindness and patience within the matrix of human idolatry and immorality. Paul thus disputes the assumed immunity of the judge who, in

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<sup>30</sup> Larcher, *Livre*, 3.847-49; cf. H. Hübner, *Die Weisheit Salomons* (ATD Apokryphen 4: Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999), 183-84.

<sup>31</sup> J.M.G. Barclay, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy": The Golden Calf and Divine Mercy in Romans 9-11 and Second Temple Judaism', *Early Christianity* 1 (2010): 82-106 (91).

<sup>32</sup> Barclay, 'I will have mercy', 91

<sup>33</sup> Gathercole, *Where is Boasting*, 211 notes that Romans 2.21-24 and 3.9-18 also provide what he terms 'phenomenological evidence' and 'scriptural evidence' for Israel's sinfulness.

<sup>34</sup> On Paul's use of *Wisdom's* theology and language against his interlocutor, see Watson, *Hermeneutics*, 410.

Romans 2.1-4, appears to base his self-differentiation vis-à-vis the other on the same religious and ethical criteria *Wisdom* employs to construct the Jew/Gentile dualism.<sup>35</sup> Assuming that the history of Romans 1.18-32 is not his history, the judge affirms Paul's *theologoumenon*: οἱ τὰ τοιαῦτα πράσσοντες ἄξιοι θανάτου (Rom 1.32). As Paul's repeated claim that the judge 'does the same things' (2.1, 3) implies, however, Paul's reading of anthropological history includes his interlocutor within the narrative of Romans 1.18-32. In other words, for Paul, in opposition to *Wisdom*, 'the difference between Jew and Gentile' – a difference which Paul maintains (e.g. Rom 1.16; 3.1; 9.1-5) – 'is not', as Watson observes, 'the difference between the righteous and the unrighteous'.<sup>36</sup> In *Wisdom* 15.1-4 Israel is different because the nation is *not* guilty of the idolatry and immorality catalogued in *Wisdom* 13.1-14.31. In Romans the gap between the Jewish judge and the other is erased because Paul's interlocutor *is* guilty of the idolatry and immorality catalogued in Romans 1.19-32. This inclusion of Paul's *Jewish* dialogue partner within the scope of what initially sounds like a *Jewish* polemic against non-Jews invites a reconsideration of the subtle but substantive differences between *Wisdom* 13-15 and Romans 1.18-32. To state our thesis in advance, the rhetorical contextualisation of Romans 1.19-31 within the kerygmatic proclamation of 1.16-18, together with the Pauline alterations to *Wisdom*'s critique of non-Jewish religion, broadens the target of Paul's polemic to include Israel and thus, as Paul announces in 1.18, πᾶσα ἀσέβεια καὶ ἀδικία ἀνθρώπων.

### *Rereading Romans 1.18-32*

Watson speaks for most scholars when he says that 'there is nothing distinctively Pauline' in Romans 1.18-32<sup>37</sup> and that there 'appears to be little or nothing in either [Romans 1.18-32 or *Wisdom* 13-14] with which the author of the other texts would have disagreed'.<sup>38</sup> Others, however, have observed a degree of difference between the Pauline polemic and

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<sup>35</sup> Pace K. Yinger (*Paul, Judaism and Judgement According to Deeds* [SNTSMS 105; Cambridge, CUP, 1999], 152-53) who argues that Paul is not disputing a Jew 'claiming "we have not sinned"...but Jews or Jewish Christians claiming that they will not be treated the same way as the "sinners" in the judgement'. This reflects a representative tendency among Pauline scholars (e.g. B.W. Longenecker, *Eschatology and the Covenant: A Comparison of 4 Ezra and Romans 1-11* [JSNTSup 57; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1999], 182; U. Wilckens, *Der Brief an die Römer* [3 vols; EKKNT; Neukirchen: Benziger, 1978-82], 1.121-24) to abstract *Wisdom* 15.2a ('even if we sin') from the more basic insistence that 'we will not sin' (15.2b) and 'human art has not misled us' (15.4).

<sup>36</sup> Watson, *Hermeneutics*, 410.

<sup>37</sup> Watson, *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles*, 195.

<sup>38</sup> Watson, *Hermeneutics*, 408.

*Wisdom* 13-14. We have already noted Gaca's claim that Paul introduces a 'problematic innovation' into the Hellenistic Jewish polemical tradition,<sup>39</sup> and Bell and Bornkamm, both noting Paul's polemical peculiarity, use this identification of difference as an argument against textual dependence.<sup>40</sup> Difference and dependence, however, are not mutually exclusive. In fact, as will be argued presently, Paul's active engagement with *Wisdom* is evident especially as he departs from *Wisdom* because his textual dependence is situated within a larger demonstration of theological difference. This rereading will attempt to situate Paul's accusatory announcement of 1.19-32 within the kerygmatic progression of Romans 1.16-18 and consider the rhetorical function and theological significance of Paul's alterations to the Hellenistic Jewish polemical tradition. It will be argued that this rhetorical location, together with Paul's divergence from *Wisdom*'s anti-idolatry critique, contribute to a universalising of Paul's polemical target. The anthropological effect is the essential identification of Jew and Gentile as they confront the divine verdict, not as non-idolatrous Jew or idolatrous Gentile, but as ἄνθρωποι.<sup>41</sup>

#### *The Kerygmatic Context of Romans 1.19-32*

*Wisdom*'s anti-idolatry polemic is situated within an extended reflection on Egyptian animal worship and functions primarily as an argument for Israel's avoidance of idolatry over against non-Jewish religion (12.23-15.18). Paul's polemic finds its rhetorical context within the proclamation of a gospel that addresses both Jew and Gentile with the news of God's saving righteousness (Rom 1.16-17). This contextual contrast generates a difference in genre which Bornkamm identifies as a distinction between 'Hellenistic apologetic' (*Wisdom*) and 'prophetic accusation' (Romans).<sup>42</sup> Understood within the double-apocalypse of divine righteousness (1.17) and wrath (1.18), the Pauline proclamation announces an event. Such a claim, however, states a conclusion ahead of its evidence. To situate the polemic of Romans 1.19-32 within its

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<sup>39</sup> Gaca, 'Paul's Uncommon Declaration in Romans 1:18-32', 165.

<sup>40</sup> Bell, *No One Seeks for God*, 76; G. Bornkamm, 'The Revelation of God's Wrath', in *Early Christian Experience* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), 47-70.

<sup>41</sup> While it would be over-determined to argue from Paul's use of ἄνθρωπος to the broadening of his polemical target, it is nevertheless suggestive that ἄνθρωπος is explicitly and intentionally inclusive in Romans 3.28 (cf. Gal 2.16) and 5.12-19. Even in Romans 2.1 where ἄνθρωπος is limited to the Jewish judge, Paul argues from within 'der innerjüdische Israel-Diskurs' to 'eine universale Verurteilung', and therefore his use of ἄνθρωπος has 'universal-anthropologische Dimensionen' (Wischmeyer, 'Römer 2.1-24', 376).

<sup>42</sup> Bornkamm's, 'The Revelation of God's Wrath', 54.

apocalyptic and kerygmatic context it is necessary to take a step back and consider the grammatical and theological progression of Romans 1.16-18.

The apocalypse of wrath in Romans 1.18 is connected to the gospel of 1.16 through an argumentative chain linked by successive uses of the explanatory γάρ. Paul is not ashamed of the gospel *because* (γάρ) it is the divine power for salvation *because* (γάρ) the righteousness of God is revealed in it; *for* (γάρ) the wrath of God is revealed. Grammatically, the γάρ of 1.18 relates ἀποκαλύπτεται ὀργή θεοῦ directly to the syntactically similar and ultimately salvific (1.16) revelation of divine righteousness in 1.17. The crucial question for our purposes is what this grammatical connection indicates about the theological link between the revelations of wrath and righteousness in relation to the gospel.

Answers to this question, while diverse, generally take one of two approaches: juxtaposition or progression. According to the former, wrath and righteousness relate as opposites.<sup>43</sup> This reading has always been puzzled by the presence of γάρ in 1.18,<sup>44</sup> but Campbell's radicalised version of this interpretation explains the γάρ as contributing to the structural parallel between the revelations of wrath and righteousness which, according to his reading, represent two antithetical gospels.<sup>45</sup> As Cranfield observes, however, 'there would seem to be no justification (apart from a theological presupposition that it is appropriate to contrast δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ and ὀργή θεοῦ)' to read Romans 1.17 and 1.18 antithetically.<sup>46</sup> In Campbell's case at least, his exegesis is clearly driven by a disinclination to permit a theological association between the syntactically linked revelations of righteousness and wrath. In his words, Romans 1.17 and 1.18 express 'fundamentally different conceptions of God'.<sup>47</sup> This theological interpretation, however, appears to put asunder that which the apostle has joined together. In 1 Thessalonians 1.10 and Romans 5.9, to cite but two examples, salvation is defined as deliverance from divine wrath. Similarly, the natural force of the

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<sup>43</sup> P. Stuhlmacher, *Gerechtigkeit Gottes bei Paulus* (FRLANT 87; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1966), 80-81.

<sup>44</sup> M.-J. Lagrange (*Saint Paul: Épitre aux Romains* [Étbib 13; Paris: J. Gabalda, 1922], 21) translates the γάρ with 'car', but argues that in this context it has 'une légère opposition' (cf. C.H. Dodd, *The Epistle to the Romans* [MNTC; London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1932], 45 who refers to the 'adversative conjunction but in 1.18').

<sup>45</sup> The Pauline gospel (1.17), defined by a saving righteousness, is set in juxtaposition to the 'Teacher's' gospel (1.18), which is centred on an eschatological exercise of retributive wrath (Campbell, *Deliverance of God*, 542-43). This construal requires reading Romans 1.18-32 as a summary of the rhetorical opening of Paul's opponent whose theology is decisively shaped by *Wisdom*. Such a thesis is seriously called into question by the numerous and significant differences between Romans 1.18-32 and *Wisdom* 13-14.

<sup>46</sup> Cranfield, *Romans*, 1.106-107.

<sup>47</sup> Campbell, *Deliverance of God*, 543.

repeated γάρ of Romans 1.16-18 coordinates the saving righteousness of God with that from which it saves. Thus, in the interpretative tradition of Sanday and Headlam,<sup>48</sup> we can say that the γάρ of 1.18 explains the revelation of righteousness by citing the reason it is required; but we can also say more.

This initial answer may appear to imply a movement from wrath to saving righteousness which in turn would seem to support a progressive reading in which the era of wrath precedes the era of righteousness.<sup>49</sup> There are, however, two related reasons why this cannot be sustained. First, as Bornkamm observes, world history prior to the gospel event is not characterised as an era of wrath; rather, for Paul, the time before the revelation of divine righteousness is the period of patience (Rom 3.25-26; cf. 2.4).<sup>50</sup> It is this time of divine forbearance that is brought to an end in the present (ἐν τῷ νῦν καιρῷ, 3.26) demonstration of divine righteousness that is the cross of Christ Jesus (3.24-26). The correlation between εἰς ἔνδειξιν τῆς δικαιοσύνης αὐτοῦ (3.25, 26) and δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ ἀποκαλύπτεται (1.17), together with the identical time references indicated by ἐν τῷ νῦν καιρῷ (3.26) and the present tense of ἀποκαλύπτω (1.17), indicate that it is, as the connection between 1.16 and 1.17 suggests, in the gospel event that the divine righteousness is revealed. What then of the revelation of wrath in 1.18? The structural parallelism between the revelations of wrath and righteousness, especially the identical present passive form of ἀποκαλύπτω, suggests that the dual revelations are tied to a single reality.<sup>51</sup> Read this way, the apocalypse of divine wrath is not only the reason for the revelation of saving righteousness; it is the dark side of the one event that reveals both.<sup>52</sup> The antithesis between wrath and righteousness, therefore, does not indicate the presence of two

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<sup>48</sup> Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, 40.

<sup>49</sup> H. Lietzmann, *An die Römer* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed. HNT 8; Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1928), 31. A variant of this reading does not relate the two eras chronologically but views wrath and righteousness as two spheres of existence corresponding to being outside (wrath) or inside (righteousness) the gospel (e.g. T. Zahn, *Der Brief des Paulus an die Römer* [KNT 6; Leipzig: Deichert, 1910], 86-87).

<sup>50</sup> Bornkamm, 'The Revelation of God's Wrath', 49.

<sup>51</sup> Campbell, *Deliverance of God*, 542-43, attempts to soften the syntactical connection between 1.17 and 1.18 by interpreting the present tense verb of 1.18 as 'a rare future present' (cf. Bell, *No One Seeks for God*, 14; H.-J. Eckstein, "Denn Gottes Zorn wird vom Himmel her offenbar werden". Exegetische Erwägungen zu Röm 1,18', *ZNW* 78 [1987]: 74-89), but the present time reference of the identical occurrence of ἀποκαλύπτεται in 1.17 makes this unlikely.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. K. Barth, *A Shorter Commentary on Romans* (trans. D.H. van Daalen; London: SCM Press, 1959), 24-26 (see also *CDI*/2, 304-305). While Barth's explicit association of the revealed wrath of Romans 1.18 and the cross is theologically appropriate, it is exegetically premature. Though divine wrath finds its eschatological manifestation on Golgotha, Romans 1.18-3.20 is that part of the apostolic kerygma which announces God's wrath which properly stands over humankind and which, as Paul only *later* reveals, is enacted and exhausted on the cross.

gospels (*contra* Campbell); rather it represents the two words of the single apostolic announcement: wrath and righteousness, condemnation and salvation, death and life, no and yes. In Pauline terms, the cross is the divine enactment of judgment on ungodliness and *therefore* the justification of the ungodly (see chapter seven). Accordingly, the revelation of wrath is, in relation to the gospel, a *novum* – something heretofore concealed but now unveiled.<sup>53</sup>

This brings us back to the difference between *Wisdom* 13-14 and Romans 1.18-32. In *Wisdom* the anthropological situation is fundamentally knowable. Non-Jewish humanity has foolishly failed to exercise their rational potential, but this failure renders them ignorant, not epistemologically incapable. In *Wisdom's* words, the non-Jewish world should have known that 'a corresponding perception of the creator' is derivable 'from the greatness and beauty of created things' (*Wis.* 13.5), but, being 'foolish by nature', they failed to think from 'the good things' to 'the one who exists' (13.1). Reading Romans 1.18-32 as if it were *Wisdom* 13-14, Campbell detects what he considers an un-Pauline parallel in the anthropology of Romans 1.18-32. According to Campbell, the polemic of Romans 1 presupposes an epistemological openness to the existence and demands of God which is itself the presupposition for the rational transition from wrath to grace.<sup>54</sup> Thus interpreted, the content of Romans 1.19-32 is essentially and antecedently known, or at least knowable. This, however, is precisely the reading which the apocalyptic and kerygmatic context of 1.18 will not allow.

In contrast to *Wisdom's* invitation to reason 'from below', Paul's apocalyptic accusation pronounces the gospel's verdict on the world. The revelation of wrath is thus a constituent part of the Pauline proclamation (cf. Rom 2.16; 1 Thess 1.9-10). Read this way, solution and plight do not exist in a linear relationship that can be plotted in terms of an epistemological process. There can be no sense of a natural, rational awareness of the anthropological situation which somehow functions as a soteriological preface to the proclamation of the gospel. Paul is not *arguing* from plight to solution or solution to plight; he is, as Seifrid observes, *announcing*

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<sup>53</sup> R. Jewett, *Romans* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 150-52. This is not to suggest that God's wrath is not operative prior to the gospel events (cf. Rom 1.24, 26, 28).

<sup>54</sup> Campbell, *Deliverance of God*, 16-17. Campbell's theological concern is to combat a 'prospective soteriology' (i.e. plight to solution) which he insists rests on a faulty epistemology that requires an essentially rational rather than revelatory apprehension of the human condition. (This is contrasted with a 'retrospective soteriology' [i.e. solution to plight] which allows the liberating gospel to inform its object about its prior captivity.) This epistemological criticism, however, is neutralised if the anthropological content of Romans 1.19-3.20 is situated within the revelatory disclosure of 1.16-18.

both the solution (1.16-17) and the corresponding plight which it presupposes.<sup>55</sup> There is, then, between solution and plight what we might call an antithetical affinity – the problem and the answer fit. However, an apprehension of this fit – this correspondence between the severity of the crisis and the drama of the divine saving act – is the epistemological product of the *theologia crucis*. It is the event and proclamation of the cross that *reveals* both sin and salvation, both wrath and saving righteousness. Within this kerygmatic context, the revelation of divine wrath is not, in contrast to *Wisdom*, reducible to a process of rational deduction. The revelation of divine wrath is, to risk stating the obvious, a *revelation*.

#### *Paradise Lost: Created-Theology in Romans 1.19-21*

Romans 1.19-32 narrates the history of ἀσέβεια and ἀδικία against which the divine wrath of 1.18 is revealed. Within the movement of this basic plotline, Romans 1.19-21 establishes humanity as recipients of divine truth, thereby legitimating the accusation that people ‘suppress the truth’ (1.18). While these verses have often been read as a straightforward articulation of a developed tradition of natural theology, the revelatory context of Paul’s polemic has major implications for the interpretation of 1.19-21. As Karl Barth remarks, ‘We must bear in mind that the very words which are so often regarded as an opening or a summons to every possible kind of natural theology are in reality a constituent part of the apostolic *kerygma*’.<sup>56</sup> Paul’s reference to ‘the knowledge of God’ (τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ, 1.19) that has been evident ‘since the creation of the cosmos’ (ἀπὸ κτίσεως κόσμου, 1.20), suggests that, for Paul, the act of creation is the establishment of the divine-human relationship.<sup>57</sup> Within this context, ‘natural theology’ is more properly ‘created-relationality’ – it is the theological knowledge presupposed in the original relationship between human creature and divine creator. For Paul, however, what is primal is past (and prologue).

According to *Wisdom* 13.1-9, knowledge of God is an unactualised potential. Creation offers a corresponding knowledge of the creator (13.5), but the non-Jewish world failed to reason from ‘the good’ to ‘the one who exists’ (13.1). In Romans 1 by contrast, τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ φανερόν ἐστιν ἐν αὐτοῖς; and this because ὁ θεὸς αὐτοῖς ἐφανερώσεν. Here knowledge of

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<sup>55</sup> M.A. Seifrid, ‘Unrighteous by Faith: Apostolic Proclamation in Romans 1.18-3.20’, in *Justification and Variegated Nomism: Volume 2, The Paradoxes of Paul* (ed. Carson et al.; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 105.

<sup>56</sup> Barth, *CD I/2*, 306.

<sup>57</sup> For a fuller treatment of this theme, see F. Watson, *Text and Truth: Redefining Biblical Theology* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997), 242-67.

God is a reality on account of divine revelation (cf. 1.21). As Markus Barth replies to his own question – ‘What is suppressed?’ – it is ‘the factual knowledge of God’.<sup>58</sup> In both *Wisdom* and Romans this possible (*Wisdom*) or actual (Romans) theological knowledge is tied to creation, but it is notable that whereas *Wisdom* argues for a possible theological knowledge derived ‘from’ (ἐκ, 13.1, 5) creation, Paul indicates only that God’s revelatory activity has been occurring ‘since’ (ἀπό, Rom 1.20) the creation of the cosmos and that this self-disclosure is somehow related to ‘the things that have been made’. There is, then, a sharp contrast between *Wisdom*’s insistence that though people could and should have known God they are nevertheless ignorant of God (13.1) and Paul’s declaration that people, γνόντες τὸν θεόν, have failed to honour him. In the one case the knowable God is unknown (*Wisdom*); in the other the unknowable God (τὰ ἀόρατα, 1.20) is known (Romans).<sup>59</sup>

‘For although they knew God...’ (1.21). This, for Paul, is the problem – not that humanity is ignorant of God, but that humanity knew God. *Wisdom* asserts that Israel’s knowledge of God will prevent sin (15.2) and the ungodly are defined as such on the basis of their theological ignorance (e.g. 2.1). From a Pauline perspective, knowledge of God does not prevent sin; it is the precondition for creaturely rebellion.<sup>60</sup> As Watson observes, ‘we learn in Rom. 1.19-20 that to be human is to be the recipient of God’s self-disclosure’;<sup>61</sup> but in Romans 1.18-23 we also learn that to be human *in history* is to be a rebel against this creational revelation. ‘Suppressing the truth’ (Rom 1.18) presupposes ‘knowledge of God’ (1.19). The διότι which connects the two clauses indicates that Paul’s emphasis on the actuality of theological knowledge serves to establish the reality of human rebellion and the legitimacy of divine judgment. By relating divine revelation to creation, Paul effectively includes all humanity within its scope and therefore makes each person a potential rebel. Thus, in contrast to *Wisdom*’s charge that people are ‘without excuse’ because they failed to exercise their epistemic potential and therefore know God, Paul insists that humanity is ‘without excuse’ because the self-revealing God is

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<sup>58</sup> M. Barth, ‘Speaking of Sin’, *SJT* 8 (1955): 288-96.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. H. Bietenhard, ‘Natürliche Gotteserkenntnis der Heiden? Eine Erwägung zu Röm 1’, *ThZ* 12 (1956): 275-88.

<sup>60</sup> Bornkamm, ‘The Revelation of God’s Wrath’, 59.

<sup>61</sup> Watson, *Text and Truth*, 258.

known. To adapt Gaca's provocative proposal, *Wisdom's* polemic targets idiots; Paul aims at apostates.<sup>62</sup>

This construal captures the implicit plot of Paul's polemical proclamation. There is a definite movement from knowledge of God to ignorance, idolatry and immorality. Thus, in contrast to *Wisdom's* summons to reason 'from below' (from creation to creator); Paul announces a revelation 'from above'. Moreover, whereas *Wisdom* envisages a process of epistemological ascent, Paul tells a story of anthropological decline. As Bell remarks, Romans 1.19-31 narrates a 'fall'.<sup>63</sup> In Watson's words, 'the effect of the primal revelation was, simply and solely, its own distortion into idolatry'.<sup>64</sup> For Paul, then, idolatry is not a step in the right religious direction; it is the rejection of revelation. The movement of false religion is not from theological ignorance to the almost excusable worship of creation (as in *Wisdom*); it is the distortion of divine self-disclosure – a suppression of theological truth (1.18) and the exchange of that truth for a lie (1.25).<sup>65</sup> Consequently, within the Pauline polemic an original, creation-related knowledge of God does not represent an alternative route to theological knowledge. This original revelation is fundamentally rejected revelation (it is past). Its function is therefore not to contribute to theological knowledge but to establish the reality of human 'excuselessness'<sup>66</sup> and therefore to ground the necessity of the re-creative revelation of Romans 3.21-22 (it is prologue).

#### *Adam, Israel and Everyone: Allusive Inclusion in Romans 1*

Allusions are elusive: they are difficult to identify and, once identified, their meaning and rhetorical function is not always clear. The following analysis of the allusive presence of Adam and Israel in Romans 1 concedes the initial ambiguity of the allusions. It is possible that Paul's account of human sin draws freely and somewhat indiscriminately from biblical resources. In this broad sense, Westerholm is correct to describe Romans 1.18-32 as 'a dramatized depiction of the human condition, recalling many a biblical account...but not

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<sup>62</sup> Gaca, 'Paul's Uncommon Declaration in Romans', 165-98. Barth (*CD* 1/2, 304) anticipates Gaca in his suggestion that the gospel's universality implies a corresponding crisis in which 'the complaint of apostasy is now expressly and seriously leveled against them all'.

<sup>63</sup> Bell, *No One Seeks for God*, 94.

<sup>64</sup> Watson, *Text and Truth*, 261.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. Watson's observation that the Pauline affirmation of primal revelation occurs within a theological interpretation of the phenomena of idolatry (*Text and Truth*, 274 n.41).

<sup>66</sup> Cranfield, *Romans*, 116.

retelling any one story'.<sup>67</sup> However, it is precisely as Paul is drawing together these various stories that he effectively constructs a single story – the human story. As argued above, the terms of the rhetorical turn at 2.1-5 force a rereading of Romans 1.18-32 which is alert to the inclusion of unexpected characters within the narrative. The following argument should thus be read as an exegetical attempt to re-read Romans 1.18-32 in light of the implications of 2.1-11.

In *Wisdom* 13-15, the ignorant idolaters do not include Israel (15.2b-4). Paul's polemic permits no such limitations. Subsuming his polemical addressees under the single term ἄνθρωπος, Romans 1.18-32 tells the tragic tale of human history 'since the creation of the cosmos' (ἀπὸ κτίσεως κόσμου, 1.20). This creational context is the first indication that the humanity in question is, both broadly and specifically, Adamic humanity. God's self-revelation began in the beginning (1.20). This brings Adam into the story, but the ingressive ἀπό keeps the narrative moving. Put another way, the story of a primordial knowledge of God which is exchanged for a lie is Adam's story; but for Paul, Adam's story is never Adam's story alone.<sup>68</sup>

In Romans 5.12 Paul traces human sin and the death that accompanies it back to Adam: 'Therefore, just as sin came into the world through the one man (δι' ἑνὸς ἀνθρώπου), and death through sin, so death spread to all because all sinned'. In Pauline theology, the Adamic trespass means death (5.15), condemnation (5.16, 18) and the status of 'sinner' (5.19) for the many who, through Adam's sin, are subjected to the reign of death (5.17, 21).<sup>69</sup> But this universalism also has a particularity. While 'all sinned' (5.12), not all sinned 'in the likeness of

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<sup>67</sup> S. Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New: The 'Lutheran' Paul and His Critics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 386.

<sup>68</sup> Those who find Adam in Romans 1 include J. Jervell, *Imago Dei: Gen 1,26f. im Spätjudentum, in der Gnosis und in den paulinischen Briefen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1960), 317-18; M.D. Hooker, 'Adam in Romans I', *NTS* 6 (1959-60): 297-306; Bell, *No One Seeks for God*, 26; Dunn, *Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 91-93; J.R. Levison, 'Adam and Eve in Romans 1.18-25 and the Greek *Life of Adam and Eve*', *NTS* 50 (2004): 519-534. However, see the cautionary article by A.J.M. Wedderburn, 'Adam in Paul's Letter to the Romans', in *Studia Biblica 1978 III* (JSNTSup 3; ed. E.A. Livingstone; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1980), 413-30. The strongest evidence for the presence of Adam in Romans 1 is 1) 1.23 probably echoes Genesis 1.26a (LXX) in which ἄνθρωπος, εἰκῶν and ὁμοίωσις (a possible synonym with Paul's ὁμοίωμα) are all coordinated, 2) the references to 'exchange' (Rom 1.23, 25), 'desire' (1.24) and creaturely subservience (1.25) may be allusions to Genesis 1-3 which have been, as Levison ('Adam and Eve', 523) argues, 'refracted through the lens of a tradition such as we find in the Greek *Life of Adam and Eve*', 3) the possible reflection of Jewish traditions about the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the contrast between presumed wisdom and actual folly in 1.22, 24) the points of contact between Paul's references to sexual immorality and traditions (e.g. *4 Macc.* 18.7-8; *2 En.* 31.6) about Eve's temptation relating to unchastity.

<sup>69</sup> While *Wisdom* explains the entrance of death in relation to the devil's agency in Eden (2.23-24), Adam's particular theological significance is not as the archetypal sinner, but rather as the first figure in a long history of Wisdom saving those who are 'worthy of her' (10.1-2; cf. 6.16).

Adam's trespass' (ἐπὶ τῷ ὁμοιώματι τῆς παραβάσεως Ἀδάμ, 5.14). That dubious honour had to await the coming of the Mosaic Law (5.13-14) and therefore is a distinction unique to Israel. As Gathercole remarks, 'Here we see that the primeval "fall" of Adam and Eve has...been brought into association with sin under the Law in the life of the people of Israel'.<sup>70</sup>

Romans 7.7-12 makes precisely this point. As in Romans 1, multiple stories appear to be intermixed. The prohibition against desire (ἐπιθυμία, 7.7),<sup>71</sup> the emphasis on deception (ἐξαπατάω, 7.11; cf. Gen 3.13) and, most notably, the reference to a prior period of aliveness apart from the law (ἐγὼ ἔζων χωρὶς νόμου ποτέ, 7.9) indicate the allusive presence of Adam.<sup>72</sup> However, as Moo and Watson argue, the primary focus of Romans 7.7-12 is Israel's encounter with the Mosaic Law.<sup>73</sup> In Watson's words, 'The topic here is not the fall but the coming of the law, and the commandment, "You shall not desire" (v.7) is drawn not from Genesis but from the Decalogue (Exod 20.17)'.<sup>74</sup> The absence of an object in relation to the prohibition indicates, as in Philo (*Decal.* 142-153) and 4 *Maccabees*. 2.6, that the tenth commandment is cited here as, in Moo's phrase, 'a representative summation' of the law.<sup>75</sup> The coming of this command (7.9) is the event of the law's coming, the conclusion of the period referred to in Romans 5.14 (ἀπὸ Ἀδάμ μέχρι Μωϋσέως). This association of Adam and Israel enables Paul to recast Israel's confrontation with the law in Edenic terms. In this respect, the selection of the prohibition against desire, rather than forcing a choice between a focus on Israel or Adam, has the effect of

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<sup>70</sup> Gathercole, 'Sin in God's Economy', 161 n.3; cf. N.T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Paul and the Law in Pauline Theology* (London: T&T Clark, 1991), 39. 4 *Ezra* 3.7, 20-27 offers a similar account of the replication of Adamic sin in Israel's history.

<sup>71</sup> Jewish sources (e.g. *Apoc. Mos.* 19.3; *Apoc. Abr.* 24.9) commonly cite 'desire' as the root of all sins and therefore link the prohibition against desire to the Eden narrative (Dunn, *Theology of Paul the Apostle* 87-88, 98-99).

<sup>72</sup> G. Bornkamm, 'Sin, Law and Death: An Exegetical Study of Romans 7', in *Early Christian Experience* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), 87-104; H. Hübner, *Das Gesetz bei Paulus. Ein Beitrag zum Werden der paulinischen Theologie* (FRLANT 119; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978), 66-69; Käsemann, *An die Römer*, 186.

<sup>73</sup> D.J. Moo, 'Israel and Paul in Romans 7.7-12', *NTS* 32 (1986): 122-135; Watson, *Hermeneutics*, 335-380. This is established primarily on the basis of Paul's use of νόμος, the similarity between the narrative sequence of this text and, in Moo's words (123), 'a Pauline theological pattern having to do with the redemptive-historical experience of Israel, the citation of the tenth commandment, the link between the law and life (cf. Lev 18.5; Sir. 45.5) and the connection between "desire" and Israel's experience in the desert (cf. 1 Cor 10.1-10)'.  
<sup>74</sup> Watson, *Hermeneutics*, 359.

<sup>75</sup> Moo, 'Israel and Paul in Romans 7.7-12', 123 n.8.

bringing Sinai and Eden together.<sup>76</sup> As Chester remarks, Paul ‘creates a fusion between the giving of the command not to eat in the Garden of Eden [and] the giving of the law at Sinai’.<sup>77</sup>

By linking desire and death, however, Paul does more than connect the Eden episode and Israel’s sin; he connects quite specifically the Adamic trespass and Israel’s experience under the law *in the wilderness*. As Watson has thoroughly demonstrated, the ‘correlation of desire and death derives...from Numbers’.<sup>78</sup> 1 Corinthians 10.1-10, reading Numbers 11 in a similar fashion to Psalm 105.14-15, associates Israel’s desire in the desert (1 Cor 10.6) with the destruction of nearly the entire wilderness generation (10.5). Here, the first manifestation of this sin-causing illicit desire is the idolatrous incident of the Golden Calf: ‘Do not be idolaters as some of them were; as it is written, “The people sat to eat and drink and rose to play”’ (1 Cor 10.7, quoting Exod 32.6). This indicates that the story of desire leading to death that is allusively narrated in Romans 7.7-12 is in large part the story of Israel’s sin and death at Sinai and in the wilderness. This, crucially, is the story *Wisdom* cannot tell.

This brings us back to Romans 1. Paul, by including Israel within the history of Adamic sin, confronts the realities of Israel’s past that *Wisdom* is forced to erase or displace. As argued above, *Wisdom* alludes to Moses’ confident words in the aftermath of the Golden Calf, but in the same sentence *Wisdom* exonerates Israel from idolatry (*Wis.* 15.2-4). That Paul faces precisely this history is strikingly evident in the double allusion of Romans 1.23. We have already noted the probable echo of Genesis 1.26a here; but, in keeping with the Pauline association of Adamic and Israelite sin, the primary reference of this verse is to the allusion to the Golden Calf in Psalm 105.20 LXX:

And they exchanged the glory (καὶ ἠλλάξαντο τὴν δόξαν) that was theirs for the likeness (ὁμοίωμα) of a grass-eating ox (Ps 105.2)

And they exchanged the glory (καὶ ἠλλάξαν τὴν δόξαν) of the immortal God for the likeness (ὁμοίωμα) of the image of a mortal man and of birds and four-footed animals and creeping creatures (Rom 1.23)

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<sup>76</sup> G. Theissen, *Psychological Aspects of Pauline Theology* (trans. J. Galvin; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1987), 204-206; S.J. Chester, *Conversion at Corinth: Perspectives on Conversion in Paul’s Theology and the Corinthian Church* (SNTW; London: T&T Clark, 2003), 186 n.29.

<sup>77</sup> Chester, *Conversion at Corinth*, 187 n.129.

<sup>78</sup> Watson, *Hermeneutics*, 363.

Here, to adapt a well-known phrase, we have an echo of Israel in the polemic of Paul.<sup>79</sup> This allusive inclusion of Israel stands in the sharpest possible contrast to *Wisdom's* claim that Israel is innocent of idolatry (15.4). There is no room for the Golden Calf in *Wisdom's* anthropological dualism. The wilderness is the site of blessing and testing for the holy, idolatry-free nation in symmetrical contrast to the plagues which fittingly befell the unrighteous Egyptians (*Wis.* 11-19). As Barclay remarks, 'the God-aware people of Israel are in principle averse to idolatry, and hardly liable to worship a Golden Calf'.<sup>80</sup> But Paul, as Watson comments, 'faces the fact that the author of *Wisdom* strives to suppress: that the holy nation is itself deeply complicit in the idolatry and ungodliness that it prefers to ascribe to the Gentiles'.<sup>81</sup> As we have seen, for *Wisdom*, Jew and Gentile are irreducibly different *qua* non-idolaters and idolaters. Consequently, Paul's inclusion of Israel within the human history of idolatry effectively eliminates the basis on which *Wisdom's* anthropological dualism is constructed.

Romans 1.18-32 is a polyvalent narrative. The story of the sin of Adamic humanity is told in the Gentile-directed style of the *Wisdom* 13-15, but, in contrast to that tradition, the polemical target is broadened to include Israel. Dunn captures this dynamic when he refers to a 'blending of traditions' that produces a 'twofold indictment', a reference first to 'the characteristic Jewish condemnation of Gentile religion and sexual practice' and, secondly, to a 'reminder that Israel itself falls under the same indictment'.<sup>82</sup> The effect of Romans 1.18-32 is therefore the opposite of *Wisdom* 13-15. Whereas *Wisdom* explicitly disassociates Israel and idolaters, Romans 1.18-32 highlights Israel's idolatry, thereby collapsing the harmartiological difference between Jew and Gentile. The contrast is thus between two theological anthropologies: *Wisdom's* irreducible, binary distinction between the righteous (Israel) and the ungodly (non-Israel) is confronted by Paul's anthropological universalism that reduces the Jew/Gentile distinction to a single denominator: *homo peccator*.

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<sup>79</sup> Barth, 'Speaking of Sin', 291: 'All that Paul says about the foolishness of those that think themselves to be wise, and of the fabrication of quadripedal idols, he says by allusions to OT sayings'.

<sup>80</sup> Barclay, 'I Will Have Mercy', 93.

<sup>81</sup> Watson, *Hermeneutics*, 411.

<sup>82</sup> Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 93. Dunn appears to overlook the oddity of having these two indictments side by side and that the presence of such a phenomenon represents a significant Pauline alteration to the polemical tradition from which he draws.

*Introducing Divine Agency: Romans 1.24, 26 and 28*

Stanley Stowers observes that ‘interpreters have not placed enough emphasis on God’s action in [Romans] 1.18-32’.<sup>83</sup> We have already considered the contextualisation of Romans 1.19-32 within the apostolic announcement of an ultimately salvific divine act and the explicit references to divine self-revelation that ground the claims about a primal theological knowledge. In Romans 1, however, God’s agency is not only evident in acts of salvation and revelation; it is also active in judgment. *Wisdom’s* explanation of the origin and effects of sin, at least in chapters 13-15, is strictly anthropological.<sup>84</sup> According to Romans 1.24, 26 and 28, by contrast, ‘the human situation depicted in Rom 1 derives’, as Beverly Gaventa argues, ‘both from human rebellion against God *and* from God’s own active role in a cosmic conflict’.<sup>85</sup> The ‘and’ makes all the difference.

Paul’s introduction of divine agency into the causal link between idolatry and immorality is unique in the Hellenistic Jewish polemical tradition.<sup>86</sup> The significance of this innovation is underlined by the triple use of the phrase ‘God handed them over’ (ὁ θεὸς παρέδωκεν, 1.24, 26 and 28).<sup>87</sup> Gaventa’s consideration of both biblical and non-biblical uses of παραδίδωμι convincingly, if unsurprisingly, demonstrates that ‘handing over virtually always involves a handing over to another agent’.<sup>88</sup> This raises two related questions: whom did God hand over and to whom did he deliver them?

Taking the latter question first, Romans 1.24, 26 and 28 all identify that to which people were delivered with an εἰς + accusative clause: εἰς ἀκαθαρσίαν (v.24), εἰς πάθη ἀτιμίας (v.26) and εἰς ἀδόκιμον νοῦν (v.28). According to this reading, the phrase ἐν ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις τῶν καρδιῶν αὐτῶν that separates the παραδίδωμι and εἰς clauses in 1.24 is interpreted causally. This is consistent with both the Pauline (1 Cor 10.6) and early Jewish opinion that ‘desire is the origin of every sin’ (Apoc. Mos. 19.3; cf. Jas 1.15)<sup>89</sup> and means that God hands people over to ‘uncleanness’, ‘dishonourable passions’ and a ‘worthless mind’ because of the desires of their hearts. While these sound more like descriptions of human misbehaviour or depravity than

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<sup>83</sup> Stowers, *A Rereading of Romans*, 93.

<sup>84</sup> *Wisdom* 2.24 does introduce a supra-human cause within the account of death’s origin, but here the non-human is demonic (διάβολος) not divine.

<sup>85</sup> B.R. Gaventa, *Our Mother Saint Paul* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007), 113 (italics added).

<sup>86</sup> Cf. Gaventa, *Our Mother Saint Paul*, 114.

<sup>87</sup> Cf. Gathercole, ‘Sin in God’s Economy’, 162-66.

<sup>88</sup> Gaventa, *Our Mother Saint Paul*, 114.

<sup>89</sup> This was often tied to the Eden narrative (see above).

agents, the reappearance of these motifs in Romans – Gaventa cites 6.19-20, 7.5 and 8.6-7 – seems to subsume these unnatural disorders under the power of sin. This is not quite the same as saying, as Gaventa does, that ‘uncleanness, dishonorable passions, and a deformed mind are instances of synecdoche; they refer to the anti-God powers, especially the power of Sin’;<sup>90</sup> but it does imply that these human conditions are, in part, the effects of sin and therefore point to its sinister agency.

There is, then, a linking of desire and the implicit agency of sin in Romans 1.24. Following a now recurring pattern, this subtly connects the histories of sin in Romans 1.18-32 and Romans 7.7-12.<sup>91</sup> Personified Sin is the main character of Romans 7.8-11. With the coming of the prohibition against *desiring* (ἐπιθυμέω, 7.7) Sin sprang to life and produced ‘*all desire*’ (πᾶσα ἐπιθυμία, 7.8) in the “I”, thus deceiving and murdering him (7.11). The parallel movement from desire (ἐπιθυμία) to the effects of sin’s agency and ultimately death (1.32) in Romans 1.24-28 suggests that Israel, the main focus of Romans 7, is not excluded from the account of God handing humanity over to the destructive power of sin in Romans 1.24-28. Otherwise expressed, tying the effects of sin to the causal effects of desire, with all its associations with Adam and Israel, contributes to the bringing together of Jew and Gentile under the single term ἄνθρωπος. Thus, in answer to our second question, God handed over *humans* – Jew and Gentile – to the effects of sin’s agency. In Romans 1.18, ἄνθρωπος means ἄνθρωπος; it is an inclusive reference and as such the tragic history of human sin is precisely the *human* story.

#### *Unsubtle Subversion: Romans 1.25*

‘God’s wrath strikes man’s religion’.<sup>92</sup> This is true in both *Wisdom* 13-15 and Romans 1; but again, there are crucial differences. There is a subtle differentiation between two types of false worship in *Wisdom* 13.1-9 and 13.10-19. The initial focus (vv.1-9) is on those things created by the divine artisan. Fire, water, air, wind, stars – these ‘created things’ (κτίσμα, 13.5) were taken to be gods (13.2) with the result that Gentile religion became fixed on the penultimacy of the created rather than its divine cause (13.1, 3-5, 9). In 13.10-19 the focus is no longer on the works of the divine creator, but rather on the artefacts created by humans (cf. 14.15-21; 15.7-

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<sup>90</sup> Gaventa, *Our Mother Saint Paul*, 119.

<sup>91</sup> Cf. Gathercole, ‘Sin in God’s Economy’, 159-69.

<sup>92</sup> Barth, ‘Speaking of Sin’, 290.

13). Under this general topic, *Wisdom* demonstrates an awareness of various forms of idolatry: personal piety (13.11-19), legal cult (14.15-16) and emperor worship (14.17-21).<sup>93</sup> This differentiated reflection on non-Jewish cult displays a level of acculturated sophistication and subtlety.<sup>94</sup>

Whatever Paul is in Romans 1, he is certainly not subtle. In contrast to *Wisdom*'s careful distinguishing of types of false worship, Paul's account reduces idolatry to images of living creatures (Rom 1.24). A similar lack of subtlety is evident as Paul, unlike *Wisdom*'s sensitive evocation of Israel's aniconic tradition, offers an apparently novel interpretation of idolatry as service to the creature (1.25). *Wisdom*'s emphasis on the human origin of certain idolatrous artefacts (13.10-19; 15.7-13) evokes what Watson calls the 'craftsman motif' from Isaiah 44.9-20, and the satirical polemic against the lifeless impotency of idols derives from Psalm 115.5-7.<sup>95</sup> Paul's interpretation, by contrast, seems to come from nowhere. It may be, however, that Paul's language of 'exchange' and its connection to, as Levison writes, 'the inversion of the human dominion that is established in Gen. 1.26' reflects an interpretative tradition that includes 'the exchange of human dominion for subservience to animals' as an effect of the Edenic fall.<sup>96</sup> In the Greek *Life of Adam and Eve* the wild animals address the woman after her rebellion: ἡμῶν αἱ φύσεις μετελλάγησαν (11.2). That this exchange includes the forfeiting of Adamic dominion is confirmed both by an extra-biblical linking of the Edenic sin with animal rebellion (24.3) and an eschatological promise that Adam's rule will be reestablished (39), thus indicating that the loss of that rule is presupposed. This connection between Romans 1.23, 25 and an interpretative tradition associated with the Eden narratives further confirms the significance of Adam within Paul's polemic. Importantly, however, Adam himself is not the polemical target. Paul accuses ἄνθρωποι not Ἀδάμ. Accordingly, the effect of this (possible) allusion to Eden is not to focus on humanity's progenitors, but rather to reduce humanity to a commonality and thereby to address Jew and Gentile as ἄνθρωπος, as Adamic humans.

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<sup>93</sup> Watson (*Hermeneutics*, 407) notes a similar distinction in Philo between 'worship of created being and idols', though in Philo this distinction is connected 'to the first two commandments of the Decalogue' (*Decal.* 66; *Spec.* 1.13-22).

<sup>94</sup> J.M.G. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora: From Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE - 117 CE)* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 392.

<sup>95</sup> Watson, *Hermeneutics*, 407.

<sup>96</sup> Levison, 'Adam and Eve', 530, 533.

Read within this rhetorical and theological intention, Paul's apparently crude collapsing of types of idolatry takes on new significance. Hidden within Paul's undifferentiated description of false worship is what we might call an unsubtle sophistication – a subversively un-nuanced account of cultic practice which has the effect of collapsing both the difference between types of religion and the associated differences between their practitioners.<sup>97</sup> In *Wisdom*, false religion exists on something of a sliding-scale which moves from mildly condemnable (μέμψις ὀλίγη, 13.6) to 'most foolish' (πάντες ἀφρονέστατοι, 15.14) – that is, from nature worship (13.1-9) to Egyptian animal-worship (15.18-19). It is the object of cultic devotion that distinguishes Egyptian from Greek, and ultimately Egyptian and Greek from Jew. In this variegated religious scheme, Israelite religion is set in contrast to a highly differentiated assortment of false religion. In other words, although all non-Jewish religion is false insofar as it is not directed to the one God of Israel, the object of one's worship remains theologically relevant. Worshiping the works of the creator is closer to the truth than idolising animals that even the creator did not bless (15.18-19). In this sense, there is true religion (Israel) and progressively less true religion.

Paul's perspective is different. Those who worship human images, birds, four-footed animals and reptiles are all guilty of the single religious sin of serving the creature rather than the creator (Rom 1.23). Thus, for Paul, cultic practice is not a definitive distinguishing mark of Greeks, Jews and Egyptians. The formal differences between types of false religion only serve to conceal a fundamental material identity. The particular image of cultic devotion is ultimately inconsequential. Either one worships the one God, or one does not. By relativising the anthropological significance of religious differences Paul effectively broadens his polemical scope. In contrast to *Wisdom's* portrayal of Israel in juxtaposition to a range of false religion (15.1-4; 18.9), for Paul there is only true worship and its opposite. Despite its diversity non-Jewish religion is essentially a singular entity; and insofar as Israel is complicit in Adamic humanity's history of idolatry – a reality that Paul's allusion to the Golden Calf episode in Romans 1.23 forces the reader to concede – Israel is placed on the wrong side of the true/false worship divide. Here again, Paul's alterations to the Hellenistic Jewish polemical tradition have the effect of producing an antithetical anthropology in relation to *Wisdom's* Jew/Gentile

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<sup>97</sup> Watson (*Hermeneutics*, 407 n.82) considers this possibility: 'The Pauline conflation might be regarded either as a crude misunderstanding or as a sign of theological sophistication'.

dualism. Whereas *Wisdom* contrasts Israel with various types of idolaters, Paul reduces idolatry to terms reflected in Israel's original sin at Sinai and thereby includes Israel within humanity's common hamartiological history.

### *Conclusion*

In the words of Romans 3.22, 'there is no distinction'. But for *Wisdom*, there is a distinction. Anthropology is reducible no further than the difference between Jew and Gentile because Jews know God and Gentiles are idolatrous. *Wisdom* 13-15 serves to reinforce this division by contrasting the idolatry and immorality of non-Jews with Israel's innocence in relation to idols and the consequent immorality. Paul's engagement with *Wisdom* 13-15 makes precisely the opposite point. The contextualisation of the Pauline polemic within the apocalyptic and kerygmatic context of Romans 1.16-18, together with the various alterations Paul introduces into the polemical tradition, serve the single rhetorical and theological aim of eliminating the difference between Jew and Gentile by eliminating the imagined difference between non-idolatry and idolatry. The story of Romans 1.18-32, even as it tells the diverse stories of Adam, Israel and the Gentiles, is, as 1.18 states, the story of the ἄνθρωπος. By narrating these various stories within and as a single story Paul effectively creates a common human history. Thus, in contrast to *Wisdom's* irreducible anthropological dualism, Paul announces the essential oneness – *coram deo* – of all persons; he announces the human.

But whence and whither: where does Paul's universalism come from and where does it go? This is not the place to answer these questions in full; but we can say, by way of anticipating our next chapter, that both questions have the same answer: the divine act that is the single and saving history of Jesus Christ. The implicit event of Romans 1.16-18 simultaneously identifies the human *qua* human as the object of divine wrath and divine saving righteousness. Read from *Wisdom's* theological perspective, Paul's universalism is both different and dangerous. For *Wisdom*, an anthropological dualism is the presupposition of a corresponding soteriological symmetry: 'Wisdom brought the righteous through the Red Sea but she drowned their enemies' (10.18-19). Paul's destabilisation of *Wisdom's* anthropology necessarily entails the disqualification of its soteriology. If humanity as such is under the wrath of God (Rom 1.18), then, from *Wisdom's* perspective and in its language, no one will survive the Red Sea of divine judgment. Expressed in Pauline terms, because Romans 1.18-31 is

the human story, the human is 'worthy of death' (1.32). It is precisely this totalising and condemnatory point that comes to explicit expression in Romans 3.9, 23. Unaccountably, however, Paul's absolute announcement of the desperate human condition occurs within a kerygmatic context that proclaims an ultimately salvific revelation of divine righteousness. From all that Paul has said so far, and from all that *Wisdom* says, this sounds oxymoronic. 'Those who do such things are worthy of death'. *But*, to anticipate our next chapter, it is, as Bornkamm might say, by God's grace that he does not bring humankind to this end in any other way than in the death of his Son.<sup>98</sup> It is in this paradox between deserved death and promised life – between the reality of sin and the announcement of salvation – that we encounter an anticipation of the shape of Paul's soteriology that will be the focus of our next chapter.

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<sup>98</sup> Bornkamm, 'The Revelation of God's Wrath', 63.

## Chapter 7

# Soteriological Semantics: Righteousness and Grace in *Wisdom* and Romans

Le paradoxe de la foi doit être produit tel quel, porté par la prose  
à la lumière de sa nouveauté radicale. – Alain Badiou<sup>1</sup>

‘There is no distinction’ (Rom 3.22b). This Pauline assertion is both a summary of the major argumentative thread of Romans 1.18-3.20 and a summary of the anthropological debate between *Wisdom* and Romans discussed in the previous chapter. In contrast to *Wisdom*’s repeated assertion that humanity exists in an irreducible dualism consisting of the righteous (Israel) and the ungodly (non-Jews), Paul, by declaring that no one is righteous (3.9-10), reduces humanity to the single category of the human. As in the rhetorical movement of Romans, however, this announcement functions within our argument as both conclusion and introduction: just as the universally condemning ‘no distinction’ grounds the corresponding ‘but now’, the anthropological disagreement between *Wisdom* and Paul implies a corresponding soteriological tension. Because *Wisdom*’s balanced conception of a bipartite humanity relates symmetrically to an Exodus-shaped construal of divine saving action – ‘Wisdom brought them [the righteous] over the Red Sea...but she drowned their enemies’ (*Wis.* 10.18-19a). The Pauline removal of the righteous (Rom 3.9-10) is therefore more than an anthropological unbalancing; it entails a consequent destabilisation of *Wisdom*’s carefully calibrated soteriology. Stated axiomatically – and thus somewhat overstated – whereas *Wisdom*’s Wisdom saves the fitting, Paul’s God justifies the ungodly.

But, as remarked earlier in this thesis, nothing comes from nothing, or at least nowhere. For *Wisdom*, the Exodus event is the paradigmatic instantiation of a deep structural pattern embedded within the created order and guaranteed by pre-creational Wisdom. The symmetry of the Red Sea is, in other words, the central soteriological expression of a repeated and predictable cosmic rationality: divine justice takes the dual form of mercy for the righteous and judgment (tempered by a non-salvific mercy) for the ungodly. Paul too locates

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<sup>1</sup> A. Badiou, *Saint Paul: La fondation de l’universalisme* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1997), 35; ET: *Saint Paul: The Foundation of Universalism* (trans. R. Brassier; Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 33.

the instantiation of divine justice and grace in an event, but unlike *Wisdom's* theological activation of the Exodus, the event from which Pauline theology is derived is more revolution than confirmation. Whereas *Wisdom* reads the Exodus as the principal historical manifestation of a pre-temporal and immutable theological pattern and thus as an affirmation of the received canons of justice, Pauline theology responds to an event that enters history as a rupture – an interruption that, rather than affirming the ‘ordinary’ notions of justice and grace, fundamentally alters their meaning and parameters. The name of this event is Jesus Christ.

While chapter eight will compare the Exodus-shaped and christological hermeneutics of *Wisdom* and Paul, the aim of this chapter is to reintroduce the Exodus-soteriology of *Wisdom* (especially as it is articulated in the vindication of the persecuted righteous person [*Wis.* 2-5] and the fitting agency of divine σοφία [*Wis.* 7-9/10]) in order to initiate a conversation between *Wisdom* and Paul on the topic of divine justice and grace. To facilitate this dialogue, the aforementioned sections of *Wisdom* will be considered in relation to portions of Romans in which Paul reflects on the revelation of divine righteousness and grace (esp. 3.21-26, but also 2.1-16, 5.6-21 and 8.3-4). Stated as a thesis, the argument of this chapter is that in contrast to the symmetrical soteriology *Wisdom* identifies in the Exodus event, Paul's location of the revelation of God's righteousness and grace in the giving of Christ for the ungodly occasions a contextually radical redefinition of the shared theological terms. As Pascal famously observed, ‘Les mots diversement rangés font un divers sens’.<sup>2</sup> Applying this dictum to the meaning of righteousness and grace in Romans and *Wisdom*, δικαιοσύνη and χάρις reflect a common vocabulary that is deployed in distinct theological grammars.<sup>3</sup> In this sense, the authors of *Wisdom* and Paul are both theologians of grace and righteousness, but the grace and righteousness about which they theologise are ultimately incommensurable.<sup>4</sup> This

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<sup>2</sup> Blaise Pascal, *Pensées* (Brunschvicg edition, 1897), I.23.

<sup>3</sup> Both Plato (*Cratylus*) and Aristotle (*On Interpretation*) recognised that discourse (λόγος) required not just a word, but a conjunction of words in the form of a predicative link. Words need other words to ‘mean’, and therefore it is the sentence that functions as the basic unit of discourse. Translated into the terms of modern linguistics the difference between word and sentence is the difference between semiotics and semantics. For our purposes, the crucial distinction is that, as Paul Ricoeur argues, ‘the object of semiotics [i.e. the sign/word] is merely virtual. Only the sentence is actual as the very event of speaking’ (*Interpretation and Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning* [Fort Worth: TCU Press, 1976], 7).

<sup>4</sup> E.P. Sanders (*Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1977], 551) recognises this incompatibility in relation to Jewish and Pauline ‘righteousness’ language –

identification of lexical continuity situated within semantic discontinuity provides an ice-breaker of sorts, a shared interest for *Wisdom* and Paul to discuss and debate. If, as argued in part one, *Wisdom* conceives of divine justice as grace for the righteous and judgment for the ungodly, then, as also argued in part one, it follows that grace, while not reducible to justice, operates within and exhibits the patterns of justness, of congruence between benefit and beneficiary. Grace, in other words, is an exercise of divine favour directed toward a fitting (ἄξιος) recipient. From this perspective, the Pauline location of the revelation of God's grace and righteousness in a divine act that justifies the ungodly sounds like a confused and dangerous declaration that grace has lost its goodness and divine justice is manifested in an instance of double-injustice (i.e. the death of a righteous person and the analytically inaccurate labeling of the unrighteous as the righteous). This chapter will explore this tension under two headings: 'righteousness revealed' and 'grace redefined'.

### *Righteousness Revealed*

'There are two kinds of righteousness'.<sup>5</sup> These well known words of Martin Luther aptly summarize the thesis of this section. *Wisdom* reads the Exodus as a paradigmatic affirmation of a created moral order which is established and sustained by pre-creational Wisdom and, thus guaranteed, can be projected into the soteriological future. The critical feature of this event is the *correspondence* between its anthropological and soteriological poles: the *righteous* are *rescued* and the *ungodly* are *destroyed*. In other words, the Exodus manifests God's righteousness because the dual divine acts of saving and drowning coincide with the respective character of the human subjects. Paul, by contrast, encounters the Christ-event, not as a reaffirmation of received notions of justice, but as a revelation and consequent redefinition of divine righteousness. In opposition to *Wisdom's* insistence that divine righteousness operates within the parameters of a necessary correspondence between divine act and human subject, Paul locates the demonstration of God's righteousness in the disjunctive declaration that God justly *justifies* the *unjust*. We can thus imagine the beginning of

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'righteousness itself is a different righteousness' – but his failure to extend this observation to include the differing definitions of 'grace' has led to a muting of Paul's peculiarity on this point.

<sup>5</sup> M. Luther, *LW* 31, 293-306.

a conversation: ‘Αγαπήσατε δικαιοσύνην’, *Wisdom* invites (1.1). ‘What δικαιοσύνη?’, Paul responds...

### *One Kind of Righteousness: Wisdom (and Romans 2)*

Romans 2.6-8 is a somewhat crude but accurate précis of *Wisdom*’s soteriology. Crude because it captures none of the qualifying nuances of the so-called ‘Mercy Dialogue’ (*Wis.* 11.17-12.27);<sup>6</sup> accurate because for all its subtlety *Wisdom*, like Romans 2.6-8, anchors the rightness of God’s righteousness within an identifiable correspondence between divine action and the quality of the human subject.

As argued in part one, ‘righteousness’ is a central theme in *Wisdom*, and the Exodus event functions as its principal definition.<sup>7</sup> In contrast to Paul’s conclusion in Romans 3.22b, the Exodus announces a distinction. More precisely expressed, the Exodus is the paradigmatic instantiation of an anthropological distinction and a corresponding soteriological distinction. As *Wisdom* retells the story (10.15-21; 19.1-21), a bipartite humanity (δίκαιοι and ἀσεβεῖς, 10.20) encounters, respectively, deliverance and destruction (cf. 10.18-19). It is important to insist, however, that this is more than a phenomenology of divine action; it is an argument for the essential *rightness* of God’s salvific activity. The Red Sea crossing is a demonstration of divine justice *because* it is the righteous who are rescued and the wicked who are drowned. Implicit in this inductive argumentation is a particular understanding of righteousness: God’s righteousness is located in the *correspondence* between divine action and the human subject(s).

Before tracing the contours of correspondence in *Wisdom*, it is important to note that calling this understanding of righteousness particular is not to say that it is peculiar. In fact, as can be demonstrated from a range of sources, δικαιοσύνη is often conceptually determined by correspondence. Thus, to cite an example in which the point is made lexically, 2 Chronicles 6.23 (LXX) can redundantly say τοῦ δικαιοῦσαι δίκαιον τοῦ ἀποδοῦναι αὐτῷ κατὰ τὴν δικαιοσύνην αὐτοῦ. This correlation of cognates, together with the use of κατὰ + accusative (κατὰ τὴν δικαιοσύνην), express a strict correspondence: the righteous are righteous, and thus

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<sup>6</sup> See chapters two and four for a full discussion.

<sup>7</sup> For the centrality of justice in *Wisdom* see G. Bellia and A. Passaro, ‘Infinite Passion for Justice’, in *The Book of Wisdom in Modern Research: Studies on Tradition, Redaction, and Theology* (DCLY 2005; ed. A. Passaro and G. Bellia; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2005), 307-28. For the hermeneutical priority of the Exodus see chapter four of the present work.

rightly declared righteous, according to their righteousness.<sup>8</sup> Similarly, Aristotle, with his famed commonsense, describes the process of becoming righteous: τὰ μὲν δίκαια πράττοντες δίκαιοι γινόμεθα (*Eth. nic.* II.i.4).<sup>9</sup> It is hard not to hear Aristotle’s maxim in the words of *Wisdom* 6.10: οἱ γὰρ φυλάξαντες ὀσίως τὰ ὅσια ὀσιωθήσονται. Here, as in Aristotle, there is a correspondence between ontology and action. In the language of Ezekiel 18.5 (LXX), the δίκαιος is the one who does (ὁ ποιῶν) δικαιοσύνη.<sup>10</sup> It is precisely this correspondence that Philo – bringing us closer to *Wisdom* temporally, geographically and conceptually – is eager to preserve. With the language of Stoic definitions of justice (cf. *SVF* 3.262) he repeatedly insists that, as a matter of principle, δικαιοσύνη works κατ’ ἄξίαν (*Leg.* 1.87; *Mos.* 2.9; *Sobr.* 40).<sup>11</sup> According to John Barclay, though ‘ἄξιος and its cognate verb ἄξιόω’ are often translated with the language of ‘worth’ and (more misleadingly) ‘merit’ – thereby evoking images of Reformation cartoons and corresponding papal bulls – ‘ἄξιος’, at least in Philo (and *Wisdom*), ‘is a relational term, describing the “fit” between one thing and another’.<sup>12</sup> To say, then, that δικαιοσύνη works κατ’ ἄξίαν is to indicate that divine righteousness operates according to an affinity between the objects of divine action and the form of that action. As Barclay clarifies,

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<sup>8</sup> The insistence of R. Bultmann (*Theology of the New Testament* [trans. K. Grobel; Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2007], 1.272-73) that δικαιοσύνη ‘is a forensic-eschatological term’ that applies adjectivally (δίκαιος) to one who has been acknowledged to be righteous (δικαιόω) obscures the link between verb, noun, and adjective. As Sanders (*Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 494) and Westerholm (*Perspectives Old and New*, 264-65 n.7) have argued – though they perhaps downplay the futurity of the justifying verdict –, the status of the righteous (δίκαιος) is established independent of their forensic treatment. The righteous (δίκαιος) are those who *should* be declared righteous (δικαιόω) because they *are* righteous. In this sense, the operations of δικαιοσύνη are, to use Kant’s categories, analytic rather than synthetic.

<sup>9</sup> Commenting on the universal acceptance of Aristotle’s dictum, Eberhard Jüngel suggests that it ‘expresses a common opinion which it apparently did not occur to anybody to dispute’ (E. Jüngel, *Justification: The Heart of Christian Faith* [trans. J.F. Cayzer; London: T&T Clark, 2001], 247).

<sup>10</sup> A similar note of correspondence can be observed in relation to the verb (δικαιόω). The proper object of the verb is δίκαιος (e.g. Deut 25.1: δικαιώσωσιν τὸν δίκαιον), a point which is often made negatively in the condemnation of the act of acquitting the ungodly (e.g. Exod 23.7; 34.7; Sir. 9.12).

<sup>11</sup> In Philo, ἄξιος-language functions as non-specific index of possible criteria of fit (e.g. social status, *Opif.* 45; intelligence, *Migr.* 56-57; need, *Post.* 142-47; nobility, *Leg.* 3.79-82; virtue, *Leg.* 3.88-89). Combining the above observations with the excursus in chapter three on Philo and gift, it becomes clear that the issue for Philo is that divine benefaction must operate within the limits of δικαιοσύνη, and as such must function κατ’ ἄξίαν. Within this logic, the various criteria of fit function as indications of correspondence between gift and recipient and thus as affirmations of the justice and rationality of God’s grace. Walther Völker misreads Philo on this point because he misconstrues the Philonic emphasis on correspondence in terms of the post-Reformation polemic against synergism (*Fortschritt und Vollendung bei Philo von Alexandrien* [Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1938], 115-22). Völker is rightly criticised by both D. Zeller, *Charis bei Philon und Paulus* (Stuttgarter Bibelstudien, 142; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1990), 65-72 and J.M.G. Barclay, ‘Grace Within and Beyond Reason: Philo and Paul in Dialogue’, in *Paul, Grace and Freedom: Essays in Honour of John K. Riches* (ed. P. Middleton, A. Paddison and K. Wenell; London: T&T Clark, 2009), 9-21.

<sup>12</sup> J.M.G. Barclay, ‘Grace Within and Beyond Reason’, 11-12.

‘both verb and adjective describe a relationship of *correspondence* (not necessarily equivalence) between two entities’,<sup>13</sup> and as such ἄξιος-language functions to identify the point of congruence between what God does and those to whom he does it.

This brings us back to *Wisdom*. Although *Wisdom* can indicate correspondence in multiple ways,<sup>14</sup> *Wisdom*’s author, like Philo after him, employs ἄξιος-terminology to signal the coincidence between divine action and the human subject (1.16; 3.5; 6.16; 9.12; 12.7; 12.26; 16.9; 18.4; 19.4). As the one who rules righteously, God can be said to be righteous (δίκαιος ὢν δικαίως τὰ πάντα διέπει, 12.15) because his judgments operate according to ‘fit’ (ἄξιαν θεοῦ κρίσιν, 12.26). This, however, does not translate into an un-nuanced *iustitia distributiva*. As argued in chapter four, the ‘Mercy Dialogue’ (11.17-12.27) insists that divine judgment is always accompanied and qualified by a non-salvific mercy that reflects God’s universal love (11.23-12.11). Nonetheless, when all his moving and modifying words about mercy and love have been written, *Wisdom*’s author maintains the Exodus-shape of God’s saving activity: the unrighteous (ἄδικος) cannot be acquitted (12.12) and the undeserving (τὸν μὴ ὀφείλοντα) cannot be condemned (12.15). It is this strict symmetry, unqualified by the complexities of canonical history (10.15-19.21) and the subtleties of theory (11.17-12.27), which determines *Wisdom*’s eschatology (2.1-5.23).

The depiction of the persecuted and subsequently vindicated righteous person in *Wisdom* 2-5 is a test and, ultimately, an affirmation of *Wisdom*’s Exodus-shaped conception of divine justice.<sup>15</sup> In this scene the ungodly (ἄσεβεῖς, e.g. 3.10) conspire to oppress and finally murder the righteous (δίκαιος, 2.12) in order to examine the truthfulness of his theology (ἴδωμεν εἰ οἱ λόγοι αὐτοῦ ἀληθεῖς, 2.17). While temporal experience appears to legitimate the Epicurean-like assumptions of the ungodly – life is short, death is final, might is right and pleasure is proper (2.1-11) – this nearsighted rationality is twisted (λογισάμενοι οὐκ ὀρθῶς, 2.1) precisely because it implies a disjunctive δικαιοσύνη. Taking the implicit non-correspondence evident in the empirical links between wickedness and prosperity and, conversely, righteousness and oppression to instantiate the real/true, they witness to their theological ignorance (οὐκ ἔγνωσαν μυστήρια θεοῦ, 2.22). Properly understood, the justice of

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<sup>13</sup> J.M.G. Barclay, ‘Grace Within and Beyond Reason’, 12 (italics added).

<sup>14</sup> In *Wisdom* 10.1-14, for example, five of the six characters rescued by *Wisdom* are labeled δίκαιος whereas Adam, presumably debarred from that label by his Edenic transgression, is described with the honorific title πρωτόπλαστον πατέρα κόσμου. See chapter three for a full discussion.

<sup>15</sup> See chapter two for a detailed discussion.

God's saving actions is locatable within a soteriology of correspondence: μισθὸν ὀσιότητος; γέρας ψυχῶν ἀμώμων (2.22).<sup>16</sup> It is this righteousness that *Wisdom* summons its audience to love (1.1), and it is this righteousness that will be definitively reestablished at the eschaton. With the apocalyptic prose of a Daniel or an Enoch, *Wisdom* announces the coming revelation of God's righteousness (5.15-23) as the day of counter-empirical salvation (τῷ παραδόξῳ τῆς σωτηρίας) for the righteous (5.2) and total destruction (καταδαπανᾶω) for the wicked (5.13). The Exodus-shape of this dual divine act is the revelation of God's righteousness because, as Philo would insist, δικαιοσύνη works κατ' ἀξίαν. Thus, the ungodly will be punished *in accordance* with their reasoning (3.10) which entails finding their fitting (ἄξιος) end in the company of death (1.16). Conversely, the righteous (δίκαιος), having been found worthy (ἄξιος, 3.5) of God, will live with him (3.1), thereby embodying *Wisdom's* principal soteriological axiom: δικαιοσύνη ἀθάνατός ἐστιν (1.15).

This is the sense in which Romans 2.6-8, however crude, is an accurate summary of *Wisdom's* soteriology.<sup>17</sup> Romans 2.1-16, like *Wisdom* 2-5, presupposes and describes an eschatological judgment.<sup>18</sup> With *Wisdom* (cf. 12.15), Paul ties the righteousness of God's judgment (δικαιοκρισία τοῦ θεοῦ, Rom 2.5) to an eschatological principle of soteriological

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<sup>16</sup> The apparent digression about the barren woman, eunuch and righteous who die early in 3.13-4.15 serves to illustrate this principle of counter-empirical soteriological correspondence. The barren woman is blessed *because* she is undefiled (3.13), the eunuch is blessed *because* his hands have done no lawless deeds (3.14) and the righteousness of those who die early occasions a redefinition of longevity *because* they are fit to receive that blessing (4.7-9).

<sup>17</sup> This is intended descriptively, not as a claim that Paul is intending to summarise *Wisdom*. It is necessary to emphasise that the theological affinity between Romans 2 and *Wisdom* does not imply that the content is un-Pauline (*contra* D. Campbell, *The Deliverance of God: An Apocalyptic Rereading of Justification in Paul* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009], 547-50). Campbell is right to stress the discontinuity between Romans 2 and 3, but this tension is not between 'fundamentally different conceptions of God' (706; cf. 543); it reflects the incommensurability of two theological paradigms whose sequential existence is an effect of the 'apocalypse of Jesus Christ'. The language of 'incommensurable paradigms' is borrowed from Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 103, 198-204. For the incommensurable though interdependent relationship between Romans 2 and 3, see S. Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New: The 'Lutheran' Paul and His Critics* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004], 283-84; cf. U. Wilckens, *Der Brief an die Römer* [3 vols; EKKNT; Neukirchen: Benziger, 1978-82], 1.132).

<sup>18</sup> The limited focus of this section (i.e. demonstrating the logic of correspondence that comes to expression in Romans 2.6-10, 13) prevents an adequate discussion of the numerous debates that surround this passage (e.g. the identity of Paul's interlocutor [cf. chapter six] and the existence or otherwise of those who do the good/law in 2.7, 10, 13-15). That this judgment is more than a rhetorical fiction seems clear from 2.16 in which judgment is said to be through Christ Jesus and according to Paul's gospel, but the possibility of the positive outcome described in 2.7, 10 and especially 2.13 appears to be the very possibility Paul declares impossible outside of Christ in 3.20 (note the lexical and thematic links between 2.13 and 3.20). The various interpretive options for Romans 2.1-16 are helpfully summarized by R. H. Bell, *No One Seeks for God: An Exegetical and Theological Study of Romans 1.18-3.20* (WUNT 106; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998), 132-36.

correspondence: ἀποδώσει ἐκάστῳ κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ (2.4-6; cf. Ps 61.13 LXX; Prov 24.12 LXX). The present is a period of divine patience (ἀνοχή, Rom 2.4), but this era will end with the eschatological unveiling of God's δικαιοκρισία in the form of recompense *according to* human actions. As Kent Yinger observes, 'Paul is concerned here with the necessary *congruence* (κατὰ) of deeds and judgment'.<sup>19</sup> Positively, this means that those who by patience in well-doing (καθ' ὑπομονὴν ἔργου ἀγαθοῦ) seek honour, glory and, *Wisdom's* favourite, incorruption (ἀφθαρσία, cf. Wis. 2.28; 6.18, 19) are linked with eternal life (Rom 2.7). Negatively, the unrighteous (οἱ πειθομένοι τῇ ἀδικίᾳ) encounter wrath and more wrath (ὀργὴ καὶ θυμός, Rom 2.8).<sup>20</sup> This appears to be a fair restatement of *Wisdom's* soteriological insistence that the righteous (δίκαιος), having been found worthy (ἄξιος, 3.5) of God, will live with him (3.1), whereas the ungodly (ἀσεβεῖς) will meet their fitting (ἄξιος) end in the company of death (1.16). In both texts divine righteousness (cf. Rom 2.5; Wis. 12.15a) is linked to an identifiable commensurability between the form of divine action, whether judgment or grace, and the corresponding human subject. In this essential sense, *Wisdom* and Romans 2, along with the other texts surveyed above, operate within the same (theo)logical paradigm: righteousness operates according to a principle of correspondence.<sup>21</sup>

Romans 2, however, is more than a restatement of *Wisdom* 2-5. Returning briefly to the theme of our previous chapter, *Wisdom* would be scandalized to find Paul detaching this soteriological symmetry from its anthropological counterpart. From *Wisdom's* perspective, Romans 2.7 describes Israel and Romans 2.8 describes non-Israel. In keeping with the anthropological universalism discussed in chapter six, however, Paul proceeds in Romans 2.9-10 to cite both the negative (2.9) and positive (2.10) soteriological possibilities as possibilities for both Israel and non-Israel (Ἰουδαίου τε πρῶτον καὶ Ἑλληνας, 2.9, 10).<sup>22</sup> This provides an

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<sup>19</sup> K. Yinger, *Paul, Judaism, and Judgment According to Deeds* (SNTS 105; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 175 (italics original).

<sup>20</sup> Together with 2.9-10, vv.7-8 form a chiasmus that serves to emphasise the symmetry and two possibilities of judgment according to works (O. Kuss, *Der Römerbrief* [3 vols.; Regensburg: Verlag Friedrich Pustet; 1957-78], 1.65).

<sup>21</sup> Nietzsche witnesses to the universality of this perspective precisely in his subversion of it. By his own account, his 'new language...sounds strangest' in the assertion that 'the falsest judgments (to which synthetic judgments *a priori* belong) are the most indispensable to us' (*Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future* [trans. R.J. Hollingdale; London: Penguin Books, 1973], 35).

<sup>22</sup> J.M. Bassler ('Divine Impartiality in Paul's Letter to the Romans', *NovT* 26 [1984]: 43-58), rightly emphasises the importance of divine impartiality in this context (cf. 2.11), but (*pace* Bassler) impartiality, rather than being an *a priori* legal necessity, is a theological consequence of the justification of the ungodly which is itself derived from the shape of the Christ-event (see below; cf. R. H. Bell, *No One Seeks for God*, 144).

important clue as to the function of Romans 2.1-16 within the larger argument of Romans. Whereas *Wisdom* locates an irreducible anthropological dualism within the just correspondence of the Exodus event, Paul's use of the notion of forensic correspondence is situated within an argument that moves from the establishment of the *initially neutral* soteriological equality of Jew and Gentile (2.1-29) to the universally condemning declaration that all, Jew and Gentile, are ὕφ' ἁμαρτίαν (3.9-20; cf. 3.22b-23; 11.32a).<sup>23</sup>

More directly relevant for our purposes is Paul's location of the criterion of correspondence in the Jewish law. The general principle that 'God will repay each one according to his or her deeds' (Rom 2.6) is particularised in Romans 2.13: οἱ ποιηταὶ νόμου δικαιωθήσονται. 'Doing the law' names the abstract activity of 'doing the good' (2.10). The divine act of eschatological justification (δικαιωθήσονται) *corresponds* to the human act of doing the law (οἱ ποιηταὶ νόμου).<sup>24</sup> The singularity of this criterion of correspondence cuts across other possible identifications of affinity between divine verdict and human status. The operations of this righteous-judgment (Rom 2.6) extend to Jew and Gentile (2.9-10), and therefore the identifying mark of ethnicity (circumcision) is relativized in relation to law-doing (2.25-27). Similarly, Paul refuses to apply the adjective δίκαιος to those who merely hear the law (2.13a); rather, he insists that it is the 'doers of the law' – a designation that transcends ethnic boundaries (2.14-15) – who are, before God (παρὰ [τῷ] θεῷ, 2.13a), properly *recognised* as righteous (δικαιῶ, 2.13b). The structure of this verse implies that, if only in this context, δικαιῶ is synonymous with being δίκαιοι παρὰ [τῷ] θεῷ.<sup>25</sup> In other words, God's

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<sup>23</sup> Wherever one locates the previous demonstration that 'all are under sin', Paul's ability to write these words implies that the argument from 1.18 onwards, even when engaging *Wisdom* (1.18-2.4) and arguing from shared conceptualities (2.5-8), moves in direct opposition to *Wisdom's* insistence that there is an anthropological distinction and thus an *actual, corresponding* soteriological distinction.

<sup>24</sup> N.T. Wright, 'On Becoming the Righteousness of God: 2 Corinthians 5.21', in *Pauline Theology* (vol. 2; ed. D.M. Hay; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 200-208 is right to insist that this provides a covenantal context for Paul's righteousness language, but he overstates his case by equating 'righteousness' with 'covenant membership' ('The Book of Romans', in *NIB X* [Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002], 491). A covenantal context does not dilute the notion of normativity which δικαιοσύνη conveys (Seifrid, 'Paul's Use of Righteousness Language', 44); it locates and particularises the norm. Thus Gathercole's correction: 'righteousness' should not be understood 'in terms of membership within the covenant' but 'as *doing what God requires* within the covenant' ('The Doctrine of Justification in Paul and Beyond: Some Proposals', in *Justification in Perspective: Historical Developments and Contemporary Challenges* [ed. B.L. McCormack; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006], 237).

<sup>25</sup> Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New*, 267. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 545 notes Paul's preference for the verb (δικαιῶ) relative to the early Jewish prioritization of the adjective. However, comparing *Wisdom* and Romans confirms Westerholm's qualifying observation that 'the priority of the adjective applies to Paul's understanding of ordinary dikaiosness as well as to Judaism' (*Perspectives Old and New*, 277 n.38). *Wisdom* is able to assume a definition of δίκαιος in antithesis to both ἁμαρτωλός and ἄσεβής that is reflected in Romans 5.6-

eschatological identification of the righteous *corresponds* to their law-defined righteousness. In this sense, ‘justification by works of law’ (Rom 3.20) and the functionally equivalent phrase ‘the righteousness of the law’ (Rom 10.5; Phil 3.9) are uniquely Pauline ways of articulating the common soteriological paradigm encapsulated in Philo’s insistence that δικαιοσύνη operates κατ’ ἀξίαν. Thus from *Wisdom’s* perspective (and in *Wisdom’s* theological practice; e.g. 3.1, 5; 10.4-14), Paul’s use of δίκαιος/δικαίω names the basis on which the objects of God’s justification are ἄξιος relative to the divine verdict. It is the righteous who are ‘fit’ to be declared righteous.

But ‘no one is righteous’ (οὐκ ἔστιν δίκαιος, Rom 3.10). This does not disqualify the principle of correspondence, but it does radically and dangerously destabilise it. If ‘doing the law’ names the human action that constitutes one’s fittingness for the divine act of justification, then the claim that no one is righteous, implying as it does that no one is a ‘doer of the law’, is necessarily a claim about the universal unfittingness of humanity vis-à-vis divine *saving* action. In other words, to say no one is righteous is to say that no one corresponds to the divine word of justification (analytic as it appears to be in Romans 2.13). It is this implied consequence that Paul makes his explicit conclusion in Romans 3.20: ἐξ ἔργων νόμου οὐ δικαιοθήσεται πᾶσα σὰρξ ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ. Chris VanLandingham rightly notes that in both Romans 2.13 and 3.20 the verb δικαίω ‘accurately describes the moral state of the subject(s)’, but in 3.20 this analytical accuracy is maintained by the negation of the verb.<sup>26</sup> It is the ‘doers of the law’ who are righteous before God (παρὰ [τῷ] θεῷ, 2.13), but since no one is righteous on this basis (3.10), no one will be justified before God (ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ, 3.20). From all that Paul has said since Romans 1.18, and from all that *Wisdom* says, this universal lack of positive correspondence can only mean the universal presence of negative correspondence. For all its diversity of expression, correspondence is the *conditio sine qua non* of this (theo)logical paradigm. Thus, as *Wisdom* might say, if none are righteous then all are properly objects of the Red Sea of divine judgment (*Wis.* 10.19). Similarly, Paul’s exclusion of the righteous erases the

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8. The equation of verb and adjective in Romans 2.13 is understandable in these terms and thus it is the breaking of the link between ‘doing the law’ and ‘being righteous’ in Romans 3.20 that occasions Paul’s paradoxical use of the verb in Romans 3.24, etc.

<sup>26</sup> C. VanLandingham, *Judgment and Justification in Early Judaism and the Apostle Paul* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2006), 226. His attempt to reconcile these two verses by suggesting that 2.13 refers to believing Gentiles whereas 3.20 refers to unbelieving Jews fails to account for the dynamic of Romans 3.19: the law speaks to Jews so *that* the entire world (πᾶς ὁ κόσμος) might be accountable to God.

possibility of the positive soteriological outcomes described in Romans 2.7, 10 and 13. If no one will be justified then all will be condemned (cf. Rom 2.8, 9; 3.20). For *Wisdom* this is the end. For Paul this is the *new beginning*.

#### *Another Kind of Righteousness: Romans 3.21-26*

‘How’, Nietzsche parodies the metaphysicians, ‘could something originate in its antithesis? Truth in error, for example.... Such origination is impossible’.<sup>27</sup> Romans 3.9-20 establishes the universality of the antithesis of righteousness: ‘all are under sin’ (3.9), ‘no one is righteous’ (3.10), ‘no one does the good’ (3.12), ‘the entire cosmos is answerable to God’ (3.19), ‘by works of law no flesh will be justified before God’ (3.20).<sup>28</sup> To adapt Nietzsche’s question, how can righteousness originate in unrighteousness? Such origination is impossible. ‘But now’, out of its antithesis, ‘the righteousness of God is revealed’. Whether or not this announcement of ‘the impossible possibility’<sup>29</sup> promises ‘a revaluation of all antique values’<sup>30</sup> is beyond the scope of this thesis; but it will be argued that from *Wisdom*’s perspective this Pauline declaration does require a revaluation of the antique value of righteousness.

The preceding section established two relevant points for the interpretation of Romans 3.21-26: 1) δικαιοσύνη is conceptually determined by correspondence; 2) Paul locates this required correspondence principally in the Jewish law. These mutually-interpreting propositions condition the reader of Romans to expect a revelation of righteousness according to the law or, in Pauline terms, ἐξ ἔργων νόμου.<sup>31</sup> As noted above, however, it is precisely this

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<sup>27</sup> Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 33.

<sup>28</sup> F. Watson, *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles: Beyond the New Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 219-31 argues, rightly in my opinion, that the conclusion of 3.19-20, following on as it does from the catena of 3.10-18, is the voice of the law speaking through its canonical interpreters, announcing the failure of its own project and thereby testifying to the righteousness apart from law.

<sup>29</sup> K. Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans* (trans. E.C. Hoskyns; Oxford: OUP, 1933), 92.

<sup>30</sup> Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 75.

<sup>31</sup> Whether ἔργα νόμου refers generally to the performance of the law (e.g. D.J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* [NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996], 209) or more narrowly to those elements of the Mosaic code which functionally separate Jew and non-Jew (e.g. J.D.G. Dunn, ‘The New Perspective on Paul’ *BJRL* 65 [1983]: 95-122) is relatively inconsequential for the present argument. Both interpretations preserve the requisite element of correspondence in that both law-doing and social-definition via the law provide a criterion of law-defined fit for the objects of divine saving action. That being said, the conceptual and lexical links between Romans 2.13 and 3.20, together with the grounds on which justification by works of law is ruled out (i.e. the universality of sin; Rom 3.9-19) and the action verbs regularly associated with νόμος (e.g. ποιέω, πράσσω, φυλάσσω, τελέω) suggests that general law-observance is indicated. This interpretation appears to be confirmed by Paul’s generalization of this terminology in Romans 4.2-6; 9.11-12, 32; 11.5-6 and the early interpretations of this Pauline language in James 2.14-26, Ephesians 2.8-9, 1 Timothy 1.9 and Titus 3.5.

possibility that Romans 3.20 declares impossible: ἐξ ἔργων νόμου οὐ δικαιοθήσεται πᾶσα σὰρξ. The impossibility of this possibility is the context out of which Paul proclaims the possibility of the impossible: νυνὶ δὲ χωρὶς νόμου δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ πεφανέρωται (Rom 3.21). A revelation of righteousness ‘apart from law’, in a context in which the law names the required criterion of fit, is necessarily a revelation of righteousness ‘without correspondence’. It is, to adapt Philo’s phrase, the arrival of a divine δικαιοσύνη that does *not* work κατ’ ἀξίαν, but, strangely, operates χωρὶς ἀξίας (to adapt a Pauline phrase). *Wisdom’s* reply is not hard to imagine: how is a revelation of righteousness devoid of the correspondence that determines the concept anything other than an irrational instance of calling injustice justice? This question provides the heuristic context for the dialogical exegesis of Romans 3.21-26 that follows.<sup>32</sup>

### *The Justification of God and the Godless*

Luther’s autobiographical reminiscence describes the exegetical experience of countless readers of Romans: ‘I had been captivated with a remarkable ardour for understanding Paul in the epistle to the Romans.... but a single saying in chapter one [δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ]...stood in my way’.<sup>33</sup> When the phrase δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ first appears in Romans (1.17), Paul’s syntax (γάρ) suggests that his reference to ‘the righteousness of God’ is explanatory, but the spilt ink and blood in which the *Wirkungsgeschichte* of this Pauline concept is written tells a different story: this part of Paul is ‘hard to understand’ (2 Pet 3.16). But Luther’s question – what does δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ mean? – would not be *Wisdom’s* first question (though it might be its last; see below). *Wisdom’s* definition of δικαιοσύνη is pre-determined by the protological order. The meaning of divine δικαιοσύνη is therefore a given: God’s righteousness is the consistent correspondence between the form and objects of his actions. This pre-historical definition, however, necessarily comes to historical expression. As argued above (chapter four), the Exodus event is for *Wisdom* the principal exemplification of divine justice, not because it reveals righteousness *de novo*, but because it instantiates the

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<sup>32</sup> Markus Bockmuehl’s lament about ‘the interpretative jungle’ of Mark 12.1-9 applies at least as well to Romans 3.21-26: ‘critical problems abound, and the academic bibliography on [Romans 3.21-26] is vastly overpopulated even by the standards of the anthill known as New Testament studies’ (*Seeing the Word: Refocusing New Testament Study* [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006], 215). For our purposes, the proposed topics of conversation (i.e. justice and grace) provide a measure of interpretative focus by allowing the dialogue, rather than the debate(s) *du jour*, to determine the relevance of the numerous *crucis interpretum*.

<sup>33</sup> M. Luther, *Preface to the Complete Edition of Luther’s Latin Writings*, in LW 34 (ed. L.W. Spitz; Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1960), 336-37.

correspondence between divine act and human subject that defines δικαιοσύνη.<sup>34</sup> It is thus the *location*, rather than the *definition*, of δικαιοσύνη that would shape *Wisdom's* question: where is the righteousness of God revealed?

Working from this question, a two-word Pauline phrase again presents itself. Instead of beginning with δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ, this section will start with ἐν αὐτῷ (Rom 1.17). The argument will unfold in three stages. First, filling in the gospel content of ἐν αὐτῷ, the Pauline location of the revelation of divine righteousness will be considered: δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ is revealed in the divine act that is the single and saving history of the crucified and risen Christ. Second, the *telos* of this event will be explored as it comes to expression in Romans 3.25-26: the Christ-event, in addition to disclosing (Rom 1.17; 3.21), also demonstrates and establishes – and thus (re)defines – the righteousness of God. Finally, taking our cue from the καί that links the justification of God and the justification of the ungodly (3.26b), the meaning of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ in Romans 3.21-22 will be addressed: the righteousness of God enacted in the gospel event includes and grounds the disjunctive declaration that sinners who are ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ are righteous before God.<sup>35</sup> Thus, in contrast to *Wisdom's* reading of the Exodus as an exemplification of a pre-defined, because pre-creational, justice, Paul ‘reads’ the Christ-event as a genuine revelation and thus radically rethinks and redefines divine righteousness in consequence of and in connection with the ‘redemption that is in Christ Jesus’ (3.24).

(1) *The righteousness of God is revealed in the crucified and risen Christ.*

Approaching Romans from *Wisdom* invites a methodology that works from the Pauline location of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ to its Pauline definition. This interpretative movement from ‘where’ to ‘what’ is not especially innovative. Beginning with the pioneering work of Cremer, a *religionsgeschichtliche* method (working from antecedents to contextual meaning) has underwritten the hermeneutical assumption that defining δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ in Paul requires finding δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ outside of and before Paul.<sup>36</sup> In other words (and in contrast to the

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<sup>34</sup> For *Wisdom's* rewriting of Genesis and Numbers as, respectively, anticipations and recapitulations of the Exodus logic see chapter four.

<sup>35</sup> This exegetical strategy of working back to δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ is similar to Campbell, *The Deliverance of God*, 683.

<sup>36</sup> H. Cremer, *Die paulinische Rechtfertigungslehre im Zusammenhange ihrer geschichtlichen Voraussetzungen* (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1899). For recent examples of this methodological tendency see M.F. Bird, *The Saving Righteousness of God: Studies on Paul, Justification and the New Perspective* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2006), 15; G. Turner, ‘The Righteousness of God in Psalms and Romans’, *SJT* 63.3 (2010): 285-301 and N.T. Wright, ‘The Book of

present search for the *Pauline* location of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ), the ‘where’ question posed by the method especially associated with Ernst Käsemann’s 1961 address to the Oxford Congress<sup>37</sup> concerns the *pre*-Pauline location of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ. The methodologically representative thesis of Cremer and Käsemann is that the meaning of Paul’s ‘righteousness of God’ phrases is locatable within the religious context and theological lexicon of the Old Testament and Early Judaism. In Käsemann’s programmatic words, ‘I begin my own attempt to interpret the facts by stating categorically that the expression’, and Stuhlmacher would add ‘the concept’,<sup>38</sup> ‘δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ was not invented by Paul’.<sup>39</sup> Thus, in a manner somewhat analogous to *Wisdom*’s assumption that God’s righteousness is built into the order and logic of creation and therefore pre-defined, Cremer and his interpretative heirs argue that δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ, because it pre-dates Paul, has a pre-defined trajectory of use into which Paul’s usage can be slotted and within which Paul’s usage can be interpreted. To quote Käsemann again, δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ is a ‘formulation which Paul has taken over’<sup>40</sup> – a formulation which, as Brauch summarises the then ‘recent German discussion’, ‘Paul uses...for a new interpretation of the Christian salvation-event’.<sup>41</sup> In other words, from where Paul stands in the history of his

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Romans’, in *NIB X* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002), 403. What is notable is not that these scholars agree on what ‘the righteousness of God means’ – Wright, for example, explicitly argues for a covenantal orientation against Käsemann’s creational focus –, but that the method of determining this definition by working to Paul from lexical and conceptual antecedents is broadly consensual.

<sup>37</sup> E. Käsemann, “‘The Righteousness of God’ in Paul”, in *New Testament Questions Today* (trans. W.J. Montague; London: SCM, 1969), 168-82. Käsemann’s lecture-turned-essay crystalized the earlier work of A. Oepke (‘δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ bei Paulus, *TLZ* 78 [1953]: cols. 257-63) and was subsequently expanded and defended by C. Müller, *Gottes Gerechtigkeit und Gottes Volk* (FRLANT 86; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1964); K. Kertelge, ‘*Rechtfertigung*’ bei Paulus (Münster: Aschendorff, 1967); P. Stuhlmacher, *Gerechtigkeit Gottes bei Paulus* (FRLANT 87; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1965).

<sup>38</sup> Cf. P. Stuhlmacher, *Reconciliation, Law and Righteousness: Essays in Biblical Theology* (trans. E. Kalin; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 82.

<sup>39</sup> Käsemann, “‘The Righteousness of God’”, 172. The formula stems from Deuteronomy 33.21 and, on the evidence of *T. Dan* 6.10 and 1QS 10.25; 11.12, is said to be a staple of Jewish apocalyptic (Käsemann, *Romans*, 30). As Campbell notes, attempts ‘to broaden the lexical base for Käsemann’s analysis’ and thereby expand the textual base for his thesis have been ‘only partially successful’ (*The Rhetoric of Righteousness in Romans 3.21-26* [JSNTSup.; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992], 146).

<sup>40</sup> Käsemann, “‘The Righteousness of God’”, 173.

<sup>41</sup> M.T. Brauch, ‘Perspectives on “God’s Righteousness” in Recent German Discussion’, in E.P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (Minneapolis, Fortress, 1977), 534. See also, Turner, ‘The Righteousness of God’, 285: ‘Far from rejecting [his] Old Testament inheritance, Paul takes over this doctrine of “righteousness through faithfulness” as it stands in the Psalms’.

religion, δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ is a given – a ‘feste Formel’<sup>42</sup> – which Paul employs to interpret God’s act in Jesus.

Reading Romans in conversation with *Wisdom*, however, exposes a kind of double-irony embedded in the approach of Käsemann and his hermeneutical kin. First, working from Paul’s textual tradition to the Pauline texts supposes that Paul, like *Wisdom*, works with and from an antecedently defined conception of divine righteousness. This tendency is especially apparent in Stuhlmacher where the interpretation of ‘the expression “God’s righteousness” ...in Paul’s letters’ is essentially reduced to determining what ““God’s righteousness” in the Old Testament and early Judaism means’.<sup>43</sup> But Paul’s texts stubbornly refuse explanation in these terms. As Romans 9.30-10.4 demonstrates, Paul’s scriptural and theological heritage names δικαιοσύνη and incites Israel to pursue it (Rom 9.31), but, for Paul, the content of God’s righteousness cannot be abstracted from its revelation in Christ (Rom 1.17; 3.21-26; 10.4). In other words, although Paul, in using the expression δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ, is speaking the language of Deuteronomy, David, Deutero-Isaiah and Daniel,<sup>44</sup> it is, as Paul interprets the crisis of his present, precisely the readers of these scriptural texts who are ‘ignorant of the righteousness of God’ (ἀγνοοῦντες τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην, Rom 10.3; cf. Phil 3.4-9). Thus, while ‘the law and prophets witness to the righteousness of God’, it is not in the law and the prophets that the righteousness of God is revealed. Rather, ‘the righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel’ (Rom 1.17).<sup>45</sup> Consequently, and here we arrive at our second irony, to locate the meaning of Paul’s ‘righteousness of God’ phrases in their scriptural and intertestamental

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<sup>42</sup> E. Käsemann, ‘Gottesgerechtigkeit bei Paulus’, *ZThK* 58 (1961): 367-78. The claim of Oepke, Käsemann and Stuhlmacher that δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ is a *terminus technicus* is seriously problematised by the limited number of Old Testament and Early Jewish texts that actually contain the formula (Deut 33.21; *T. Dan* 6.10; 1QS 10.25, 11.12; 1QM 4.6 and less certainly *1 En.* 71.14) and the linguistic flexibility with which Paul expresses the correlation of δικαιοσύνη and θεός (Rom 1.17; 3.5, 21, 22, 25, 26; 10.3; 2 Cor 5.21; Phil 3.9; see especially E. Güttgemanns, ‘“Gottesgerechtigkeit” und strukturelle Semantik: Linguistische Analyse zu δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ’, *Studia linguistica Neotestamentica*, BEvTh 60 [Munich, 1971], 5-98).

<sup>43</sup> P. Stuhlmacher, *Revisiting Paul’s Doctrine of Justification: A Challenge to the New Perspective* (trans. D.P. Bailey; Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2001), 18-19.

<sup>44</sup> Richard Hays is probably correct to detect an echo of Psalm 97.2 (LXX) in Romans 1.16-17 (*Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989], 36), but this linguistic allusion should not be allowed to determine Paul’s theological semantics in abstraction from his overt scriptural citation (Hab 2.4 in Rom 1.17b; so rightly Watson, *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith*, 47-53) and his ‘localizing’ reference to the ‘righteousness of God’ that is revealed ‘in the gospel’ (cf. M.A. Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness: Paul’s Theology of Justification* [NSBT 9; Leicester: Apollos, 2000], 46).

<sup>45</sup> For a critique of defining δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ on the basis of the concept’s ‘prehistory’ see H. Conzelmann, ‘Current Problems in Pauline Research’, *Int* 22 (1968): 170-86 (80); cf. S.K. Williams, ‘The “Righteousness of God” in Romans’, *JBL* 99 (1980): 241-90 (244).

antecedents is to find δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ in a place Paul never put it. For Paul, ‘the righteousness of God’ is not a conceptual *a priori* that enables him to gauge the soteriological significance of Jesus’ history. Rather, ‘the righteousness of God’ is that which ‘has been made visible’ (φανερώ) in the event Paul calls ‘the redemption that is in Christ Jesus’ (Rom 3.21a, 24) and ‘continues to be unveiled’ (ἀποκαλύπτω) in the revelatory proclamation of the same (Rom 1.16-17).<sup>46</sup> In the (all but forgotten) words of the first edition of Barth’s *Römerbrief*, ‘Die Wirklichkeit der Gerechtigkeit Gottes im Christus ist das Neue im Evangelium’.<sup>47</sup>

Thus, to suggest that Paul theologises from an inherited notion of divine righteousness to an interpretation of the Christ-event is to read Paul backwards. Paul does not use δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ to make sense of what happens in Jesus; for Paul, δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ just is what happens in Jesus (cf. 1 Cor 1.30). As Campbell writes, ‘what Christ has achieved and therefore disclosed...must be the content of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ’.<sup>48</sup> In linguistic terms, while the semiotics of divine righteousness are of Old Testament and early Jewish stock, Jesus, in his saving singularity, is the semantics of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ.<sup>49</sup> The interpretative movement, then, is not from a pre-existent conceptuality to an articulation of the gospel in its pre-defined terms. Rather, Paul deduces a definition of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ from its revelation in the gospel. As Luther might say, ‘omnia vocabula in Christo novam significationem accipere’.<sup>50</sup>

Contained within this methodological contrast is a formal answer to *Wisdom*’s question about the specifically Pauline location of ‘the righteousness of God’: Paul does not locate δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ in the preexisting theological grammar of his textual tradition; for Paul, ‘the righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel’ (Rom 1.17). Formal answers, however, beg

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<sup>46</sup> J.M.G. Barclay, ‘Paul’s Story: Theology as Testimony’, in *Narrative Dynamics in Paul: A Critical Assessment* (ed. B.W. Longenecker; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 146 captures the dynamic relationship between the past and present of the Christ-event: ‘Although the crucifixion of Christ was indeed an event in history, it punctures other times and other stories not just as a past event recalled but as a present event....In the preaching of the gospel, time becomes, as it were, concertinaed, and the past becomes existentially present’. It is this interplay between the event’s ‘own time’ and its persistent ‘timeliness’ that Jüngel attempts to express with the (somewhat infelicitous) definition of the gospel as the ‘eschatological Time-Word of God’ (*Justification*, 68).

<sup>47</sup> K. Barth, *Der Römerbrief (Erste Fassung) 1919* (Gesamtausgabe II: Akademische Werke; edited by Hermann Schmidt; Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1985), 23.

<sup>48</sup> Campbell, *The Deliverance of God*, 683.

<sup>49</sup> This of course implies that there is something about these semiotics that makes them apropos as the lexical articulation of the new semantics of the Christ-event (see below). In this sense, tracing linguistic trajectories is useful so long as the data such an investigation yields are utilised within a framework that imagines the possibility that experience and/or event can generate a word-usage that breaks out of, though does not therefore necessarily lose all contact with, an expression’s previous employment (cf. Seifrid, ‘Paul’s Use of Righteousness Language’, 39-40, 58).

<sup>50</sup> M. Luther, *Disputatio de divinitate et humanitate Christi* (1540; WA 39/II, 94, 17f.).

material questions. More concretely, the formal assertion that ‘the righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel’ raises a material question about the content of the Pauline gospel. According to the opening lines of Romans, ‘God’s son [Jesus Christ]’<sup>51</sup> is the subject matter of ‘God’s gospel’ (εὐαγγέλιον θεοῦ... περὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ, 1.1, 3).<sup>52</sup> However, as the ‘complex double statement’<sup>53</sup> separating τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ and Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ indicates, the name Jesus does not signal an abstract state of being. Rather, as Barth suggests, ‘the name Jesus defines an historical occurrence’.<sup>54</sup> Between Jesus’ identity as God’s son (1.3) and risen Lord (1.4) stands a comprehensive and constitutive history: the *one who is* Jesus Christ is ‘*the one who* was born of the seed of David’ and ‘*the one who* was designated Son of God by resurrection’ (1.3-4).<sup>55</sup> The ‘gospel concerning God’s son’ is thus identical to this son’s history. As Ferdinand Hahn puts it, ‘Das Evangelium hat einen konkreten Inhalt: Es ist die heilstiftende Botschaft vom Handeln Gottes in der Geschichte Jesu Christi’.<sup>56</sup> In Pauline terms, the εὐαγγέλιον θεοῦ... περὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ (Rom 1.1, 3) is the εὐαγγέλιον ὃ εὐηγγελισάμην of 1 Cor 15.1-4: Χριστὸς ἀπέθανεν...καὶ ἐγήγερται.

For Paul, then, the events of Jesus’ life – especially the events of the cross and resurrection – are not just, or even primarily, sequential saving events on the horizontal stage of human history; they are christological predicates. Just as the participial phrases that separate τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ and Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ suggest that, as Watson remarks, ‘Jesus is his own

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<sup>51</sup> Cranfield, *Romans*, 1.65 rightly notes that Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ is in apposition to τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ.

<sup>52</sup> Richard Hays (*Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989], 85) suggests taking περὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ with γραφαῖς ἀγίας rather than εὐαγγέλιον θεοῦ, but the christological focus of 1.3-4 indicates that περὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ identifies the subject matter of the gospel (so most commentators, e.g. Calvin, Cranfield, Dunn, Käsemann). However, as J.R. Daniel Kirk notes (*Unlocking Romans: Resurrection and the Justification of God* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008], 44-45 n.56), Gal 3.1-18 and especially 1 Corinthians 15.1-4 demonstrate the interdependence of scripture and gospel in Pauline theology: the gospel of the crucified and resurrected Son of God accords with and is pre-promised in Israel’s scriptures (cf. Wilckens, *Römer*, 1.63-64).

<sup>53</sup> Wright, ‘Romans’, 416.

<sup>54</sup> Barth, *Romans*, 29.

<sup>55</sup> That Jesus’ identity as God’s Son (τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ, 1.3) both pre-exists and is established by his history (τοῦ ὀρισθέντος υἱοῦ θεοῦ, 1.4) resists the common charge of adoptionism (*pace* Käsemann, *Romans*, 13) and reflects an ontology in which being and becoming are dynamically rather than diametrically related. As is regularly noted, the transition from ‘God’s Son’ to ‘God’s Son in power’ indicated by ὀρίζω is probably best understood in terms of messianic eschatology, drawing both on enthronement theology (L.W. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003], 104) and resurrection theodicy (i.e. this is a prolepsis of the expected ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν; Wilckens *Römer*, 1.65).

<sup>56</sup> F. Hahn, *Theologie des Neuen Testament* (2 Vols.; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 1.202.

life-story; his identity is not detachable from his history',<sup>57</sup> Paul's use of relative clauses (Rom 4.25) and substantival participles (Rom 8.34) indicate that the 'who' of Jesus' identity cannot be abstracted from the 'what' of Good Friday and Easter. In Paul's words, Jesus is 'the one who was handed over...and was raised' (ὃς παρεδόθη...καὶ ἠγέρθη, Rom 4.25); or as Romans 8.34 has it, Jesus is 'he who died' and 'he who was raised' (Χριστὸς [Ἰησοῦς] ὁ ἀποθανών, μᾶλλον δὲ ἐγερθείς; cf. 2 Cor 5.15; 13.4). In this sense, the christological content of the gospel is inseparable and finally identical with the evangelical-event that is the cross and resurrection. Jesus is the crucified and risen one and therefore the gospel about God's son is the gospel of Golgotha and the empty grave. To gloss Romans 1.17 in these terms, the righteousness of God is revealed in the event of the crucified and risen Christ.

As *Wisdom* would read that final clause, it is the 'and' that joins the cross and resurrection that would render the Pauline claim to revealed righteousness nonsensical. The story of the persecuted and vindicated righteous person (*Wis.* 2-5) is an ancient parable of Badiou's recent axiom: 'the event is not death; it is resurrection [immortality]'.<sup>58</sup> Within *Wisdom's* theodicy, the death of the righteous, rather than revealing the righteousness of God, contradicts the principle of correspondence and thus implicitly generates a (Pauline) question: Is there injustice with God? As argued in chapter two, *Wisdom's* μὴ γένοιτο takes the form of the promise of immortality (*Wis.* 3.4), but, as indicated above, this is more than an eschatological trumping of death; it is the definitive reestablishment of the correspondence between human subject and divine action. The death of the righteous is an historical manifestation of injustice because it implies an incongruity between the righteousness of the victim and the inactivity of God: εἰ ἐστὶν ὁ δίκαιος υἱὸς θεοῦ, ἀντιλήμψεται αὐτοῦ (2.18; cf. 2.20). Immortality is thus an expression of divine justice because it replaces the disjunction between righteousness and death with the congruent conjunction of δικαιοσύνη and ἀθάνατος (1.15: δικαιοσύνη ἀθάνατός ἐστιν).

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<sup>57</sup> F. Watson, 'The Quest for the Real Jesus', in *The Cambridge Companion to Jesus* (ed. M. Bockmuehl, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 166. Cf. H. Frei, *The Identity of Jesus Christ: The Hermeneutical Bases of Dogmatic Theology* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 1997), 186.

<sup>58</sup> Badiou, *Saint Paul*, 66. Badiou's concern is to avoid the Hegelian tendency to construe the cross and resurrection dialectically and, less overtly, to guard against Nietzsche's charge of a Pauline fascination with suffering and death. However, as Stephen Chester argues, Badiou's presentation of the cross as a non-evental 'condition of immanence' blunts his own reading because it denies the Pauline basis for the 'exclusion of all existing discourses of truth': it is Christ *crucified* that is a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles' ('Who Is Freedom For? Martin Luther and Alain Badiou on Paul and Politics', in *Paul, Grace and Freedom: Essays in Honour of John K. Riches* [London: T&T Clark, 2009], 109-10).

Read from this perspective, Paul's location of the revelation of divine righteousness in the *death* and resurrection of 'the one who knew no sin' (2 Cor 5.21) appears, to give it a Pauline twist, both scandalous and foolish. The cross – both in terms of its content (the death of the righteous) and, to anticipate our exegesis below, its effects (the justification of ungodly) – is a contradiction. This means, for *Wisdom*, the event of the cross is necessarily in conflict with the principle of correspondence which, by pre-definition, determines the meaning of δικαιοσύνη. And, in the Rock-Paper-Scissors of *Wisdom's* theology, 'pre' beats 'but now'. For Paul, by contrast, 'but now' signals a semantic revolution. Whereas *Wisdom* would know the cross to be an instance of injustice because, as a contradiction, it conflicts with the pre-definition of righteousness as correspondence, Paul deduces the definition of δικαιοσύνη from the divine act that manifests (φανερῶ, Rom 3.21a),<sup>59</sup> demonstrates (ἔνδειξις, 3.25, 26a) and establishes (εἰς τὸ εἶναι, 3.26b) the righteousness of God. For this reason, the 'and' that joins cross and resurrection is not, as a christological reading of *Wisdom* 2-5 might suggest,<sup>60</sup> a Badiou-like concession that death is the requisite condition – the 'mortal site' – for the event Paul calls Resurrection.<sup>61</sup> The cross, rather, as the explicit naming of the divine subject in Romans 3.25 and the implied subject of the passive verbs and participles of Romans 4.25 and 8.34 suggest, is, with the resurrection, the divine act that constitutes the evangelical identity of Jesus. In Bultmann's precise formulation, 'Jesus Christ the Crucified and Risen One' is 'God's eschatological act'.<sup>62</sup>

Romans 3.21-26, at least in part, is Paul's attempt to define 'the righteousness of God' by describing the act of God in Christ that reveals, shows and constitutes it. It is *God* who 'put Jesus forward as a ἰλαστήριον' and thus, for Paul, the cross is a divine action and as such an instance of divine self-disclosure. The exegetical implication, as Jüngel rightly notes, is that we must let Paul 'decide on what a righteous God is like, not on the basis of the normal use of

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<sup>59</sup> The perfect tense of the verb φανερῶ, as Jewett following Bockmuehl ('Das Verb φανερῶ im Neuen Testament: Versuch einer Neuauswertung', *BZ* 32 [1988]: 87-99), argues, 'points to the historical salvation event in Jesus Christ' (R. Jewett, *Romans* [Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007], 273 n.37).

<sup>60</sup> See e.g. *Barnabas* 6.7, Justin Martyr (*Dial.* 17), Augustine (*Civ. Dei* 17.20.1).

<sup>61</sup> Badiou, *Saint Paul*, 68-73.

<sup>62</sup> Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, 1.3. Barth, similarly, refers to the gospel as 'God's act fulfilled in him for us' (*CD* IV/1, 137). Barth's addition of 'for us' picks up the *pro nobis* orientation of, for example, Romans 4.25 and 1 Corinthians 15.3-4. Jesus' identification with his saving history 'for us' problematizes Wright's claim that the gospel is 'Jesus Christ is Lord' and thus not 'you can be saved' ('New Perspectives on Paul', in *Justification in Perspective: Historical Developments and Contemporary Challenges* [ed. B.L. McCormack; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006], 249). For Paul, Jesus just is 'the righteousness of God for us' (1 Cor 1.30).

concepts, but only on the basis' of the event that 'justifies [God and] the ungodly'.<sup>63</sup> This means that an exegetical definition of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ in Paul will be deductive and descriptive in form; it will, with Paul, define 'the righteousness of God' from (deductive) and as (descriptive), to anticipate our argument, God's justifying act of judgment in Christ.

(2) *The telos of the Christ-event is the demonstration and establishment of God's righteousness.*

'The righteousness of God' is revealed in the divine act that is the singular and saving history of the crucified and risen Christ. Thus far our argument. In Romans 3.24-26, however, the divine act that is 'the redemption that is in Christ Jesus' and in which the righteousness of God is revealed does not just contain the cross; it centres on it. As Paul's thrice repeated purpose clause indicates, the divine act of putting Jesus forward as a ἱλαστήριον is teleological: ὄν προέθετο ὁ θεὸς ἱλαστήριον...εἰς ἔνδειξιν τῆς δικαιοσύνης αὐτοῦ...πρὸς τὴν ἔνδειξιν τῆς δικαιοσύνης αὐτοῦ...εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτὸν δίκαιον (Rom 3.25-26). In other words, within the singular yet complex history of Jesus, the cross is the decisive and defining disclosure of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ.<sup>64</sup> Thus, to take up Jüngel's exegetical invitation to allow Paul to 'decide on what a righteous God is like...on the basis' of the event that 'justifies [God and] the ungodly' is necessarily to define divine righteousness by describing the death of Jesus in which that righteousness is demonstrated (ἔνδειξις, 3.25, 26a) and established (εἰς τὸ εἶναι, 3.26b).

Before attempting this descriptive and deductive act of interpretation, however, it is worth recalling, as emphasised above, that *Wisdom* would hear this Pauline assertion as a confused claim that the definitive demonstration of divine justice is located in the event, which according to *Wisdom* 2.17-20, is the acme of injustice. How, *Wisdom* would no doubt ask, can the death of 'the one who knew no sin' (2 Cor 5.21) be anything other than, to borrow Kant's famous characterisation of the cross, a 'moral outrage'<sup>65</sup> – a bizarre and threatening inversion of the logic and goodness of the created order? To answer this question in Pauline

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<sup>63</sup> Jüngel, *Justification*, 78. Cf. Seifrid, 'Paul's Use of Righteousness Language', 59: 'The Christ-event itself provides the final definition of the language'.

<sup>64</sup> In this sense, the kerygmatic act of announcing the gospel is the ever present apocalypse of divine righteousness (Rom 1.17) precisely as 'the word of the cross' (1 Cor 1.18). Thus, while Robert Jenson is right to challenge Schleiermacher's claim that the resurrection 'does not belong to foundational elements of faith in Christ' (see F. Schleiermacher, *Der Christliche Glaube*, 99.2), he overstates his correction by saying 'the Crucifixion is God's salvific action just in that God overcomes it by the Resurrection' (*Systematic Theology: Volume I* [Oxford: OUP, 1997], 182).

<sup>65</sup> I. Kant, *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone* (New York: Harper & Row, 1960), 164.

terms is to exegete Romans 3.25-26.<sup>66</sup> My thesis can be summarised as follows: Romans 3.25-26, interprets the cross as the actualisation of the eschatological judgment described in Romans 2.4-10; but, whereas Romans 2.4-10 portrays a future judgment in accordance with human worth, Romans 3.25-26 announces the enactment of that future judgment in the ‘now’ of Jesus’ death.

As discussed more fully above (and in chapter six), Romans 2.4-11 reminds the anthropologically deluded judge (2.1-3) that divine patience and kindness intends, as *Wisdom* 11.23 agrees, repentance (εἰς μετάνοιαν, 2.4). This suggests, as Romans 2.5 explicitly states, that God’s forbearance, because it is telic, is temporary. The present is the period of patience (χρηστότης, ἀνοχή, μακροθυμία, 2.4), but this era ends ‘on the day of wrath which is the revelation of the righteous-judgment of God’ (ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ὀργῆς καὶ ἀποκαλύψεως δικαιοκρισίας τοῦ θεοῦ, 2.5). The form of this δικαιοκρισία is a future judgment in which one’s fate (ζωή αἰώνιος or ὀργή καὶ θυμός) corresponds (κατά + accusative) to one’s subjective (τὰ ἔργα) worth (ὁ ἐργαζόμενος τὸ ἀγαθόν or ὁ κατεργαζόμενος τὸ κακόν, 2.6-10). At this stage in the rhetorical progression of Romans, life and wrath are both imagined as soteriological options in accordance with the respective possibilities of human virtue and vice. As the argument unfolds, however, it becomes evident that, in terms of the specific criterion of correspondence (i.e. doing the law’, 2.13), ‘all are under sin’ (3.9) and thus ‘no one is righteous’ (3.10). Correspondingly, God’s righteousness (θεοῦ δικαιοσύνη) takes the form of wrath (ὁ θεὸς ὁ ἐπιφέρων τὴν ὀργήν, 3.5). Thus, when the eschatological judgment is re-described in Romans 3.19-20 the reality of universal unrighteousness meets the consequence of the principle of correspondence: ἐξ ἔργων νόμου οὐ δικαιωθήσεται πᾶσα σὰρξ ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ.

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<sup>66</sup> The various *hapax legomena* (ἰλαστήριον, πάρεσις, προγεγονότα ἁμαρτήματα), together with some unusual word usage (προτίθημι, αἷμα) and apparent Pauline interpolations (διὰ [τῆς] πίστεως) are strong indicators that Paul here incorporates a pre-Pauline (hymnic) formula. E. Lohse (*Martyrer und Gottesknecht. Untersuchungen zur urchristlichen Verkündigungen vom Sühntod Jesu Christi* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1995], 149-150) is probably right to limit the fragment to Romans 3.25-26a (cf. Jewett, *Romans*, 270-71; E. Lohse, *Der Brief an die Römer* [KEK 4; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003], 131-32). While tradition-historical considerations will rarely feature in the following analysis, the forthcoming suggestion that Romans 3.25-26 be interpreted in a kind of dialectical dialogue with Romans 2.4-5 suggests that Paul, in employing and adapting this traditional formula, did so, not just because of its familiarity or because he wished to correct a Jewish-Christian tradition (pace Müller, *Gottes Gerichtigkeit*, 109-11), but because it suited his rhetorical and theological purposes (cf. Wright, ‘Romans’, 417).

‘Accordingly’ can encounter ἀδικία only as a word of condemnation. From all Paul has said thus far, and from all *Wisdom* says, there would appear to be nothing more to say. ‘But’ – which is quite a different word than ‘correspondingly’ – Paul speaks again: God’s righteousness (3.25-26) has met human unrighteousness (3.23), not with the ‘accordingly’ of condemnation, but with the ‘nevertheless’ of justification (3.24). In Barth’s memorable and profoundly Pauline words, ‘The righteousness of God is that “nevertheless” by which He associates us with Himself and declares Himself to be our God.’<sup>67</sup> This “nevertheless” contradicts every human logical “consequently”. But, we can imagine *Wisdom* asking Nietzsche’s question, ‘how can something originate in its antithesis’? One way to give a Pauline answer to this question is to read Romans 3.25-26 in light of Romans 2.4-5.

While commentators occasionally note the lexical link between Romans 2.4 and 3.26a, the way in which ἀνοχή functions within parallel plotlines is rarely observed.<sup>68</sup> The use of ἀνοχή to characterise an era in contrast to a time defined by the disclosure of divine righteousness (δικαιοκρισία τοῦ θεοῦ, 2.5; δικαιοσύνη αὐτοῦ, 3.26) signals the telling of a similar story. As Bornkamm remarks, in Romans ‘the periods of salvation history’ are ‘placed in contrast to each other as the time of patience and the time of the showing of righteousness’.<sup>69</sup> In context, this observation is offered by Bornkamm as an exegesis of Romans 3.25-26, but, as it stands, it functions as an equally apt description of the implicit plotline of Romans 2.4-5. As discussed above, Romans 2.4 characterises the present as the time of God’s kindness and patience and contrasts this with the coming apocalypse of God’s righteous-judgment (2.5). Within this narrative sequence, the end of the era of divine patience is the arrival of the eschaton in the form of a future judgment (2.5-10).

Romans 3.24-26 tells a sequentially similar though drastically different story. Whereas Romans 2.4-5 contrasts the *present* era of patience with the *future* enactment of justice in the form of a judgment κατὰ τὰ ἔργα, Romans 3.25-26 presents the *past* as the time of the ἀνοχή τοῦ θεοῦ, the time in which God delayed the revelation of his righteous-judgment ‘by passing over former sins’ (διὰ τὴν πάρεσιν τῶν προγεγονότων ἀμαρτημάτων)<sup>70</sup> and juxtaposes this era,

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<sup>67</sup> Barth, *Romans*, 93

<sup>68</sup> Cranfield, *Romans*, 1.211 is a partial exception; cf. Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness*, 65.

<sup>69</sup> G. Bornkamm, ‘The Revelation of God’s Wrath’, in *Early Christian Experience* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), 49.

<sup>70</sup> The connection between Romans 2.4-5 and 3.25-26 tells decisively against W. G. Kümmel’s insistence that πάρεσις should be translated ‘forgiveness’ rather than ‘passing over’ (Πάρεσις und ἔνδειξις. Ein Beitrag zum

not with the *future* ‘day of wrath’, but with the *present* demonstration of divine righteousness that is the cross. Thus, in narrative terms, God’s act of putting Jesus forward as a ἱλαστήριον is functionally parallel to ‘the revelation of God’s righteous-judgment’.<sup>71</sup> In other words, – and here we arrive at this section’s central thesis – the ‘now’ (ἐν τῷ νῦν καιρῷ) of Jesus’ death is the eschatological enactment of the future judgment; it is, in Balthasar’s words, ‘the full achievement of the divine judgment’.<sup>72</sup> Expressed in terms of the parallel between Romans 2.5 and 3.25-26a, the present ‘demonstration of divine righteousness’ (ἐνδειξιν τῆς δικαιοσύνης αὐτοῦ, 3.25, 26a) is the actualisation of the promised ‘revelation of God’s righteous-judgment’ (ἀποκαλύψεως δικαιοκρισίας τοῦ θεοῦ, 2.5).<sup>73</sup> The ‘now’ of the cross is the ‘day of wrath’, and it is precisely as such that it is the act/event of God’s righteousness (cf. Rom 3.5).<sup>74</sup> According to the righteous decree of the righteous God (Rom 2.5; 3.5-6), sinners ‘are worthy of death’: τὸ δικάϊωμα τοῦ θεοῦ...ὅτι οἱ τὰ τοιαῦτα πράσσοντες ἄξιοι θανάτου εἰσίν (Rom 1.32). The death of Jesus, at least in the first instance, is the demonstration of divine righteousness because it is

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Verständis der paulinischen Rechtfertigungslehre’, in *Heilsgeschehen und Geschichte: Gesammelte Aufsätze. 1933-1964* [ed. W. G. Kümmel; Marburg: Elwert Verlag, 1965], 260-70).

<sup>71</sup> This implies that the metaphorical function of ἱλαστήριον within Paul’s account of the atonement in Romans 3.25-26 operates within the interpretation of the cross as eschatological judgment. It is not just that liberative (ἀπολύτρωσις) and cultic (ἱλαστήριον) metaphors function as independent though complementary ‘lines of approximation’ (Barth, *CD IV/1*, 274) to the ultimately non-metaphorical truth of God’s salvific act. Rather, in Romans 3.25-26 ἱλαστήριον and ἀπολύτρωσις are coordinated by, and thus contribute to, an account of the cross as the event of divine judgment. For a dogmatic account of the ordering of atonement metaphors in similar terms see J. Terry, *The Justifying Judgement of God: A Reassessment of the Place of Judgement in the Saving Work of Christ* (Paternoster Theological Monographs; Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2007).

<sup>72</sup> Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Mysterium Paschale* (trans. A. Nichols; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1990), 119. Cf. P.T. Forsyth, *The Justification of God* (London: Latimer House, 1948), 183; H. Ribberbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology* (trans. J.R. de Witt; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 168.

<sup>73</sup> This does not mean, as Barth mistakenly claims (*A Shorter Commentary on Romans* [trans. D.H. van Daalen; London: SCM Press, 1959], 24-26), that the ‘day’ of Romans 2.5 (cf. 1.18; 2.16) refers to the cross; but it does suggest, however paradoxically, that the future judgment referred to in 2.5-10 occurs on the cross (cf. Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness*, 65-66). Thus, while Paul continues to affirm the futurity of judgment (Rom 14.10-12; 1 Cor 3.12-15; 4.4-5; 2 Cor 5.10), his consideration of its soteriological shape in Romans 8.31-34 is determined by God’s prior and ongoing act in his Son. The relationship between present and future justification is thus exactly the reverse of what Wright suggests: present justification is not an accurate ‘anticipation of the future verdict’ (Wright, ‘The New Perspective on Paul’, 260); the future word of justification is an echo and effect of the justifying judgment enacted in the cross (cf. n.87).

<sup>74</sup> This suggests that ἱλαστήριον should be interpreted as a metaphorical expression of the cross as judgment. While this would tend to support a propitiatory reading, ‘propitiation’ remains a potentially misleading translation: 1) Jesus does not act to appease God’s wrath; rather God acts in Jesus to savingly resolve his contention with sinful humanity. 2) The language of ‘appeasement’ can distract from the sense in which the cross is the enactment of divine wrath operative within the definitive demonstration of divine love (Rom 5.8). ‘Place of atonement’ is probably the best we can do as a translation as it contains this propitiatory focus without eliminating the expiatory echo in the reference to ‘former sins’ and it captures the reference to the ‘mercy-seat’ (Exod 25.17-22; Lev 16.1-34; see D. Bailey, ‘Jesus as the Mercy Seat: The Semantics and Theology of Paul’s use of Hilasterion in Romans 3:25’ [PhD diss., University of Cambridge, 1999]).

the enactment of this decree.<sup>75</sup> As Romans 8.3-4 indicates, for Paul, the cross is the condemnation of sin and as such the fulfillment of τὸ δίκαιωμα τοῦ νόμου. Preston Sprinkle rightly notes that ‘given the emphasis on divine agency’ in 8.3 and the passive form of πληρώω, ‘it is unlikely that πληρωθῆ ἐν ἡμῖν refers to the active fulfillment of the law by believers, but to the act of God in satisfying the...requirements of the law’.<sup>76</sup> What Sprinkle fails to notice, however, is that the passive fulfillment of ‘the righteous requirement of the law’ in and through the death of Jesus suggests that God’s act of condemning sin in the flesh of his Son fulfills the τὸ δίκαιωμα τοῦ νόμου (8.4) as τὸ δίκαιωμα τοῦ θεοῦ (1.32). In other words, while it is right to read the singular form in 8.4 as a reference to ‘sum-total of what the law requires’,<sup>77</sup> the law’s requirement in its confrontation with human sin is οἱ τὰ τοιαῦτα πράσσοντες ἄξιοι θανάτου εἰσὶν (Rom 1.32; cf. Gal 3.10). In this sense, the death of Jesus as the condemnation of sin and the judgment of sinners is the revelation of the righteousness of God.<sup>78</sup>

Herein lies Paul’s answer to *Wisdom*’s question: the cross is the demonstration of divine righteousness, not as the salvific antithesis to divine judgment, but as the proleptic occurrence of the promised ‘revelation of God’s righteous-judgment’ and thus the enactment of the divine decree (Rom 1.32) and the fulfillment of the law’s condemnatory requirement (Rom 8.3-4). The death of Jesus, in other words, is not the circumvention of God’s contention with sinful humanity (Rom 1.18; 3.9-20); it is the completion of that contention in the eschatological judgment that is God’s condemnation of sin in the flesh of his Son.<sup>79</sup> In this sense, the cross is the ‘correspondingly’ that necessarily links human unrighteousness and divine wrath (Rom 3.5), but – and here we approach what Jüngel calls ‘the deepest secret of God’s righteousness’<sup>80</sup> – the ‘correspondingly’ of divine judgment contains and effects, not as its counterpart but as

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<sup>75</sup> Cf. J.A. Linebaugh, ‘Debating Diagonal Δικαιοσύνη: The *Epistle of Enoch* and Paul in Theological Conversation’, *Early Christianity* 1 (2010): 107-128.

<sup>76</sup> P. Sprinkle, *Law and Life: The Interpretation of Leviticus 18.5 in Early Judaism and in Paul* (WUNT II.241; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 188.

<sup>77</sup> Sprinkle, *Law and Life*, 188 n.89; cf. Moo, *Romans*, 481 n.55. Others have suggested that the singular form anticipates the love-command of 13.8-10 (e.g. A.J. Bandstra, *The Law and the Elements of the World: An Exegetical Study in Aspects of Paul’s Theology* [Kampen: J.H. Kok, 1964], 107-08; R.W. Thompson, ‘How Is the Law Fulfilled in Us? An Interpretation of Rom. 8.4’, *Louvain Studies* 11 [1986]: 31-40), but this is questionable considering the absence of the love-command from the immediate context, and the passive verb implies a salvation historical rather than ethical orientation (so rightly, Sprinkle, *Law and Life*, 188 n.90; cf. Wright, *Romans*, 580).

<sup>78</sup> For a recent interpretation of Romans 3.21-26 that reads ‘the righteousness of God’ as both ‘*iustitia distributiva*’ and ‘*iustitia salutaris*’, see G. Theißen, *Erleben und Verhalten der ersten Christen: Eine Psychologie des Urchristentums* (Munich: Gütersloher, 2007), 315-16.

<sup>79</sup> Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness*, 66.

<sup>80</sup> Jüngel, *Justification*, 87.

its consequence, the ‘nevertheless’ of justification (Rom 3.24, 26b). It is therefore accurate to gloss ‘the righteousness of God’ as *iustitia salutaris*,<sup>81</sup> not because it is opposed to or the overcoming of divine judgment, but because in the death of Jesus, as Seifrid comments, ‘the contention between the Creator and the fallen creature is decided in God’s favor and yet savingly resolved’.<sup>82</sup> The condemnation of sin (Rom 8.3) grounds the non-condemnation of the sinner (Rom 8.1). In this sense, the Christ-event has a two-part *telos*: ‘God put Jesus forward as a ἱλαστήριον...in order to demonstrate his righteousness’ (Rom 3.25), but this same act (παραδίδωμι) is also διὰ τὰ παραπτώματα ἡμῶν (and the inextricably linked raising of the crucified is διὰ τὴν δικαίωσιν ἡμῶν [Rom 4.25; cf. 1 Cor 15.3-5]). The cross, then, is both *pro deo* and *pro nobis*. In the words of Paul’s final and strongest purpose clause: God put Jesus forward as a ἱλαστήριον...εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτὸν δίκαιον καὶ δικαιοῦντα (Rom 3.26b).<sup>83</sup> The death of Jesus is thus the establishment of God’s justice as the event of divine judgment and the establishment of God as the justifier as the event of justification. As Barth puts it, ‘the right of God’ is enacted in his judgment and ‘the justification of man takes place in the eventuation of this judgment’.<sup>84</sup> Justification is therefore a consequence of judgment. In other words (and to anticipate our next section), the God who judges ungodliness on the cross is, in that way, the God ‘who justifies the ungodly’ (Rom 4.5).

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<sup>81</sup> Cremer, *Die paulinische Rechtfertigungslehre*, 33.

<sup>82</sup> Seifrid, ‘Paul’s Use of Righteousness Language’, 59. Seifrid goes on to note that while Old Testament and early Jewish descriptions of God’s righteousness imagine the enactment of saving righteousness for God’s people and condemning righteousness for God’s enemies (e.g. Pss 7.1-17; 89.5-18; Isa 11.3-5), ‘there is no [antecedent] definition of “righteousness”...which adequately accounts for the simultaneity of righteous wrath and the gift of righteousness of which Paul speaks’ (59). The scholarly tendency to equate righteousness and salvation (see e.g. Bird, *The Saving Righteousness of God*, 14-5; cf. Stuhlmacher, *Gottesgerechtigkeit*, 98), while correctly emphasising the salvific orientation of much biblical and early Jewish usage (e.g. Ps 98.1-3; Isa 46.13; CD 20.20; 1 En. 99.10), is reductionistic insofar as it fails to account for the dual possibilities of salvation and condemnation. (It is notable, as Seifrid observes, that the LXX never translates ἁγία - terms with a word based on the σωτ- root; ‘Paul’s Use of Righteousness Language’, 51-52).

<sup>83</sup> The apparent contradiction in this formulation suggests that *Wisdom’s* author would likely read the καὶ as concessive (e.g. Moo, *Romans*, 242); but while this interpretation captures the incongruity between divine justice and the objects of justification (see below), the grounding of this dual-predication (just and justifier) in the single event of the cross that judges and justifies supports an explicative reading of the καὶ: God is righteous as and in that he justifies those who are ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ (cf. Campbell, *Deliverance of God*, 673; Jewett, *Romans*, 292; Jüngel, *Justification*, 75; Käsemann, *Romans*, 101).

<sup>84</sup> Barth, *CD IV/1*, 528.

(3) *The righteousness of God enacted in the crucified and risen Christ includes and effects the justification of the ungodly.*

Thus far we have argued that Paul locates the righteousness of God in the divine act that is the one, redemptive history of Jesus and that, within this single and saving history, the cross is the central and defining demonstration of divine righteousness because it is the enactment of God's eschatological judgment. As noted above, however, the *καί* that links the divine predicates 'just' and 'justifier' (Rom 3.26b) indicates that the death of Jesus is simultaneously the event of judgment *and* justification; it is, to borrow Justyn Terry's phrase, 'the justifying judgment of God'.<sup>85</sup> Thus, to both summarise and anticipate our argument, 'the righteousness of God', as it is revealed and enacted on the cross, is God's eschatological judgment against ungodliness and God's eschatological justification of the ungodly. The previous section focused on the justification of God in and as the judgment of the cross; this section will consider the disjunctive justification of sinners that this judgment effects and includes.

As argued above, Paul's righteousness language in Romans 2.1-3.20, like *Wisdom's* usage throughout, is determined by the correspondence between divine act and human worth: God's righteous-judgment (*δικαιοκρισία*) will be revealed when he repays each human subject in accordance with her or his subjectivity (*ἀποδώσει ἑκάστῳ κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ*, Rom 2.5-6). It is thus the 'doers of the law who will be justified' (*οἱ ποιηταὶ νόμου δικαιωθήσονται*, 2.13), but on the basis of this criterion of correspondence *οὐκ ἔστιν δίκαιος οὐδὲ εἷς* (3.10). *Correspondingly*, God's righteousness (*θεοῦ δικαιοσύνη*) necessarily encounters human unrighteousness (*ἡ ἀδικία ἡμῶν*) in the form of wrath (*ὀργή*, 3.5). In this hamartiological context, divine and human justification are mutually exclusive: the justification of God (3.4-5) entails the non-justification of sinful humanity (3.19-20).

But, as argued above in relation to Romans 3.25-26, the divine act that is the death of Jesus establishes God as 'just' and 'justifier' and thus effects the impossible – the concurrent justification of God and sinful humanity. Here, as in Romans 2.13 and 3.19-20, divine and human justification are located in an event of eschatological judgment; but in Romans 3.24-26 eschatological justification takes the present tense (*δικαιούμενοι*; cf. 3.28 and the aorist of

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<sup>85</sup> Terry, *The Justifying Judgement of God*; cf. P. Stuhlmacher, 'The Theme of Romans', in *The Romans Debate* (ed. K.P. Donfried; Peabody: Hendrickson, 1977), 333-45 (339): the justification of 'sinners who believe is...the result and effect of the righteousness which God himself demonstrates in the surrender of his Son'.

δικαίω in 5.1, 9) because it is effected by the arrival of the eschatological judgment in the now of the cross.<sup>86</sup> This judgment, however, unlike Romans 2.13; 3.20, is fundamentally disjunctive: God demonstrates his righteousness in an event that grounds and effects the forensically nonsensical declaration that sinners (Rom 3.23) are righteous (Rom 3.24, 26b). The tension here with the theological grammar of Romans 2.1-3.20 and *Wisdom* suggests that δικαιοσύνη has lost its supposed univocity; but this is merely to raise again the question of the whence and whither of Paul's contextually peculiar theological semantics.

The arrival of this alternate reality is signaled by the *vuvì dé* of Romans 3.21. Contextually, the adversative *δέ* serves what Jochen Flebbe terms a 'logisch-rhetorischen Funktion in der Opposition zu V.20', but what Flebbe fails to ask – and thus to answer – is what generates and grounds this logical-rhetorical contrast.<sup>87</sup> The structural antithesis between Romans 3.20 and 3.21 suggests that the soteriological pattern of the apart-from-law-manifestation of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ (3.21) relates antithetically to the (excluded) possibility of justification before God by works of law (3.20).<sup>88</sup> In this sense, *vuvì dé* announces a theological actuality that Romans 2.13 and 3.19-20 declare a logical impossibility – the disclosure of divine righteousness apart from the criterion of correspondence (*χωρὶς νόμου*). But – and this is the point Flebbe misses – the logical contrast between Romans 3.20 and 3.21 is not between two abstract soteriological theses; rather, Romans 3.21 describes an event that appears illogical from the theological perspective of Romans 2.1-3.20 (and *Wisdom*). In other words, the logical fault-line that divides Romans 3.20 and 3.21 is generated by the more elemental and

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<sup>86</sup> Stuhlmacher (*Justification*, 14) is therefore right to argue that 'justification involves an act of judgment' and is 'decidedly located in the final judgment', but he underemphasises the Pauline stress on the 'now-ness' of this justifying judgment. Even more problematic is Wright's already-noted insistence that present justification is 'an anticipation of the future verdict' to be rendered at the final judgment ('New Perspective on Paul', 260; cf. P.F. Esler, *Conflict and Identity in Romans: The Social Setting of Paul's Letter* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003], 161). For Paul, present justification does not *anticipate* the verdict of final judgment; it is that verdict effected by the arrival of God's eschatological judgment in the now of Jesus' death (and resurrection; cf. Rom 4.25). Thus, while future and present justification/judgment are logically (and chronologically) distinguishable (compare Rom 3.24-26, 28; 5.1, 9 with Rom 8.33-34), they are not, at least for Paul, separable.

<sup>87</sup> J. Flebbe, *Solus Deus: Untersuchungen zur Rede von Gott im Brief des Paulus an die Römer* (BZNW 158; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 68.

<sup>88</sup> It may be possible to trace this antithetical parallelism in chiasmic form:

A ἐξ ἔργων νόμου  
 B οὐ δικαιοθήσεται ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ  
 C διὰ νόμου  
 C<sup>1</sup> χωρὶς νόμου  
 B<sup>1</sup> δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ  
 A<sup>1</sup> διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ

eschatological dialectic between reality *ante* and *post Christum*. The ‘now’ of Romans 3.21 anticipates the ἐν τῷ νῦν καιρῷ of 3.26a and thus the manifestation of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ (3.21) cannot be isolated from the demonstration of God’s righteousness in the divine judgment that is the death of Christ (3.25-26). The contrast between Romans 3.20 and 3.21 is thus properly eschatological: νυνὶ δέ names the arrival of the eschaton in the divine saving act that is identical to the single and saving history of Jesus.<sup>89</sup> The logical contrast between Romans 3.20 and 3.21 is therefore deduced from and descriptive of the *event* that Romans 3.21-26 announces – an event that both is and effects the illogical: the demonstration of divine righteousness in the death of ‘the one who knew no sin’ (see above) and the concurrent declaration that sinners are righteous (see below).

Romans 3.21-26 can thus be said to describe an event and the new reality it creates. The first indications of the new-ness of this theological reality are the so-called *particulae exclusivae* – that is, the mutually-interpreting assertions that δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ is manifested χωρὶς νόμου and is δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (3.21a, 22a). We will return to the positive coordination of righteousness and ‘faith of Jesus Christ’ below; for now our interest is in the expression χωρὶς νόμου.<sup>90</sup> For Dunn, because he contrasts χωρὶς νόμου with the phrase ἐν τῷ νόμῳ in Romans 3.19, “‘Without the law’...means outside the national and religious parameters set by the law’,<sup>91</sup> it means, to quote Gathercole’s summary of Dunn, ‘outside the sphere of the law...in a sociological sense’.<sup>92</sup> However, as the brief structural analysis of the antithetical parallelism between Romans 3.20 and 3.21 above suggests, the contrast is not between righteousness ‘in the law’ and ‘without law’, but between righteousness ‘by works of law’ and ‘apart from law’ – that is, between a righteousness that is determined by

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<sup>89</sup> Käsemann, *Romans*, 93 rightly notes the significance of the duration indicated by the perfect tense of φανερώ: ‘the eschaton is paradoxically present but the present is not the eschaton’.

<sup>90</sup> It is often supposed that the radicality of this statement is qualified by Paul’s ‘balancing’ clause in 3.21b: μαρτυρουμένη ὑπὸ τοῦ νόμου καὶ τῶν προφητῶν. However, as I have argued elsewhere (Linebaugh, ‘Debating Diagonal Δικαιοσύνη’, 121 n.43) it is unlikely that νόμος has the same reference in 3.21a and 3.21b. The latter refers to the entire Pentateuch, as is evident from its use within a common taxonomy referring to the Jewish scriptures as a whole (“the law and the prophets”; e.g. Matt 7.12; John 1.15; Acts 13.15). The former, by contrast, takes its cue from 3.20 in which the νόμος in question is the same as in Romans 2 where it was qualified by verbs such as ποιέω (v. 13), πράσσω (v. 25), and τελέω (v. 27) and understood as a series of commandments, all taken from the Decalogue in 2.20-23, which one can transgress (παραβάτης, 2.25, 27). This νόμος is therefore better understood in the more limited sense of the Sinaitic legislation. Paul is thus saying that the entire sacred corpus, including the Pentateuch (νόμος), witnesses to the revelation of God’s righteousness apart from the law given at Sinai (νόμος).

<sup>91</sup> Dunn, *Romans*, 1.165.

<sup>92</sup> Gathercole, ‘Justified by Faith’, 151.

correspondence (ἐξ ἔργων νόμου) and a righteousness that is disjunctive (χωρὶς νόμου).<sup>93</sup> The correspondence that connects divine righteousness and human unrighteousness can only be expressed in an illocutionary act of non-justification: οὐ δικαιοθήσεται πᾶσα σὰρξ (Rom 3.20; cf. 3.5). In this sense, the righteousness of the law is what *Wisdom* would call the ‘fitting judgment’ (ἄξια κρίσις, 12.26) of the ungodly. But Paul announces a demonstration of divine righteousness that is at once the enactment of God’s judgment against ungodliness (Rom 1.17-18; 3.25-26; 8.3-4; cf. 2 Cor 5.21) and the justification of the ungodly (Rom 4.5). Paul’s declaration that δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ is manifested χωρὶς νόμου, because it eliminates the criterion of correspondence, opens up the possibility of this apparently unjust justification of sinners; Romans 3.23-24 names this possible impossibility as a theological actuality.

As argued at length in the previous chapter, for Paul, in contrast to *Wisdom*, there is no anthropological distinction (οὐκ ἔστιν διαστολή, Rom 3.22b). This is true positively in terms of soteriology – the righteousness of God through Christ-faith is εἰς πάντας τοὺς πιστεύοντας (Rom 3.22a, see below) – and negatively in terms of hamartiology – πάντες ἥμαρτον καὶ ὑστεροῦνται τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ (Rom 3.23). In this latter sense, the righteousness revealed in God’s act in Christ is an affirmation of Romans 1.18 and 3.9-20 before it is their antithesis – ‘all sinned’. Thus, to quote Wilckens, ‘Die Ausschaltung des Gesetzes bedeutet nicht seine Umgehung’.<sup>94</sup> However, as Romans 3.25-26 indicates (and as I have argued elsewhere), ‘the judgment of the sinner contains within it, not as its complement but as its consequence, the justification of the judged’.<sup>95</sup> The objects of the divine saving action implied in the passive participle δικαιούμενοι (3.24) are the sinners of 3.23,<sup>96</sup> and therefore as Dunn rightly and paradoxically remarks, ‘it is precisely those who have sinned and fallen short of God’s glory who are justified’.<sup>97</sup> Sharply put, the righteousness of God that is revealed apart from law does

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<sup>93</sup> This does not mean that χωρὶς νόμου does not contain revolutionary sociological potential. As will be argued below, the dissociation between righteousness and the expected criterion of correspondence implied by χωρὶς νόμου erases any and all lines of anthropological distinction (Rom 3.22b) and thus grounds the universality of this disjunctive δικαιοσύνη – it is εἰς πάντας (Rom 3.22a, 29-30).

<sup>94</sup> Wilckens, *Römer*, 1.186.

<sup>95</sup> Linebaugh, ‘Debating Diagonal Δικαιοσύνη’, 119.

<sup>96</sup> Following Cranfield (*A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* [2 vols. ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1975], 1.205), I take as the subject of 3.24 the ‘all’ of 3.23 while recognizing that 3.24 continues the main theme from 3.21-22. Campbell (*The Rhetoric of Righteousness*, 86-92) is probably correct to see the anthropological statement of 3.23 as an elaboration of the “all the believing ones” of 3.22 such that the subject of the passive form of δικαιώω in 3.24 is doubly qualified by the ‘all of faith’ and the ‘all sinned’.

<sup>97</sup> Dunn, *Romans*, 1.168. So also Wilckens, *Römer*, 1.188 n.39: “die Sünde aller [ist] also der Ort, an dem die Gottesgerechtigkeit wirksam wird”.

not follow the expected pattern of correspondence; for Paul, δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ operates at and is operative as the disjunction between divine act and human subject: πάντες ἥμαρτον... δικαιοῦμενοι.<sup>98</sup> In contrast to the analytic agency of justice in *Wisdom* 1.8-11 (cf. 5.18), the righteousness of God that Paul proclaims locates and labels unrighteousness in order to create its opposite (*creatio ex contrario*).<sup>99</sup> Thus, for *Wisdom*, the Pauline link between πάντες ἥμαρτον and δικαιοῦμενοι can only be interpreted as a theological oxymoron, an instance of forensic schizophrenia in which the judge accurately and analytically identifies sinners as sinners (3.23) only to overturn this just judgment with the apparently unjust declaration of justification. For Paul, however, this contradiction is contained within and communicative of the divine act that manifests, demonstrates and establishes God's righteousness.

The acuteness of this tension between *Wisdom* and Paul provides something of an apology for Bultmann's admittedly overstated assertion that the Pauline concept δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ is 'eine Neuschöpfung des Paulus'.<sup>100</sup> However much we might want to qualify Bultmann's claim, it remains the case that at this stage of the argument of Romans Paul is – to risk my own hyperbole – operating within a theological universe that is fundamentally incommensurable with the ordered cosmos *Wisdom's* author carefully constructs. *Wisdom's* world is built on two dualisms (righteous/ungodly; salvation/condemnation) and the consistent correspondence between them (righteous – salvation; ungodly – condemnation), and it is precisely the final immutability of this cosmic symmetry that underwrites the summons to 'love justice' (*Wisdom* 1.1). By contrast, Pauline theology, with its paradoxically inverted connection between anthropology and soteriology (sinner – justification), occurs within the 'new creation' (καινή κτίσις, Gal 6.15) Paul announces; but, crucially, the first movement of this new creation is an act of de-creation: the crucifixion of the cosmos by the cross (ἐν τῷ σταυρῷ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν

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<sup>98</sup> For a similar account, see Westerholm's discussion of what he calls 'extraordinary righteousness' (*Perspectives Old and New*, 273-84).

<sup>99</sup> In this respect, justification is rightly understood as an *actus forensis* effected by a *verbum efficax* (cf. Luther, *LW* 5.140). For Paul, as for Luther after him, the God who justifies the ungodly (Rom 4.5) is the God who gives life to the dead and calls non-being into being (Rom 4.17). The linking of these liturgical predications suggests an analogous form of divine activity in the acts of creation, resurrection and justification (Seifrid, *Christ, our Righteousness*, 56), which implies that justification is a constitutive – that is, creation-like – act: the divine word of justification creates the reality it speaks (cf. Rom 5.19; see Barth, *Romans*, 102; Jüngel, *Justification*, 210-11; Käsemann, *Romans*, 123). Wright's suggestion (*New Perspectives on Paul*, 258) that justification is a judicial recognition 'declaring that something is the case, rather than...making something happen or changing the way something is' mutes the immediacy of the Pauline connection between the divine act of justification and the human objects of justification: πάντες ἥμαρτον... δικαιοῦμενοι (Rom 3.23-24); ὁ δικαίων τὸν ἀσεβῆ (Rom 4.5); cf. Romans 5.6-10.

<sup>100</sup> R. Bultmann, 'ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣΥΝΗ ΘΕΟΥ', *JBL* 83 (1964): 12-16 (16).

Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ...κόσμος ἐσταύρωται, Gal 6.14). In other words (and to repeat what was said above in relation to the logical contrast between Romans 3.20 and 3.21), the fault-line between *Wisdom* and Pauline theology after the ‘but now’ is a world-breaking and -building event – that is, the divine enactment of eschatological judgment and justification in the crucified and risen Christ.

We have thus circled back to our starting point: Paul locates the revelation of divine righteousness in God’s action that is Jesus’ history. This, however, is not just a repetition of the above argument; it is an (anticipatory) exegesis of Romans 3.22a. Location and definition merge at this point: the righteousness of God is not only located in the Christ-event; for Paul, the righteousness of God is δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. This, as I will argue presently, is a divine righteousness that is negatively defined by non-correspondence (διὰ πίστεως) and positively defined by Christology (Ἰησοῦς Χριστός). While it is not my intention to enter into an extended discussion of the πίστις Χριστοῦ debate, this focused discussion of ‘the righteousness of God’ will take the form of a reply to two common arguments against the objective genitive reading: 1) the objective genitive makes human faith a material condition for divine saving action,<sup>101</sup> and 2) the grammatical difference between the objective genitive and subjective genitive reflects a theological difference between anthropocentric (objective genitive) and christocentric (subjective genitive) construals of Pauline theology.<sup>102</sup> In place of these misleading characterisations I will suggest: 1) faith is, in the first instance, the negation of correspondence and thus the affirmation rather than the disqualification of the unconditionality of divine saving action, and 2) the objective genitive interpretation and the solifidianism<sup>103</sup> it generates function to ‘designate the [christological] object of faith as the ground of justification’.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> See e.g. Campbell, *Deliverance of God*, 77-78; P.M. Sprinkle, ‘Πίστις Χριστοῦ as an Eschatological Event’, in *The Faith of Jesus Christ: Exegetical, Biblical and Theological Studies* (eds. M.F. Bird and P.M. Sprinkle; Peabody: Hendrickson, 2009): 165-84 (166).

<sup>102</sup> See e.g. R.B. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3.1-4.11* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), xxix; J. L. Martyn, ‘The Apocalyptic Gospel in Galatians’, *Int* 54 (2000): 246-66 (250).

<sup>103</sup> J.A. Null, *Thomas Crammer’s Doctrine of Repentance: Renewing the Power of Love* (Oxford: OUP, 2000), 5: ‘Derived from *sola fide*, solifidianism is the technical term for adherence to justification by faith alone’.

<sup>104</sup> Ribberbos, *Paul*, 172. Once these theological objections are countered, the strong semantic case for something like the objective genitive can be heard: 1) Paul’s instrumental faith clauses are derived from the ἐκ πίστεως of Habakkuk 2.4, which does not (*pace* R.B. Hays, *The Conversion of the Imagination: Paul as Interpreter of Israel’s Scripture* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005], 119-142) employ ὁ δίκαιος as a christological title but as a reference to the generic, believing human (Watson, *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles*, 240). 2) In Paul, Jesus is never the subject of the verb πιστεύω (Esler, *Conflict and Identity*, 157) and Paul’s habit of interpreting an instance of the verb

(i) *The Righteousness of Faith as Non-Correspondence*: Paul does not present faith as an abstraction; he presents it in an antithesis: ‘a person is not (οὐκ) justified by works of law (ἐξ ἔργων νόμου) but (ἐὰν μὴ) through faith in Jesus Christ (διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, Gal 2.16; cf. Rom 3.28). This antithesis is reflective of a Pauline pattern: πίστις and/or πιστεύω is set in contrast to νόμος and/or ἔργα and, as Matlock observes, ‘the middle term is δικαιοῦν or δικαιοσύνη’.<sup>105</sup> This syntactical structure becomes theologically significant at Romans 3.21-22. The righteousness of God to which the law and the prophets witness and which the gospel reveals is both χωρὶς νόμου and διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. The coordination of these mutually-interpreting assertions suggests, as Gathercole argues, ‘that χωρὶς in verse 21 is clearly the opposite of διὰ in verse 22’.<sup>106</sup> In other words, χωρὶς νόμου functions as a negative definition of διὰ πίστεως: “By faith” means “apart from law”;<sup>107</sup> or, expressed in terms of our dialogue with *Wisdom*, ‘by faith’ means ‘without correspondence’. Thus, to gloss ‘the righteousness of God’ as δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ διὰ πίστεως is, in the first instance, to define δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ in terms of the non-correspondence.

Romans 4.3-5 clarifies this point. As Paul’s citation of Genesis 15.6 indicates (ἐπίστευσεν δὲ Ἀβραάμ τῷ θεῷ...), Abraham is the unambiguous subject of the verb πιστεύω (4.3), and yet the antithesis of Romans 4.4-5 makes it impossible to interpret this human act as a criterion of correspondence. Precisely as the subject of πιστεύω, Abraham is ὁ μὴ ἐργαζόμενος – he is χωρὶς ἔργων (4.6) – and his justification is therefore the act of ‘the one who justifies the ungodly’. Here, as in Romans 3.21, πίστις, as an anthropological action, is an anthropological negation – it is the act of the ungodly in the absence of works (4.5, 6); it is what is present and possible when the criterion of correspondence (νόμος) is not. In this sense, ‘the righteousness

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in a citation with reference to the noun (e.g. Rom 4.3, 5; 9.32-33 10.5-11, 16-17) indicates that the meaning of the noun and verb have not drifted apart (R.B. Matlock, ‘Detheologizing the ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ Debate: Cautionary Remarks from a Lexical Semantic Perspective’, *NovT* 42 [2000]: 1-23 [13-14]; cf. Watson, *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles*, 243). 3). The question of redundancy in Romans 3.22, Galatians 2.16, 3.22 and Philippians 3.9 points to ‘a much wider pattern of repetition of πίστις/πιστεύω in Galatians and Romans, rooted in Genesis 15.6 and Habakkuk 2.4’ (R. B. Matlock, ‘Saving Faith: The Rhetoric and Semantics of πίστις in Paul’, in *The Faith of Jesus Christ: Exegetical, Biblical and Theological Studies* (eds. M.F. Bird and P.M. Sprinkle; Peabody: Hendrickson, 2009): 73-89 (89).

<sup>105</sup> Matlock, ‘Saving Faith’, 77 notes Galatians 2.16, 19, 20, 21; 3.2, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 18, 21, 22, 24, 26; 5.4, 5; Romans 3.20, 22, 25, 26, 27, 28, 30, 31; 4.3, 6, 11, 13, 14, 16; 5.1; 9.30, 32; 10.5, 6; Philippians 3.9; cf. Romans 4.4-5; 9.32 (Eph 2.8-9).

<sup>106</sup> Gathercole, *Where is Boasting*, 224. He adds, ‘the “righteousness of God revealed apart from the Law” in 3.21 is equivalent to “the righteousness of God through faith” in 3.22’.

<sup>107</sup> Watson, *Hermeneutics*, 72 (italics original).

of faith' – the righteousness that was reckoned to Abraham – is a disjunctive δικαιοσύνη; it is, in Westerholm's concise phrase, 'the righteousness of sinners' (3.23-24; 4.6-8).<sup>108</sup>

In this context, faith is not a new point of correspondence between divine saving action and human subjects;<sup>109</sup> it is an affirmation of the contradiction between the form and object of God's activity: God justifies the ungodly, gives life to the dead and calls non-being into being (Rom 4.5, 17). Thus, in Barth's words, '*sola fide*' is the 'great [anthropological] negation';<sup>110</sup> it is the site of non-correspondence – of ungodliness, deadness and nothingness (Rom 4.5, 17, 19) – at which the righteous God operates *ex contrario*. In this sense, faith is a human 'yes' to the divine 'no' that is the enactment of judgment in the death of Jesus.<sup>111</sup> Faith is an anthropological negation as an affirmation that the death of Jesus for sinners is the deserved death of sinners (Gal 2.20; Rom 6.3-8; cf. Rom 1.32; 6.23). But, to recapitulate the argument above, the object of faith is the God who acts in Jesus to judge *and* justify the ungodly. Faith lives in this contradiction: it is an anthropological 'no' because it says 'yes' to the eschatological judgment of the cross; but, to anticipate our argument below, it is also a theological 'yes' because it is directed to the God who, in the resurrection of the crucified (Rom 4.25), speaks (and thereby effects: *verbum efficax*) the inexplicable (and from *Wisdom's* perspective, illogical) 'yes' of justification.

(ii) *The Righteousness of Faith in Christ as Applied Christology*: In the introduction to the second edition of *The Faith of Jesus Christ*, Richard Hays argues that 'the greatest weakness of the traditional post-Reformation understanding of "faith" and "justification" in Paul is...that it offers no coherent account of the relation between the doctrine of justification and *christology*'.<sup>112</sup> In context, what Hays means is that the interpretative decision to read Christ as the object rather than the subject of faith contributes to the anthropocentric construal of

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<sup>108</sup> Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New*, 281.

<sup>109</sup> For a representative expression of the theological nervousness about the objective genitive making faith a material condition for divine action and thereby making soteriology contingent on human agency, see Sprinkle, 'Πίστις Χριστοῦ as an Eschatological Event', 166. This fear is based on an historical misreading. Calvin for example, while never referring to faith as a *causa materialis*, speaks of faith as the *causa instrumentalis* only in conjunction with the word that evokes it (Rom 10.17): '*verbum cum fide instrumentum*' (J. Calvin, 'Acts 14-28 and Romans 1-6', in *Calvin's Commentaries Volume XIX* [trans. J. Owen; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003], 138 n.2).

<sup>110</sup> Barth, *CD IV/1*, 621.

<sup>111</sup> Seifrid, *Christ, our Righteousness*, 66: 'In faith, one takes the side of God in his claim against oneself.'

<sup>112</sup> Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ*, xxix.

justification he associates with Bultmann,<sup>113</sup> whereas his (subjective genitive) reading of πίστις Χριστοῦ restores the Pauline relationship between Jesus and justification.<sup>114</sup> This, however, is a misreading of both Paul and Protestant theology.

For Paul, as argued above, faith is, in the first instance a negation; it the denial of anthropological correspondence and therefore the disqualification of anthropocentricity. For this reason, ‘faith’, to quote Ribberbos, ‘does not justify because of that which it is in itself, but because of that to which it is directed’.<sup>115</sup> And this is the theological import of the objective genitive: Jesus Christ, the object of faith, is designated as the sole condition and cause of justification: δικαιούμενοι... ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (Rom 3.24). In this sense, faith is both ‘the great [anthropological] negation’ and the great christological (and theological) affirmation.<sup>116</sup>

Romans 4 is again instructive. The Pauline antitheses that express the negative significance of faith also emphasise the centrality of its object. As Halvor Moxnes observes, the antithesis between ‘works’ and ‘faith’ in Romans 4.4-5 is asymmetrical because of the addition of the predication ‘the one who justifies the ungodly’ which directs the reader ‘not to faith *per se*, but to God, in whom one believes’.<sup>117</sup> The salvific subject here is not believing Abraham (he is ὁ μὴ ἐργαζόμενος) but the justifying God. This pattern reverberates throughout the chapter. Abraham’s faith lives at the disjunction between the content of God’s promise (‘so shall your offspring be’, Rom 4.18) and empirical reality (νέκρωσις, 4.19); but the grounds for this ‘hope against hope’ (4.18) is not an autonomous act of faith – even Abraham’s believing subjectivity is generated by God through the promise (cf. the passive forms of ἐνδυναμῶ and πληροφορέω, 4.20, 21)<sup>118</sup> – but the one in whom Abraham believes: ‘the God who makes alive the dead and calls non-being into being’ (Rom 4.17). Faith, in other words, is both an affirmation of the contradiction between anthropology and soteriology and an identification of the God who operates out of the opposite.

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<sup>113</sup> Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ*, xxv-xxvi.

<sup>114</sup> Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ*, xxix.

<sup>115</sup> Ridderbos, *Paul*, 172.

<sup>116</sup> Cf. Watson, *Hermeneutics*, 169: ‘Paul sets faith on the border between despair and hope and sees it facing in both directions. Faith is both despair of human capacity and hope in [the] saving act of God’.

<sup>117</sup> H. Moxnes, *Theology in Conflict: Studies in Paul’s Understanding of God in Romans* (NovTSup 53; Leiden: Brill, 1980), 42.

<sup>118</sup> M.A. Seifrid, ‘The Narrative of Scripture and Justification by Faith: A Fresh Response to N.T. Wright’, *CTQ* 72 (2008): 19-44 (43): ‘Faith for Paul is nothing other than the word of promise performing its work in those who believe’.

A similar dynamic is evident in Romans 3.21-22. The symmetrical contrast between ‘law’ and ‘faith’ is unbalanced by the identification of faith’s object: Jesus Christ. The effect, as in Romans 4.4-5, is to emphasise and identify the exclusivity of the *solus Christus* (or, in 4.5, the *solus Deus*). Faith responds to and is comprehended within the prior divine action that Paul calls ‘the redemption that is in Christ Jesus’ and thus, as the grammar indicates, the salvific agent here is not ὁ ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ, but the one who acts in and through Jesus to be ‘just and justifier’ – that is, ὁ θεός. The negation implied by the διὰ πίστεως is therefore an affirmation of the divine accomplishment of justification in Jesus: the function of the doctrine of righteousness by faith in Pauline (and Protestant) theology is to clarify and communicate the soteriological significance of Jesus for sinners. As Barth puts it, ‘What is the *sola fide* but a faint yet necessary echo [and, I would add, effect] of the *solus Christus*?’. Or again, ‘It is impossible to see how the *solus Christus*...can have any other correlative than the *fides Christi*, as the *sola fides*, which absolutely excludes all other helpers or helps’.<sup>119</sup> In other words, to say that ‘the righteousness of God’ is ‘the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ’ is to say that God’s eschatological act of judgment and justification is irreducibly and exclusively singular – it is Jesus Christ. Rather than qualifying this christological singularity (*solus Christus*) and the concomitant unconditionality (*sola gratia*, Rom 3.24; see below), the *sola fide* is their apophatic affirmation: διὰ τοῦτο ἐκ πίστεως, ἵνα κατὰ χάριν (Rom 4.16).<sup>120</sup>

Paul’s redefinition of divine righteousness as δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ is thus an instance of what Käsemann calls ‘applied Christology’:<sup>121</sup> ‘the righteousness of God’ is a description of (and its disjunctive definition is deduced from) God’s act in Jesus.<sup>122</sup> It is this event – this name – that divides Paul from *Wisdom*. Whereas *Wisdom* operates with a pre-definition of δικαιοσύνη that is exemplified in the correspondences of the Exodus event (righteous – saved; ungodly – destroyed), Paul redefines δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ in consequence of the contradictions contained within the divine act that reveals, demonstrates and establishes

<sup>119</sup> Barth, *CD IV/1*, 632.

<sup>120</sup> Käsemann, *Romans*, 101: ‘Precision is given to *sola gratia* by *sola fide*’. Cf. Jüngel, *Justification*, 149-226, 236-59 who demonstrates that the Reformational *solas* are ordered in such a way as to preserve *solus Christus*. The common charge that the objective genitive reading of πίστις Χριστοῦ is anthropological rather than christological is simply false at the level of historical theological description: the function of the *sola fide* is to safeguard and negatively affirm (not by human agency) the *sola gratia* and the *solus Christus*.

<sup>121</sup> Käsemann, *Romans*, 96. Bultmann’s similar sounding phrase, ‘Paul’s teaching of justification is...his real Christology’ (‘The Christology of the New Testament’, in *Faith and Understanding* [ed. R.W. Funk; London: Harper and Row, 1969], 262-85 [279]) is an overstatement insofar as it reduces Pauline Christology to justification.

<sup>122</sup> Cf. Campbell, *Deliverance of God*, 687: ‘δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ is a way of describing the Christ event for Paul’.

it (Christ – cross; judgment – justification). In other words, for Paul ‘the righteousness of God’ is the enactment of God’s eschatological judgment against ungodliness *in Jesus* and the effectuation of God’s eschatological justification of the ungodly *in Jesus*. Or, more to the point, ‘the righteousness of God’, precisely as ‘the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ’, is the divine act that is Jesus’ single and saving history.

### *Grace Redefined*

The word χάρις in Romans 3.24 was consciously underemphasised in the foregoing exegesis of Romans 3.21-26. The ‘redemption that is in Christ Jesus’ which effects the justification of sinners as it demonstrates and establishes God’s righteousness is, according to 3.24, the event of divine grace (δωρεὰν τῆ αὐτοῦ χάριτι). That God’s grace can manifest God’s justice is a maxim *Wisdom* would happily affirm, but the notion that grace can take the form of a judgment against ungodliness that effects the justification of the ungodly (see above) points to a crucial difference. Whereas *Wisdom* locates the justice of divine benefaction in the correspondence between gift and recipient, Romans 3.23-24 names sinners as the incongruous beneficiaries of the Christ-gift. This section will explore this tension between fitting (*Wisdom*) and unfitting (Romans) grace and argue that in parallel to the incommensurable definitions of righteousness identified above, *Wisdom* and Romans articulate ultimately incompatible theologies of God’s grace.<sup>123</sup>

### *Congruous and Conditioned Χάρις: Wisdom and the Fitting Gift*<sup>124</sup>

As argued above, *Wisdom* conceives of divine justice as a duality of divine action: judgment for the ungodly and salvation for the righteous. It is the salvific side of this dualism

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<sup>123</sup> John Barclay (‘Believers and the Last Judgment in Paul: Rethinking Grace and Recompense’, 8) has recently noted that while there have been numerous reconsiderations of the place of ‘works’ and ‘law’ in Pauline theology, there have been ‘surprisingly few attempts to deconstruct inherited assumptions about grace’. Partial exceptions to this trend can be found in Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New*, 341-351 and H.-M. Rieger, ‘Eine Religion der Gnade: Zur “Bundesnomismus”-Theorie von E.P. Sanders’, in *Bund und Tora: Zur theologischen Begriffsgeschichte in alttestamentlicher, frühjüdischer und urchristlicher Tradition* (eds. F. Avemarie and H. Lichtenberger; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996) 129-61 (both cited by Barclay). This section is a far cry from the ‘wholesale reconsideration of what Paul meant by this terminology, in his ancient Jewish and Graeco-Roman context’ (8 n.20; underlining original), but together with our earlier discussions of ‘grace’ in Philo and Seneca, the present dialogue between Paul and *Wisdom* is at least *part* of this ‘reconsideration’.

<sup>124</sup> *Wisdom*’s theology of grace was detailed in chapter three. The purpose of this section is to reintroduce, in summary form, the basic contours of *Wisdom*’s ‘gift-theory’ in order to facilitate a conversation with Paul on this topic.

that *Wisdom* calls grace.<sup>125</sup> In other words, divine grace, because it is, at least in part, a facet of divine justice, exhibits a patterned correspondence between God's saving gift and its human recipients. Thus, in *Wisdom* 4.15, God's χάρις is directed towards 'his holy ones' (τοῖς ὁσίοις αὐτοῦ; cf. 3.9). Similarly, in 3.14, it is the law-observant and faithful eunuch to whom God gives (δίδωμι) his χάρις. In both cases, the justness of divine benefaction is displayed in the identifiable affinity between benefit and beneficiary. The justice of grace, however, does not disqualify the graciousness of grace.<sup>126</sup> As demonstrated in conversation with Philo and Seneca in chapter three, the conceptual context for *Wisdom's* grace-discourse is the social and theological realm of 'gift'. While Seneca relates the necessity of giving to the 'worthy' (*dignus*) to the social function of establishing and fostering relationships by the discriminant exchange of benefits, Philo's insistence that God's gifts are coordinated with human 'worth' (ἀξία) serves a decidedly theological purpose. For Philo, the ἄξιος-χάρις link does not imply that the 'worthy' earn divine grace, a thought Philo explicitly repudiates (*Sacr.* 54);<sup>127</sup> rather the 'fit' between God's gifts and recipients ensures that divine action, benefaction included, reflects the rationality, justice and fairness of the God who is φιλόδωρος (*Leg.* 3.166).

A similar dynamic is evident in *Wisdom's* meditation on the educational and salvific activity of divine σοφία, God's ultimate gift (ἡ χάρις, 8.21). As one who works in concert with, though is distinguishable from, personified δίκη (1.6-8), *Wisdom*, precisely as χάρις, operates within the parameters of the cosmic moral order she established and sustains. This means, in Exodus-like fashion, she avoids the ungodly (1.4; cf. 7.25) and associates with the righteous (6.12; 7.27; 10.4, 5, 6, 10, 13). Thus, while *Wisdom* is proactively self-disclosing (φθάνει προγνωσθῆναι, 6.13), her seeking is selective: τοὺς ἀξίους αὐτῆς αὐτὴ περιέρχεται ζητοῦσα (6.16). While this single criterion of 'fittingness' (ἄξιος) can be met by a variety of human actions directed toward *Wisdom* (e.g. seeking [6.12, 17; 8.2], desiring [6.13, 17, 20; 8.2], requesting [7.7.; 8.21; 9.1-18], loving [6.12, 17; 8.2], serving [10.9]), none of these verbs imply a cooperative soteriology. Human worth is a *condition* of divine grace, but it is never its *cause*;

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<sup>125</sup> God's love (ἀγαπάω, 11.24) and mercy (ἐλεέω, 11.23) are said to extend to the objects of God's judgment, but this mercy, rather than saving the ungodly, takes the form of decelerated destruction (12.8-11; cf. 12.2).

<sup>126</sup> Both Seneca (*De Beneficiis* I.15.6) and Philo (*Post.* 142-47) indicate that it is in fact the absence of the discriminate matching of benefit to beneficiary that renders the gift a non-gift.

<sup>127</sup> Cf. *De Vita Mosis* 2.242 where the χάρις given to those who are 'considered worthy' (ἀξιόω) remains a gift (δόμα) not payment (οὐδ' ἀποδώσεις).

that role belongs exclusively to Wisdom (8.5). Σοφία may only save the ‘fit’, but it is σοφία who saves (τῇ σοφίᾳ ἐσώθησαν, 9.18). As argued in chapter three, this is not salvation by human worth; this is salvation *for* those who are worthy. Thus Solomon, though he was good (ἀγαθὸς ὢν, 8.20), recognised that Wisdom was genuinely a gift (χάρις) and thus that his obtainment of her required an act of divine giving (δίδωμι, 8.21).

This correspondence between God’s gift of Wisdom and the human recipients of her saving activity is portrayed both in the Exodus-shape of *Wisdom’s* re-reading of Genesis (10.1-14) and in the introduction of Wisdom into the Exodus event itself (10.15-21). Again, it is emphatically Wisdom who saves (σοφία ἐρρύσατο), but the objects of her salvific benefaction are ‘those who care for her’ (τοὺς θεραπεύοντας αὐτήν, 10.9). In order to demonstrate this link between benefit and beneficiary, *Wisdom* identifies (an often non-canonical) criterion of ‘fit’ in each of its subjects. The suitability of Noah, Abraham, Lot, Jacob and Joseph is signified by the label ‘righteous’ (δίκαιος, 10.4, 5, 6, 10, 13), a criterion of fit which eludes the disobedient Adam (10.1c) whose worth is nevertheless ensured by his status as ‘father of the world’ (πατέρα κόσμου, 10.1a).<sup>128</sup> Similarly, though perhaps more explicitly, *Wisdom’s* rewritten Exodus depicts the objects of Wisdom’s gracious Red Sea rescue (ρύομαι) as a ‘holy people and blameless race’ (λαὸν ὅσιον καὶ σπέρμα ἄμεμπτον, 10.21) whose deliverance can be called a ‘reward’ (μισθός, 10.17) for their labours. This use of μισθός, however, does not signal that *Wisdom* has transitioned from a gift-economy to a commercial metaphor.<sup>129</sup> That μισθός functions in both discourses, meaning either earned pay (e.g. *Mos.* 1.141, 2; *Spec.* 1.156; cf. Gen 29.15; Sir. 34.22; Luk 10.7) or fitting gift (*Wis.* 5.15; 10.17; cf. *Spec.* 4.98; Gen 15.1?),<sup>130</sup> indicates that the economies are not antithetical; but neither are they indistinguishable. The difference between payment and gift is succinctly stated by Barclay: ‘Pay was based on calculable equivalence; it was contractual, legal and therefore necessary. By contrast, gifts were ill-defined in value, were personal and voluntary, and were therefore inherently noble’.<sup>131</sup> *Wisdom’s* classification of the

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<sup>128</sup> In each instance, the duality of the Exodus pattern is reflected in the contrast between the fitting whom Wisdom rescues and the destruction of those who either pass by or depart from Wisdom. In this sense, these episodes are vignettes of divine justice in that they narrate the simultaneity of fitting grace and deserved destruction.

<sup>129</sup> A similar misreading occurs when Philo’s conjunction of χάρις and ἄξιος is interpreted as a deprecation of grace (D.A. Carson, ‘Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility in Philo’, *NovT* 23 [1981]: 148-64) or a confusion of categories (VanLandingham, *Judgment and Justification*, 27).

<sup>130</sup> Philo can also use γέρας and cognates in benefaction-discourse (e.g. *Mos.* 1.148).

<sup>131</sup> Barclay, ‘Believers and the “Last Judgment in Paul”’ (2010, unpublished), 9.

Exodus-event as a μισθός clearly belongs on this benefaction side of this economic divide. The Exodus is a gift, or more precisely the saving work of *the* gift (8.21; 10.15); but because it is fitting gift, it is both χάρις and μισθός, the latter indicating not so much earning – this is the wrong economy for that – as the equitability and rationality of divine beneficence.

As argued above, the Exodus is *the* event of divine justice: the righteous are rescued and the ungodly are destroyed (10.18-19). It is the first half of this bipartite proposition that names *the* event of divine grace: διεβίβασεν αὐτοὺς θάλασσαν ἐρυθρὰν (10.18). Grace, then, while not reducible to and capable of qualifying justice, is operative within the parameters of justice.<sup>132</sup> God graciously saves the righteous (δίκαιοι, 10.20), not primarily because *they* are righteous, but because *God* is righteous (cf. 12.15). In this sense, the conditionality of divine grace evident in the necessary correspondence between gift and recipient is not about a calculable equivalence between human worth and subsequent divine benefaction (it is gift, not pay); it is about the stability of the cosmos and the goodness and justice of God. In other words, the patterned congruence between God's gifts and those who receive them answers the theodicy question discriminant divine giving implicitly evokes: why does God give to some and not to others? The ἄξιος-χάρις link is thus an insistence that rather than being arbitrary, unfair and chaotic, God's gracious activity coheres with the unalterably just moral universe he created: πάντα μέτρῳ καὶ ἀριθμῷ καὶ σταθμῷ διέταξας, 11.20.

#### *Incongruous and Unconditioned Χάρις: Paul and the Unfitting Christ-Gift*

Τῷ δὲ ἐργαζομένῳ ὁ μισθὸς οὐ λογίζεται κατὰ χάριν, ἀλλὰ κατὰ ὀφείλημα (Rom 4.4). So says Paul, and so most assume. Gift and reward are supposed to be opposites and so, supposedly, speak different languages (e.g. χάρις, δωρεάν, χάρισμα and δίδωμι over against μισθός, ὀφείλημα, ἄξιος and γέρας). But, as demonstrated above, these allegedly antithetical lexical clusters combine in the single discourse of ancient benefaction. Χάρις is given to the ἄξιος and this gift is called a reward (μισθός, *Wis.* 10.17; γέρας, *Mos.* 1.148). However, rather than allowing this un-Pauline grammar to deconstruct assumptions about the univocity of grace, post-Pauline readers have often responded to this 'fusion of opposites' with incredulity. D.A. Carson, for example, betrays his semantic presuppositions by 'correcting' the Philonic

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<sup>132</sup> M.A. Seifrid's (*Justification By Faith: The Origin and Development of a Central Pauline Theme* [Leiden: Brill, 1992], 131) observation regarding the concept of mercy in the Psalms of Solomon is a bit too strong for *Wisdom*: 'The term no longer serves to express deliverance in spite of justice, but deliverance as justice rendered by God'.

phrase ‘worthy of grace’ with the theologically suggestive *sic*.<sup>133</sup> Similarly, Chris VanLandingham argues from an assumed definition of grace to a disqualification of Philo’s use of the concept. Because God’s covenant with Abraham, which Philo interprets both as a particular gift and as a symbol of divine grace (*Mut.* 52), is depicted as ‘the reward for his search for God’ (citing *Migr.* 77), VanLandingham concludes that ‘considering what “grace” means, Philo’s portrayal of Abraham’s election cannot be characterized as such’.<sup>134</sup> But what does grace mean? As noted above (and as argued at length in chapter three), for *Wisdom*, along with Seneca and Philo, grace means precisely what Carson and VanLandingham think it cannot mean: grace is an unearned though explainable benefit given to a suitable recipient. To criticize this conception of χάρις in terms of a categorical contrast between reward and grace is to miss both Paul’s peculiarity (see below) and the theological function of the ἄξιος- χάρις link: the fittingness of grace is not an indication of commercial exchange; it is a reflection of the rationality and goodness of the gift-giving God.

Read against this ubiquitous understanding of gift/grace in Paul’s social and theological context, Romans 4.4 sounds less like a platitude. To say that a reward (μισθός) for work is pay (ὀφείλημα) not gift (χάρις) is not to say the obvious; it is to say the possible. A μισθός can be either ὀφείλημα or χάρις (see above). It is this possible difference that Paul reframes as a categorical difference. Reward for work (τῷ ἐργαζομένῳ ὁ μισθός), or so Paul’s argument goes, is, by definition, not grace. But read in dialogue with *Wisdom*, especially *Wisdom*’s classification of the saving grace of the Exodus as a ‘reward for labour’ (μισθὸν κόπων αὐτῶν, 10.17), this Pauline ‘definition’ presents itself as a re-definition. (A similar point could be made with regards to Romans 11.6: εἰ δὲ χάριτι, οὐκέτι ἐξ ἔργων, ἐπεὶ ἡ χάρις οὐκέτι γίνεται χάρις. Interpreted in conversation with *Wisdom*, the seemingly self-evident claim that the introduction of works disqualifies the graciousness of grace reads more like an innovation in theological semantics than an argument from a universal *a priori*.) But where does this semantic innovation come from? Expressed in terms of our ongoing dialogue, if *Wisdom* can explicitly call the grace of the Exodus a ‘reward for labour’ why does Paul insist that a reward for work is not grace (χάρις)? One indication of an answer to this question comes in the

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<sup>133</sup> Carson, ‘Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility in Philo’, 160–62.

<sup>134</sup> VanLandingham, *Judgment and Justification*, 27.

antithesis between Romans 4.4 and 4.5.<sup>135</sup> Grace is not reward for work (though *Wisdom* is able to describe the event of grace in those terms); grace is the justification of the ungodly. But this provocative prediction is not self-authenticating. To name God ‘the one who justifies the ungodly’ (ὁ δικαιῶν τὸν ἀσεβῆ) is not, as Dunn suggests, to ‘restate a theologoumenon’;<sup>136</sup> it is to describe God’s justifying character in consequence of the event that effects justification. In other words, to say that God justifies the ungodly is to read the divine act that justifies sinners into the identity of God.<sup>137</sup> Put this way, the antithesis between Romans 4.4 and 4.5 points behind itself to the event of grace which grounds justification, the event which Paul calls ‘the redemption that is in Christ Jesus’ (Rom 3.24).

As argued above, *vuvì dé* identifies a rupture, a world-breaking and -building event that divides history and draws a line in the sand between contrasting theologies. Our previous discussion, however, was limited to the Pauline claim that this apparently illegal occurrence reveals, demonstrates and establishes the righteousness of God. What was not explored is that this justification of God and the godless is accomplished by what Alan Badiou calls ‘evental grace’.<sup>138</sup> Whereas *Wisdom* subsumes the operations of divine grace within the parameters of divine justice, Paul describes the judgment that reveals God’s righteousness with the language of grace because it is a judgment that effects justification. In this sense, grace and righteousness are inextricably linked as mutually-interpreting ways of talking about the divine act that is Jesus’ history.<sup>139</sup> Consequently, the grace that grounds justification (δικαιούμενοι δωρεὰν τῆ αὐτοῦ χάριτι) is not reducible to a divine disposition; it is the Christ-event. In Bultmann’s words, ‘Righteousness...has its origin in God’s grace – i.e. in His act of grace

<sup>135</sup> Jewett, *Romans*, 313 rightly describes the relationship between Romans 4.4 and 4.5 as antithetical.

<sup>136</sup> J.D.G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 367. Dunn’s attempt to neutralize the radicality of this Pauline claim in relation to the repeated prohibition against justifying the ungodly (e.g. Exod 23.7; Prov 17.15; 24.24; Isa 5.3; Sir. 9.12; CD 1.19) by appealing to the necessity of grace and the mechanisms of mercy in Israel’s scripture does little to blunt the offense of Paul’s predication.

<sup>137</sup> Read this way, Paul’s description of God as ‘the one who justifies the ungodly’ is a rethinking of God in relation to his action in Christ. As an interpretation of the Christ-event, and thus as Christology and theology, ‘the justification of the ungodly’ can properly be called a central Pauline theme (cf. Jüngel’s response to Barth’s insistence that ‘the *articulus stantis et cadentis ecclesiae* is not the doctrine of justification but its basis and culmination: the confession of Jesus Christ’ [CD IV/1, 527]: ‘this is precisely the function of justification: to convey *the being and work of Christ* for us’ [Justification, 28-29; italics added]).

<sup>138</sup> ‘Evental’ translates Badiou’s *événementielle* (e.g. *Saint Paul*, 7, 59). Though Badiou can say that the ‘pure event is reducible to this: Jesus died on the cross and resurrected’ (63), he qualifies this claim in his insistence that the cross is not part of the event but the ‘site’ of the event which is reducible to Jesus’ resurrection (70). As the following analysis of Romans 3.21-24 and 5.6-10 will show, to disassociate cross and event is to read against the grain of the Pauline text (cf. n. 60).

<sup>139</sup> Cf. Barth, CD II/1, 383.

accomplished in Christ'.<sup>140</sup> To gloss Romans 3.24 accordingly, this is 'justification by (a singular, eventual) grace, (the content of which is) the redemption that is in Christ Jesus'. Grace then, to borrow a phrase from John Barclay, is the 'Christ-gift',<sup>141</sup> an eventual grace *pro nobis* that is simultaneously the Father's gifting of the Son (Rom 8.32) and the Son's gifting of himself (Gal 2.20). It is the strangeness of this gift that occasions Paul's redefinition of God's grace (and, as noted above, his rethinking of the gracious God).

Romans 3.21-24 reveals two oddities about this gift, the latter of which produces a re-description of God (Rom 4.5, see above) and a redefinition of God's grace (5.6-10, see below). First, the Christ-gift is 'apart from law'.<sup>142</sup> As argued above, the revelation of divine righteousness is located in the christological gospel: the righteousness of God is revealed in and redefined as the divine act that is the single and saving history of Jesus. Klaus Haacker is thus mistaken to limit the theological range of *χωρὶς νόμου* to the rejection of the theory of justification by works.<sup>143</sup> Because the apart-from-law revelation of God's righteousness occurs in an event, that event is necessarily *χωρὶς νόμου*. Consequently, just as 'apart from law' signals the non-correspondence of the Christ-event and thus requires a rethinking of righteousness, the 'trans-legality' of the Christ-event, here interpreted as the Christ-gift, points to an incongruity between benefit and beneficiary which unavoidably entails a redefinition of *χάρις*. If, as argued above, 'law' names the condition of correspondence, a gift that is given *χωρὶς νόμου* is necessarily incongruent and unconditioned.

This has two immediate consequences. First, if the Christ-gift is given apart from the criterion of correspondence and thus without prior condition – if all preset requirements of fit including the Jewish law are eliminated – then each person, however unfit, is a possible recipient of this particular grace. In other words, to repeat an observation made above, 'no distinction' (Rom 3.22b) is applicable both negatively with regard to anthropology (3.23) and

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<sup>140</sup> Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, 284.

<sup>141</sup> Barclay, 'Grace Within and Beyond Reason', 17; cf. Barth, *Romans*, 31: 'Grace is the gift of Christ'.

<sup>142</sup> Badiou describes the Pauline conception of grace as both 'trans-legal' and 'illegal' (*Saint Paul*, 76, 42). The latter classification, while a legitimate realisation of the potential meaning of *χωρὶς νόμου*, is ill suited to communicate the Pauline dialectic between God's grace-in-Christ which is simultaneously *χωρὶς νόμου* and *τέλος νόμου*. As argued above, the Christ-event comes from outside the law, but it includes within its effects the fulfillment of the righteous requirement of the law (*τὸ δικαίωμα τοῦ νόμου*, Rom 8.4). This two-sidedness is present in the insistence that the 'law and the prophets' witness to the apart-from-law event (Rom 3.21) and in the assertion that faith, rather than nullifying the law, actually establishes it (*νόμον ἰσχύνομεν*, Rom 3.31). This dynamic will be more fully considered in chapter eight.

<sup>143</sup> K. Haacker, *Der Brief des Paulus an die Römer* (ThHK 6; Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1999), 93.

positively with regard to soteriology (3.22). In this sense χωρίς νόμου grounds εἰς πάντας (3.21, 22): the unconditionality implied by the absence of the criterion of correspondence erases any and all lines of anthropological division - οὐ...ἔστιν διαστολή.<sup>144</sup> In this sense, the phrase εἰς πάντας τοὺς πιστεύοντας is not a mere repetition of 'faith in Christ' with the slight (but admittedly significant) addition of 'all';<sup>145</sup> it is an assertion deduced from the mutually-interpreting *particulae exclusivae*: if the revelation God's righteousness occurs independently of the criterion of correspondence (χωρίς νόμου) and as the Christ-gift (διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ) then it is necessarily 'for all'.<sup>146</sup>

It is this dynamic that explains the link between Romans 3.21-28 and 3.29-30. It is not enough to say that Paul's universalism derives from a rethinking of monotheism,<sup>147</sup> nor is it sufficient to suggest that, in the interest of 'Gentile rights',<sup>148</sup> Paul broke through the particularism of his religious heritage with the message of divine impartiality.<sup>149</sup> The essential though regularly unasked question is, Why? – why did Paul rethink the implications of monotheism and why did he conclude that Gentile as well as Jew (and slave as well as free and female as well as male) were equally 'qualified' to receive God's grace?<sup>150</sup> The contrast with *Wisdom* here is suggestive. Whereas *Wisdom* insists that the benefaction of the one and gracious God is conditioned by the ethnic (Israel not Egypt), social (the father of the world, 10.1), intellectual (*Wisdom's* pupils not those who reason wrongly, 2.1; 3.10) and moral (the

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<sup>144</sup> Lohse (*Der Brief an die Römer*, 132), correctly distinguishes between conditionality and the necessity of faith: 'Gottes Gnadenerweis wird ohne jede Bedingung als Geschenk allen denen zugeeignet, die im Glauben den Zuspruch seines rechtfertigenden Urteils empfangen'.

<sup>145</sup> See e.g., Wright, *Romans*, 470.

<sup>146</sup> Badiou, *Saint Paul*, 77: 'There is for Paul a fundamental link between universalism and charisma.... an essential link between the "for all" of the universal and the "without cause" [χωρίς νόμου]'.

<sup>147</sup> N.T. Wright, for instance, refers to the echo of the *Shema* in Romans 3.30a and argues that Paul deduces from the oneness of God the necessary oneness of the family of God ('Romans', 482). What Wright does not say is why no one else praying the *Shema* came to this conclusion or why Paul did.

<sup>148</sup> This phrase alludes to Krister Stendahl's well-known claim that 'justification by faith was hammered out by Paul for the very specific and limited purpose of defending the rights of Gentile converts' (*Paul Among Jews and Gentiles* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976], 2).

<sup>149</sup> Especially influential in this regard is J.M. Bassler, *Divine Impartiality: Paul and a Theological Axiom* (SBLDS 59; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1982); cf. C.H. Cosgrove, *Elusive Israel: The Puzzle of Election in Romans* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1997).

<sup>150</sup> D. Boyarin, *A Radical Jew: Paul and the Politics of Identity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994) is an exception to this trend as he notices the radicality of Paul's universalism and thus asks why Paul mobilizes monotheism in this contextually unique way. However, his explanation in terms of a Pauline blending of the singularity of Israel's God and the Hellenistic idea of the One differs significantly from the present christological emphasis. It should also be noted that while the current interpretative trend to emphasise Paul's Gentile mission as the *Sitz im Leben* for Paul's anthropological and soteriological universalism is correct to identify and stress Paul's social and theological context, it often submerges the question about the motivation and rationale for Paul's subversive theology and social practice.

righteous not the ungodly) worth of its recipients, the redemption that Paul proclaims operates apart from the criterion of correspondence and thus as an unconditioned gift (χωρίς νόμου... δωρεάν τῆ αὐτοῦ χάριτι, 3.21, 24). It is because the Christ-gift requires no prior criterion of worth, including worth defined in terms of Jewish ethnicity and/or law-observance, that it can extend to the unworthy, ‘Gentile sinners’ included (Gal 2.15). As Barclay remarks, ‘It is the call of this inexplicable grace...that forms the theological rationale for [Paul’s] culturally revolutionary communities of Jew and Gentile in Christ’.<sup>151</sup> In other words, the impartiality of the one God is not for Paul a theological *a priori*; it is a deductive consequence of the impartial and unconditioned act of this one God in the giving of his Son. Grammatically, εἷς ὁ θεός is modified by the relative clause ὃς δικαιώσει περιτομὴν ἐκ πίστεως καὶ ἀκροβυστίαν διὰ τῆς πίστεως and thus, theologically, the one God is named or, to borrow an expression, ‘picked out’ by his act of justifying Jews and Gentiles by faith.<sup>152</sup> The application of the Shema in 3.29-30a is therefore grounded in the singular soteriology of Romans 3.30b: God is the God of Jews and Gentiles because he is the one who justifies both by faith. It is therefore not monotheism *per se* that accounts for Pauline universalism; it is his reinterpretation of the implications of divine oneness in light of God’s unconditioned gift that grounds the salvific ‘no distinction’.

That ‘no distinction’ is applied both positively (Rom 3.22) and negatively (3.23) brings us to our second implication of the non-correspondence of this event and, in turn, directs us to the second oddity of the Christ-gift. The implied incongruity of the apart-from-law gift points to an impossible possibility: incongruous and unconditioned grace. It is this implied incongruity that is made explicit in the connection between sinners and justification in Romans 3.23 -24. The positive linking of ‘for all’ and ‘no distinction’ (Rom 3.22) gives way to a negative connection between ‘no distinction’ and ‘all sinned’ (Rom 3.23).<sup>153</sup> From *Wisdom’s* perspective, this is the end of grace; no fit means no gift. But, to fill one of Badiou’s more

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<sup>151</sup> Barclay, ‘Grace Within and Beyond Reason’, 16-17.

<sup>152</sup> The citation is from B.D. Marshall, ‘Christ and the Cultures: The Jewish People and Christian Theology’, in *The Cambridge Companion to Christian Doctrine* (ed. Colin E. Gunton; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 81-100 (96).

<sup>153</sup> Though rarely translated this way, the aorist of ἀμαρτάνω in conjunction with the loss of δόξα probably alludes to the complicity of all humanity in the Edenic trespass (cf. Rom 1.23; so Lohse, *Der Brief an die Römer*, 131; Wright, ‘Romans’, 470). If this is correct, then the connection between the Edenic fall and justification in Romans 3.23-24 may anticipate the extended reflection on Adam and Christ in Romans 5.12-19 in which the language of grace/gift and righteousness is again prevalent.

penetrating phrases with some Pauline content, ‘Paul names an unheard-of possibility’ (πάντες ἥμαρτον... δικαιούμενοι), ‘one dependent on eventual grace’ (διὰ τῆς ἀπολυτρώσεως τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ).<sup>154</sup> As argued above, the objects of the divine saving action implied in the passive verb δικαιούμενοι (3.24) are the sinners of 3.23. This is a χάρις that cannot be called a μισθός. Whereas *Wisdom* uses reward language to identify the affinity between benefit and beneficiary and thus to underline the fittingness of the gift, the χάρις that Paul announces is emphatically not a μισθός because it evinces a contradiction rather than a correspondence between God’s gift and those who receive it. In other words, because the Christ-gift has sinners as its incongruous recipients, it is a *nova gratia*, an unfitting gift.<sup>155</sup> This lack of fit between benefit and beneficiaries confirms Bultmann’s memorable phrase: ‘The paradox of grace is that it is precisely the *transgressor*, *the sinner*, to whom it applies.’<sup>156</sup>

As *Wisdom* would read Romans 3.23-24 this is precisely the paradox. It is not the existence of sinners or the graciousness of God that would surprise *Wisdom*; it is the application of divine grace to sinners that would not only surprise but indeed shock and scandalise *Wisdom*. In fact, Philo and Seneca would not even call this Pauline paradox grace. For Seneca, a benefit is not a benefit if it is not prompted by the rational selection of an appropriate recipient (*De Beneficiis* I.15.6). Similarly, Philo insists that gifts that are not given to appropriate beneficiaries, rather than being gifts, are, as Barclay summarises, ‘an empty display of wealth or even an act of misanthropy’ (*Post.* 142-47).<sup>157</sup> Paul, however, is emphatic that it is the event which effects this disjunctive justification of sinners that is determinative for the definition of grace (δωρεὰν τῇ αὐτοῦ χάριτι).<sup>158</sup> To return to a text discussed above, because the Christ-gift is given to and justifies sinners, Paul can argue deductively from this event and claim, in

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<sup>154</sup> Badiou, *Saint Paul*, 43. Romans 5.17 interprets this gift-effected justification as itself a gift of righteousness (τῆς δωρεᾶς τῆς δικαιοσύνης). N.T. Wright (*What Saint Paul Really Said: Was Paul of Tarsus the Real Founder of Christianity?* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997], 98) is right to highlight the ridiculousness of receiving righteousness as if it was ‘a substance or a gas which can be passed across the courtroom’; but, as Westerholm (*Perspectives Old and New*, 275 n. 31) notes, ‘the absurdity of it all in no way alters the fact that Paul speaks of “receiving the abundant overflow of grace and of the gift of righteousness”’. For Paul, the ‘gift of righteousness’ is the Christ-gift – that is, Jesus who became righteousness for us (1 Cor 1.30).

<sup>155</sup> Haacker (*Der Brief des Paulus an die Römer*, 97) is of course right to emphasise that grace is not a *novum*, but his related claim that the only Pauline innovation is the connection between grace and Jesus fails to recognise its own ramifications. It is precisely the rethinking of grace in connection with the Christ-gift that occasions Paul’s radical redefinition.

<sup>156</sup> Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, 282 (italics original).

<sup>157</sup> Barclay, ‘Grace Within and Beyond Reason’, 12.

<sup>158</sup> Lohse (*Der Brief an die Römer*, 132) notes that the gift-character of justification ‘wie sowohl durch δωρεὰν wie auch durch τῇ αὐτοῦ χάριτι unterstrichen wird’.

contrast to *Wisdom*, that a μισθός for work is not χάρις (Rom 4.4). Again, this is not because a reward for work could never be construed as grace (*Wisdom* explicitly demonstrates that it could); it is because *the* gift is not a reward for work. For *Wisdom*, to call a gift a reward is not to call it payment; it is to call it congruent, conditioned and fitting. It is because Paul daringly, and from *Wisdom*'s perspective dangerously, deduces the definition of grace from the incongruous, unconditioned and unfitting giving of Christ that he insists on the semantic separation of μισθός and χάρις. In other words, it is because the Christ-gift justifies sinners apart from law that Paul redefines grace in opposition to reward for work and as 'the justification of the ungodly' (Rom 4.4-5; cf. 11.5-6). The Pauline conception of unconditioned grace is grounded in *the* unconditioned gift.

Rather than qualifying this radical redefinition, Paul, in Romans 5.6-10, parades the incongruity of the Christ-gift. Romans 5.15-21 is Paul's most concentrated discussion of grace,<sup>159</sup> but the repeated references to gift/grace in this paragraph refer back to 5.6-10. The content, effect and incongruity of this gift all point in this direction. First, in terms of content, the gift is christological. God's grace (ἡ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ) is inseparable from the Christ-gift (ἡ δωρεὰ ἐν χάριτι τῆ τοῦ ἐνὸς ἀνθρώπου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, 5.15).<sup>160</sup> Second, the gift effects justification (τὸ χάρισμα...εἰς δικαίωμα, 5.16; cf. 5.17-19). Third, the gift is given incongruously (χάρισμα ἐκ πολλῶν παραπτωμάτων, 5.16).<sup>161</sup> This christological, justification-effecting and incongruous gift directs us back to Romans 5.6-10 where both the content and the contradiction of the Christ-gift are given their sharpest (and most shocking) focus.

The gift to which Romans 5.15-17 refers is named in Romans 5.6-10; it is the justifying (5.9) and disjunctive (5.6-8) death of Christ. Elsewhere Paul can flaunt the logically foolish and theologically scandalous content of this event (1 Cor 1.18-23), but in this context, as in Romans 3.23-24, it is the objects of grace that signal its oddity. The grammar of 5.6-8 makes this point. The explanatory γάρ that opens v.7 promises an explication of the claim of v.6,<sup>162</sup> but the

<sup>159</sup> χάρισμα, 5.15, 16; χάρις, 5.15 (2X), 17, 20, 21; δωρεά, 5.15, 17; δώρημα, 5.16.

<sup>160</sup> Jewett, *Romans*, 381: 'The χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ...is depicted in tandem with ἡ δωρεὰ ἐν χάριτι'.

<sup>161</sup> Cranfield, *Romans*, 1.286: 'that the accumulated sins and guilt of all the ages should be answered by God's free gift, this is the miracle of miracles, utterly beyond human comprehension'. It should be stressed, however, that the 'miracle' here is not that God is gracious; it is that God's gift 'follows many trespasses' and thus, as the contradiction between παράπτωμα and δικαίωμα implies, has trespassers as its incongruous recipients. A similar pattern is evident in Romans 5.20 where the abundance of sin (ἐπλεόνασεν ἡ ἁμαρτία), rather than disqualifying the operations of divine grace, is met with a super-abundance of grace (ὑπερεπερίσσευσεν ἡ χάρις).

<sup>162</sup> Moo, *Romans*, 308 n.72.

adversative δέ of v.8 indicates that this explanation is made by way of antithesis:<sup>163</sup> the grace which Paul proclaims is not self-sacrifice for the righteous and/or the good.<sup>164</sup> As with Romans 4.4 and 11.6, however, this antithesis is not as obvious as it first appears. Rather than being something other than grace, the ‘gift of death’ (to borrow a Derridean phrase)<sup>165</sup> for noble persons and righteous causes was regularly regarded as the epitome of benefaction.<sup>166</sup> While the quality of the beneficiaries of this supreme act of self-giving render the gift explainable, it remains emphatically unearned. Explainable but unearned, this is precisely what *Wisdom* calls χάρις. But this is merely to raise again the question about the peculiarly Pauline definition of χάρις: if self-sacrifice for the righteous and/or good is theoretically gracious, why does Paul contrast (δέ) divine grace with this hypothetical act of heroism (5.7-7)? The answer, as above, is not that the gift of one’s life for a worthy person is not a gift (that is exactly what *Wisdom* would call it); the answer is that *the gift* is not a death for the righteous and/or the good. *The gift* is Christ crucified for the ungodly (ὕπὲρ ἀσεβῶν ἀπέθανεν, 5.6).

In antithesis to the fitting gift of Romans 5.7 Paul announces the utter incongruity of God’s grace-in-Christ. Following Käsemann through the syntactical thickets of 5.6, the two appearances of ἔτι,<sup>167</sup> taking the first with the genitive absolute (ὄντων ἡμῶν ἀσθενῶν) and the second with the verb (ἀποθνήσκω), ‘present the same paradox’.<sup>168</sup> The time of the cross was the time of human weakness and ungodliness. Thus, in Käsemann’s words, ‘Christ did his saving work at an unexpected and, morally considered, even inappropriate moment’.<sup>169</sup> ‘Christ

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<sup>163</sup> Jewett, *Romans*, 360.

<sup>164</sup> Regardless of whether or not δίκαιος and ἀγαθός are synonymous, Paul’s point is unambiguously that, however unlikely in practice, it is reasonable to imagine the possibility of self-sacrifice for a righteous and/or good person. For the synonymous reading see O. Kuss, *Der Römerbrief übersetzt und erklärt* (3 vols; Regensburg: Pustet, 1957-78), 1.208-209; F. Wisse, ‘The Righteous Man and the Good Man in Romans v.7’, *NTS* 19 (1972-73): 92-93. Those who distinguish between the two terms include Dunn, *Romans*, 1.255; A.D. Clarke, ‘The Good and the Just in Romans 5.7’, *TynB* 41 (1990): 128-32.

<sup>165</sup> This phrase is taken from the title of Derrida’s well known essay on gift, *The Gift of Death* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

<sup>166</sup> Jewett (*Romans*, 360 n.158) cites Isocrates *Arch.* 107; Lycurgus *Leoc.* 86.2; Philo *Agr.* 3.156; Diodorus Siculus *Hist.* 9.2.6.3. Stuhlmacher (*Romans*, 81) adds Plato, *Apology* 32a; Dio Cassius 80.20; Sirach 4.28; 1 Clement 55.1. J.R. Harrison (*Paul’s Language of Grace in its Greco-Roman Context* [WUNT II.172; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003], 225) references a number of additional sources, but his reading assumes that ὁ ἀγαθός of Romans 5.7b refers to a benefactor (which seems too narrow in this context) and thus his parallel texts are restricted to instances of a beneficiary dying for his benefactor.

<sup>167</sup> While the variant in B cop<sup>sa</sup> (εἶ γε...ἔτι) is smoother than the double ἔτι it is difficult to account for the repetition in terms of scribal innovation. Thus, as it is both the *lectio difficilior* and the reading with the substantially stronger external evidence, the following exegesis takes ἔτι γὰρ...ἔτι as its textual base.

<sup>168</sup> Käsemann, *Romans*, 137.

<sup>169</sup> Käsemann, *Romans*, 137.

died for the ungodly’, writes Calvin, ‘when we were in no way worth (*dignus*) or fit (*idoneus*)’.<sup>170</sup> Read this way, κατὰ καιρόν is not an apocalyptic reference to ‘the right time’, but indicates that the moment of the cross coincides with the ungodliness of those for whom Christ died (ἔτι κατὰ καιρόν ὑπὲρ ἀσεβῶν ἀπέθανεν).<sup>171</sup> The καιρός of the cross excludes the possibility of prior human fittingness. Entering the ‘still’ (ἔτι) of post-Adamic history (5.12-19), the Christ-gift cannot come as a ‘correspondingly’; it is necessarily a ‘nevertheless’.<sup>172</sup> This is the sense in which 5.7 provides an antithetical explication of the Christ-gift. The gift of Christ crucified does not have the righteous and/or the good as its reasonable beneficiaries. On the contrary, at a time when the ungodly and weak were precisely that, Christ died for the ungodly (Χριστὸς...ὑπὲρ ἀσεβῶν ἀπέθανεν).<sup>173</sup> The δέ of 5.8 confirms this contrast and further flaunts the inexplicability of the Christ-gift. Whereas *Wisdom’s* eschatological reactivation of the Exodus implies that God’s salvific love rescues the righteous, Paul proclaims the death of Christ for sinners (ἀμαρτωλῶν ὄντων) – an inclusive class of humanity that is contrasted with the δίκαιος of v.7 – as the definitive demonstration of divine love (συνίστησιν δὲ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ἀγάπην εἰς ἡμᾶς ὁ θεός).<sup>174</sup>

The tension here is acute. Paul locates the demonstration of divine love (5.8) and righteousness (3.21) in a gift given to those whom *Wisdom* consistently depicts as the fitting recipients of divine judgment (ἀξίαν θεοῦ κρίσιν, *Wis.* 12.26). While the righteous are rescued, their ungodly (ἀσεβής, 10.20) and sinful (ἀμαρτωλός, 19.13) enemies (ἐχθρός, 10.19) are destroyed. Paul, of course, can grant the deservedness of this destruction (τὰ ὀψώνια τῆς ἀμαρτίας θάνατος, Rom 6.23a; cf. 1.32), but the gift he announces does not ‘fit’; it is given to those whose proper payment is death, but the incongruous gift is eternal life in Christ Jesus (τὸ δὲ χάρισμα τοῦ θεοῦ ζωὴ αἰώνιος ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, 6.23b). It is thus, in *Wisdom’s* terms, those who are the objects of God’s fitting judgment who are also the recipients of his unfitting

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<sup>170</sup> Calvin, *Romans*, 195. Benefits given to those who are not *dignus* is exactly the social problem Seneca’s *De Beneficiis* attempts to redress (cf. I.1.2)

<sup>171</sup> Wilckens, *Römer*, 1.295 n.973; Jewett, *Romans*, 358.

<sup>172</sup> K. Barth, *Christ and Adam: Man and Humanity in Romans 5* (*SJTOP* 5; trans. T.A. Smail; Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1956), 2: ‘In the death of Christ God has intervened on our behalf in the “nevertheless” of His free grace’.

<sup>173</sup> Lohse, *Römer*, 170: ‘Christus aber starb nicht nur für einen einzelnen und dazu auch guten Menschen, sondern für diejenigen, die in gar keiner Weise Liebe verdient hätten. Er gab sein Leben für Gottlose, für Sunder dahin’.

<sup>174</sup> Harrison, *Paul’s Language of Grace*, 225 notes the radicality of this Pauline claim vis-à-vis systems of benefaction: ‘In the view of Paul, the death of Christ surpasses in scope all contemporary Graeco-Roman beneficence precisely because it was conditioned by ἀγάπη rather than reciprocity [or perhaps better, worth]’.

gift of righteousness – that is, the gift of Jesus Christ who became righteousness for us (1 Cor 1.30). The Christ-gift, rather than locating the worthy (cf. *Wis.* 6.16), encounters the ungodly (ἄσεβής, 5.6), the sinner (ἁματωλός, 5.8), the enemy (ἐχθρός, 5.10) and re-names its beneficiaries *ex contrario*: it justifies sinners (5.9a) and reconciles enemies (5.10a).<sup>175</sup>

*Wisdom's* author would no doubt interject at this point. As emphasised above, *Wisdom's* is a theology of grace, but not this grace. Paul cites an incongruous and unconditioned gift as the revelation of divine righteousness and love. But for *Wisdom* it is precisely that which Paul negates (i.e. the correspondence between God's gifts and human worth) that ensures that the benefaction of the gifting God is just and good. Thus, from *Wisdom's* perspective, Paul's redefinition of χάρις is simultaneously deluded and dangerous. Paul, however, would resist this *a priori* argumentation. The gracious God and the grace of God are not abstractions; God and his grace are known in his gift. As Watson indicates, 'For Paul, the question who God is can best be answered by reference to what God does.... Divine being and divine action are inseparable from one another, and no distinction is drawn between how God is *in se* and *ad extra*'.<sup>176</sup> Paul names God (*in se*) with verbal predicates (*ad extra*). God is 'the one who raised Jesus from the dead' (ὁ ἐγείρας Ἰησοῦν ἐκ νεκρῶν, Rom 4.24b), 'who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all (ὅς γε τοῦ ἰδίου υἱοῦ οὐκ ἐφείσατο ἀλλὰ ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν πάντων παρέδωκεν αὐτόν, Rom 8.32), and thus 'who justifies the ungodly' (ὁ δικαιῶν τὸν ἄσεβῆ, Rom 4.5). God, in other words, is the God of the Christ-gift; the one who 'was in Christ reconciling the world to himself' (θεὸς ἦν ἐν Χριστῷ κόσμον καταλλάσσων ἑαυτῷ), and this in spite of their trespasses (μὴ λογιζόμενος αὐτοῖς τὰ παραπτώματα αὐτῶν, 2 Cor 5.19). Paul's theology of God's grace and the gracious God is thus a daring, and from *Wisdom's* perspective dangerous, deduction. Paul theologises *from* the Christ-gift to the definition of divine grace. It is this risky, *a posteriori* theo-logic that accounts for the contextually non-commonsensual assertion of Romans 4.4 (and 5.7; 11.6). Grace, for Paul, is not reward for work or heroic self-sacrifice; grace is that which is given to and justifies the ungodly. But this is not because the former conceptions are intrinsically ungracious; it is because the Christ-gift, which is given to and justifies the ungodly, is determinative for Paul's

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<sup>175</sup> The *Qal wahomer* argument (or a *minori ad maius* inference) in 5.9, 10 further emphasises the inexplicable effect of the gift (Wilckens, *Römer*, 1.298). As Cranfield suggests, the eschatological salvation of those whom God calls righteous is 'very easy' when compared to the 'really difficult thing' that is the creative and incongruous gift that grounds this re-naming (*Romans*, 1.266).

<sup>176</sup>F. Watson, 'The Triune Divine Identity: Reflections on Pauline God-Language, in Disagreement with J.D.G. Dunn' *JSNT* 80 (2000): 99-124.

theology. In other words, Paul does not argue *from* a definition of grace; he argues *for* a definition of grace in consequence of God's act of grace. It is thus the unconditionality (χωρὶς νόμου) and incongruity (ἀσεβής, ἁμαρτωλός, ἐχθρός) of the Christ-gift that determines the Pauline vision of unconditioned and incongruous grace.

### *Conclusion: Descriptive and Deductive Definitions*

Contemplating the puzzle of the doctrine of justification, Karl Barth asks what 'the concepts grace and right' mean and how they relate.<sup>177</sup> The thesis of this chapter has been that Romans and *Wisdom*, though they both employ the conceptualities of grace and righteousness, provide fundamentally different answers to these questions: grace and righteousness are not univocal concepts. For *Wisdom*, the answer to these heuristic questions is anchored in the pre-creational moral order and paradigmatically instantiated in the Exodus. God's righteousness is the consistent correspondence between the form of divine action (salvation or destruction) and those towards whom he acts (righteous or ungodly). Within these parameters, grace, while capable of qualifying and therefore not reducible to justice, operates within and exhibits the patterns of justness, of congruence between benefit and beneficiary. In this sense, divine benefaction is an instantiation of divine justice: grace is an unearned though explainable exercise of divine favour directed towards a fitting recipient that demonstrates the justness of the gracious God.

For Paul, the righteousness and grace of God are not *exemplified* in an event; divine righteousness and grace *are* an event. More precisely, righteousness and grace are Pauline ways of describing the divine act that is the single and saving history of Jesus. For this reason, the Pauline notions of grace and righteousness are inextricably linked – to speak of divine grace is to speak of divine righteousness, and vice versa, because both forms of speech are mutually-interpreting ways of talking about Jesus. For Paul, the righteousness of God and the grace of God just are the divine saving act that is identical to Jesus' single history. It is because the righteous and gracious act of God in Jesus is a saving grace that is given to sinners in the form of a righteousness that enacts judgment and effects justification that Paul rethinks the meaning of grace and righteousness. Consequently, the Pauline definitions of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ

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<sup>177</sup> Barth, *CD IV/1*, 519.

and χάρις are re-definitions; they are deduced from and descriptive of the Christ-gift: disjunctive δικαιοσύνη and unconditioned χάρις. Barth captures this:

The Christian message [or at least the Pauline gospel] does not at its heart express a concept or an idea, nor does it recount an anonymous history to be taken as truth and reality only in concepts and ideas.... it recounts a history...in such a way that it declares a name, binding the history strictly and indissolubly to this name and presenting it as the story of the bearer of this name. *This means that all the concepts and ideas used in this report [Barth mentions grace but we could no doubt add righteousness] can derive their significance only from the bearer of this name and from his history, and not the reverse. They cannot have any independent importance or role based on a quite different prior interpretation. They cannot say what has to be said with some meaning of their own or in some context of their own abstracted from this name. They can serve only to describe this name - the name of Jesus Christ.*<sup>178</sup>

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<sup>178</sup> Barth, CD IV/1, 16-17 (italics added).

## Chapter 8

### With the Grain of the Universe: History and Hermeneutics in *Wisdom* 10-19 and Romans 9-11

If the Bible is right, this world's gonna explode – Bob Dylan

The author of *Wisdom of Solomon* and the Paul of Romans read the same texts, yet they read them differently.<sup>1</sup> This is both an introduction to this chapter and an explanation of the wide continuity and deep discontinuity that characterised the conversation between Paul and *Wisdom* imagined in the previous two: the recurrent points of contact are not coincidences of formal convergence but products of a shared textual inheritance; the recurrent points of debate are not accidental material divergences but products of different readings. In other words, what connects Paul and *Wisdom* is a canon – they read the same texts – what separates them is a hermeneutic – they read them differently.<sup>2</sup>

The conversation between the author of *Wisdom* and Paul has thus far been marked by a movement from dialogue to debate. *Wisdom* and Paul are both concerned with the bipartite structuring of humanity, but whereas *Wisdom* works to reinforce the Jew/Gentile distinction Paul attempts to reduce that anthropological fraction to a single denominator, *homo peccator* (chapter six). *Wisdom* and Paul both use the words χάρις and δικαιοσύνη, but they deploy them in incommensurable theological grammars – *Wisdom* to describe and guarantee the moral order, Paul to describe the event that justifies the ungodly (chapter seven). In both cases, it was suggested that the essential fault-line is christological: Paul reinterprets the human situation in the shadow of the cross and redefines grace and righteousness as descriptions of Jesus' single and saving history. What was underemphasised in those chapters,

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<sup>1</sup> This is an adaption of Francis Watson's methodological observation: 'Paul and his fellow-Jews read the same texts, yet read them differently' (*Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith* [London: T&T Clark, 2004], ix).

<sup>2</sup> Watson notes that 'In Romans 3.1-2, Paul views the reception, preservation and propagation of the texts of scripture as the primary reason to reaffirm the unique significance of Jewishness' and argues that 'Paul remains Jewish as he argues [with other Jews]...not because many other Jews were saying the same thing (they were not), but because Paul...is concerned wholly with intra-Jewish issues of scriptural interpretation and hermeneutics' (*Hermeneutics*, ix, 27). Cf. J.A. Linebaugh, 'Paul's (Re)Reading of Israel's Scripture: 2 Corinthians 3.6b-14', *Trinity Journal for Theology and Ministry* 3 (2009): 111-130: 'Paul's Jewish identity is hermeneutically significant because, as a Jew, his theology is hermeneutical'.

however, is that Paul's christologically-determined anthropology and theological vocabulary come to expression in and as interpretations of Israel's scripture: the unveiling of the single, sinful human under the Jew/Gentile divide (Rom 3.9) is announced in the voice of the psalmists, sages and prophets (Rom 3.10-18), and the redefining of righteousness takes the form of a rereading of Habakkuk 2.4 and Genesis 15.6 (Rom 1.17; 3.21-4.25). In this sense, Richard Hays is right: 'Israel's Scripture is the "determinative subtext" that plays a constitutive role in shaping [Paul's] literary production'.<sup>3</sup> But again, to sharpen the point, it is precisely this 'determinative subtext' that *Wisdom* and Paul have in common: Israel's scripture is constitutive of the radically dissimilar theologies of Romans and *Wisdom*. For this reason, Hays' quite correct observation that Pauline theology is 'intertextual in character'<sup>4</sup> is, in comparative terms, to raise rather than answer the hermeneutical question. Because *Wisdom* and Romans are both instances of intertextual theology and, to borrow a concept from Watson, because both texts are locatable within a 'single intertextual field'<sup>5</sup> – i.e., because they read the same texts – the crucial comparative question is: why do the author of *Wisdom* and the Paul of Romans read the same texts *differently*?

The aim of this chapter is to answer this question by comparing the similar yet deeply different retellings of Israel's history in *Wisdom* 10-19 and Rom 9-11. My thesis is that the hermeneutical fault-line that divides *Wisdom* 10-19 and Romans 9-11 is identical to the christological fault-line identified in the previous chapters: *Wisdom's* hermeneutic is Exodus-shaped; Paul's hermeneutic is Christ-shaped.<sup>6</sup> More fully expressed, *Wisdom* reads under the

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<sup>3</sup> R.B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 16. I would thus want to join Hays in distancing myself from Harnack's insistence that Paul's engagement with scripture is only an ad hoc missionary reaction to Judaizing opponents ('Das Alte Testament in den paulinischen Briefen und in den paulinischen Gemeinden', *Sitzungsberichte der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-historische Klasse* [1928]: 124-41, quoted in Hays, *Echoes*, 7 n.16). Closer to the mark is J.R. Wagner's suggestion that Paul's reading of Israel's scripture was shaped by his apostolic mission and message and that his apostolic mission and message were informed by his reading of Israel's scripture (*Heralds of the Good News: Isaiah and Paul 'In Concert' in the Letter to the Romans* [NovTSup 101; Leiden: Brill, 2002], 3). Watson is therefore correct to argue for a dialogical rather than unilateral relationship between Paul's gospel and Paul's interpretative activity (*Hermeneutics*, 16-17), but, as will become evident below, the relationship between Christ and scripture is both reciprocal and asymmetrical: '[Paul's] hermeneutic', as J.L. Martyn remarks, 'works from the previously unknown and foolish gospel of the cross to the previously known and previously misunderstood scripture' and, as Martyn does not say, back again ('John and Paul on the Subject of Gospel and Scripture', in *Theological Issues in the Letters of Paul* [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997], 221).

<sup>4</sup> Hays, *Echoes*, 16.

<sup>5</sup> Watson, *Hermeneutics*, 5.

<sup>6</sup> To call *Wisdom's* hermeneutic 'Exodus-shaped' is a short-hand for referring to the paradigmatic function of *Wisdom's* symmetrical construal of the Red Sea crossing examined in chapter four (see *Wis.* 10.15-21; 19.1-22).

educational agency of σοφία (*Wis.* 7.7, 13, 17-22) and thereby learns to construe history as anticipations and recapitulations of Exodus' paradigmatic exemplification of the stable and lawful creational order (*Wis.* 10.1-11.16; 16.1-19.21).<sup>7</sup> Paul's reading, by contrast, is occasioned by, oriented towards, and patterned after God's act of raising the crucified Jesus from the dead for the justification of sinners. Thus, whereas the author of *Wisdom* has learned 'the beginning and end and middle of times' (ἀρχὴν καὶ τέλος καὶ μεσότητα χρόνων, 7.18) from the 'fashioner of all things' (ἡ πάντων τεχνῆτις, 7.21) and therefore rereads and rewrites history as a repeated concretion of the theological and cosmological fact that God has 'ordered all things by measure and number and weight' (11.20),<sup>8</sup> Paul reads Israel's scripture as a typological testimony to the cosmos-crucifying-and-recreating Christ-event (Gal 6.14) and so interprets history according to a destabilising dialectic: life out of death, justification out of ungodliness, creation out of nothing. Stated as a thesis, Paul's hermeneutic is determined by the centrifugal significance of the Christ-event: the divine act that is the single and saving history of Jesus constitutes scripture's 'now of legibility',<sup>9</sup> the time at which the 'law and prophets' are recognisable as witnesses to God's act in Christ, as that singular event uncovers anticipations of itself in the Old Testament.<sup>10</sup> Thus, to answer my heuristic question, the author of *Wisdom* and the Paul of Romans read the same texts differently because Paul reads *post Christum*.<sup>11</sup>

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Paul, as will be evident below, has his own interpretation of elements of the text of Exodus (see especially Rom 9.15-23).

<sup>7</sup> See chapters four and five for a full discussion of *Wisdom's* rereading and rewriting of the pentateuchal narrative.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. J.M.G. Barclay, 'Unnerving Grace: Approaching Romans 9-11 from The Wisdom Solomon', in *Between Gospel and Election* (WUNT 257; ed. F. Wilk and J.R. Wagner; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010): 91-110.

<sup>9</sup> Giorgio Agamben, *The Time that Remains: A Commentary on the Letter to the Romans* (tran. P. Dailey; Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), 145 uses the phrase 'Das Jetzt der Lesbarkeit' to summarise and define the hermeneutic of Walter Benjamin. See W. Benjamin, 'Theses on the Philosophy of History', in *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections* (ed. H. Arendt; trans. H. Zohn (New York: Schocken Book, 1968), 253-64; idem, *The Arcades Project* (ed. H. Arendt; trans. H. Eiland and K. McLaughlin; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 463.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. D. Harink, 'Time and Politics in Four Commentaries on Romans', in *Paul, Philosophy, and the Theopolitical Vision: Critical Engagment with Agamben, Badiou, Žižek, and Others* (ed. D. Harink; Eugene: Cascade, 2010): 282-312 (306).

<sup>11</sup> For a similar account of Paul's hermeneutic, one which sees 'Das Alte Testament als integraler Bestandteil des Evangelium' while insisting that the Old Testament is 'ein integrales Element' of the gospel 'in seiner Interpretatio Christiana', see F. Hahn, *Theologie des Neuen Testament* (2 Vols.; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 1.195-201; cf. 2.38-142.

## *Christomorphic Historiography: Romans 9-11*

Paul's apostolic kerygma, which is identical to the proclamation of Jesus Christ,<sup>12</sup> is a revelation of a mystery that Israel's scriptures silently contained but now (vūv) publicly speak (Rom 16.25-26). According to Romans 1.1-4, the 'holy scriptures' are God speaking the gospel of his Son Jesus Christ in promissory form, but, as Romans 3.21 indicates, the hermeneutical transition from promise to witness occurs in the 'now' of the revelation of God's righteousness in and as the Christ-event: *συνὴ δὲ...δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ πεφανέρωται μαρτυρουμένη ὑπὸ τοῦ νόμου καὶ τῶν προφητῶν*. In other words, the 'law and the prophets' are a pre-saying of the gospel and so, for Paul, the apostolic act of speaking the gospel entails a christological re-saying of Israel's scripture.<sup>13</sup> Romans 9-11, I want to argue, is this kind of christological re-saying.

*Wisdom* 10-19 and Romans 9-11 are in many ways parallel texts.<sup>14</sup> In general terms, both texts respond to a present crisis by appealing to a programmatic canonical pattern that provides hope as it is projected into the future. More specifically, both uncover this pattern through a series of exegetical case-studies (*Wis.* 10.1-14; Rom 9.6-18) and both finally insist that God is unalterably committed to Israel (*Wis.* 10.15; 19.22; Rom 9.6; 11.1, 26). Both authors are preoccupied with divine mercy and its relationship to God's righteousness and power, and, as Barclay notes, 'both make appeal in this context to God's will (*Wis.* 11.25; 12.18; Rom 9.18), God's patience (*Wis.* 12.8-10; Rom 9.22) and God's call (*Wis.* 11.25; Rom 9.7, 12, 25)'.<sup>15</sup> Both texts assert the categorical difference between created and uncreated being, both employ the image of the potter (*Wis.* 15.7; Rom 9.21) and both assert the unquestionable freedom of God (*Wis.* 11.21; 12.12; Rom 9.19-21). In short, there is a wide continuity between *Wisdom* 10-19 and Romans 9-11.

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<sup>12</sup> R. Jewett, *Romans* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 1005: the phrase τὸ κήρυγμα Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (Rom 16.25) is a 'clarification of "gospel" as "the preaching of Jesus Christ"'. Jewett argues extensively for regarding Romans 16.25-27 as an interpolation (*Romans*, 998-1002), but even if this argument is accepted, the doxology recapitulates the hermeneutical point of Romans 1.1-4 and therefore, for our purposes, can be read as Pauline in theological content, if not literary construction.

<sup>13</sup> That Romans is, at least in part, an epistolary fulfillment of Paul's desire to preach the gospel in Rome (Rom 1.15) helps to account for its high concentration of scriptural citations and allusions. According to Dietrich-Alex Koch, fifty-one of the eighty-nine quotations from the Old Testament in the undisputed Pauline letters occur in Romans (*Die Schrift als Zeuge des Evangeliums: Untersuchungen zur Verwendung und zum Verständnis der Schrift bei Paulus* (BHT 69; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1986), 21-24.

<sup>14</sup> W. Sanday and A.C. Headlam, *The Epistle to the Romans* (ICC; New York: Scribner's, 1896), 267-69; Barclay, 'Unnerving Grace', 104-105.

<sup>15</sup> Barclay, 'Unnerving Grace', 105.

But there is also deep discontinuity. This chapter will offer a reading of Romans 9-11 in conversation with *Wisdom* 10-19 in an attempt to uncover this discontinuity and identify its christological basis. In contrast to *Wisdom*'s σοφία-taught and Exodus-shaped hermeneutic, I intend to argue that the three major sections of Romans 9-11 (9.6-29; 9.30-10.21; 11.1-32)<sup>16</sup> are christologically occasioned and christologically ordered: Paul's historiography has its centre of gravity in the Christ-event (Rom 9.30-10.21), Israel's scriptural past is a typological and prophetic testimony to this singular occurrence (9.6-29) and Israel's present and future is an effect of this concrete christological cause (11.1-32).<sup>17</sup> Put another way, Paul's hermeneutic is 'christomorphic'<sup>18</sup> – Jesus' history is the mould in which all history is cast. And it is this christological recasting of Israel's past, present and future that accounts for the contrast between the thoroughgoing rationality and stability of *Wisdom*'s pentateuchal rewrite and Paul's deeply unsettling and deeply hopeful historiography.

#### *The Christ-Shaped Pattern of Election: Romans 9.6-29*

'To articulate the past historically does not mean to recognize it "the way it really was". It means to seize hold of memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger'.<sup>19</sup> This thesis of Walter Benjamin captures the pathos and present-tense of Paul's historiography in Romans 9.6-29. The confident exclamation about the unchangeable and unconquerable love of God that closes Romans 8 gives way, without grammatical warning, to 'great pain' and 'constant grief' (Rom 9.2). Paul's present is defined by the contradiction between Israel's possession of God's covenant privileges and promises (Rom 9.4-5) and the unnerving irony that the advent of Israel's Christ (cf. 9.5) has occasioned Israel's stumble (9.32; cf. 11.11, 17). In the face of this catastrophic contradiction, Paul, like Moses in the aftermath of the Golden Calf disaster (Exod

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<sup>16</sup> Cf. Florian Wilk's proposal that Romans 9-11 should be divided into two main sections, one argumentative (9.6-10.21), the other paraenetic (11.1-24) ('Rahmen und Aufbau Römer 9-11', in *Between Gospel and Election* (WUNT 257; ed. F. Wilk and J.R. Wagner; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010): 227-253.

<sup>17</sup> Watson distances himself from the tradition of relating Romans 9 and Romans 10 in terms of divine sovereignty and Israel's responsibility (e.g. C.K. Barrett, 'Romans 9.30-10.21: Fall and Responsibility of Israel', in *Essays on Paul* [London: SPCK, 1982], 132-53; J.A. Fitzmyer, *Romans* [AB 33; London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1992], 576; E. Lohse, *Der Brief an die Römer* [KEK 4; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003], 270, 284). Watson's suggestion that Romans 9.6-29 and 9.30-10.21 relate as 'the scriptural testimony to election/rejection and its concrete realization in Christ' is similar to my proposal (*Hermeneutics*, 21 n.41).

<sup>18</sup> J.M.G. Barclay, 'Paul's Story: Theology as Testimony', in *Narrative Dynamics in Paul: A Critical Assessment* (ed. B.W. Longenecker; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 153.

<sup>19</sup> W. Benjamin, 'Theses on the Philosophy of History', 255.

32.30-32), wishes he could be ἀνάθεμα ἀπὸ τοῦ Χριστοῦ for the sake of his ‘kinsfolk according to the flesh’ (Rom 9.3).<sup>20</sup> It is in the context of this crisis that Paul rereads Israel’s scripture. To adapt Benjamin’s thesis, Paul’s articulation of the past in Romans 9 occurs in ‘a moment of danger’ – that is, Paul’s reinterpretation of Israel’s history (9.6-18) and reactivation of Israel’s prophetic traditions (9.19-29) is motivated by, oriented towards and, as I will argue, patterned after the present christological crisis.

(1) *The Typological Testimony: Romans 9.6-18*<sup>21</sup>

*Wisdom* concludes its re-narration of pentateuchal history with a confident celebration of God’s immutable faithfulness to Israel (*Wis.* 19.22). Paul begins his reinterpretation of Israel’s scriptural past with a similar thesis: Οὐχ οἶον δὲ ὅτι ἐκπέπτωκεν ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ (Rom 9.6).<sup>22</sup> These similar sounding assertions, however, summarize fundamentally different readings of history. *Wisdom*’s conclusion is built on the stable and symmetrical activity of God in accordance with the worth of respective human subjects – σοφία brought the holy people through deep waters and drowned their ungodly enemies (*Wis.* 10.17-20). Paul’s thesis, when read from the vantage point of *Wisdom*, introduces a rereading of scripture that appears intent on destabilising and denying the possibility of explaining the divine acts of rejection and election according to any criteria of human worth. By constructing his own series of diptychs

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<sup>20</sup> U. Wilckens, *Der Brief an die Römer* (3 vols; EKKNT; Neukirchen: Benziger, 1978-82), 2.187; Jewett, *Romans*, 83; J.M.G. Barclay, ‘Grace Within and Beyond Reason: Philo and Paul in Dialogue’, in *Paul, Grace and Freedom: Essays in Honour of John K. Riches* (ed. P. Middleton, A. Paddison and K. Wenell; London: T&T Clark, 2009), 9-21 (13).

<sup>21</sup> A brief note on my use of typology: whereas Giorgio Agamben argues that the type/antitype conceptuality indicates ‘a caesura that divides the division between times...in which the past is dislocated into the present’ and thus points to the ‘inseparable constellation’ of typos and antitypos (*The Time that Remains*, 74), my usage, following Erich Auerbach, maintains the ‘Innernesschichtlichkeit’ of, in Auerbach’s terms, the *figura* and the fulfillment (‘Figura’, *Istanbuler Schriften* 5, *Neue Dantestudien* [Istanbul, 1944]: 11-71 [54]). Agamben is right to suggest that typology describes the way ‘Paul establishes a relation...between every event from a past time and *ho nyn kairos*’ (*The Time That Remains*, 74), but this typological relation is not one of temporal dislocation; it is, rather, that the gospel event unveils what John David Dawson calls the ‘gospelness’ of prior events (*Christian Figural Reading and the Fashioning of Identity* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002], 134). As John Barclay suggested to me in personal conversation, Paul’s typological hermeneutic could be described as uncovering ‘echoes of the gospel in the scriptures of Israel’. Cf. Hahn, *Theologie*, 1.197-98; 2.119-23.

<sup>22</sup> For Romans 9.6a as the thesis of Romans 9-11 see C.E.B. Cranfield *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (2 vols. ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1975) 2.473; J.D.G. Dunn, *Romans 9-16* (WBC 38B; Dallas: Word Books, 1988), 539; Lohse, *Der Brief an die Römer*, 270; Jewett, *Romans*, 573. Jochen Flebbe rightly notes that Romans 9.6 indicates that the ‘Israelproblem’ is, for Paul, a ‘Gottesfrage’ (J. Flebbe, *Solus Deus: Untersuchungen zur Rede von Gott im Brief des Paulus an die Römer* [BZNW 158; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008], 268-69).

(Ishmael and Isaac, Rom 9.7-9; Esau and Jacob, 9.10-13; Pharaoh and Moses; 9.14-18),<sup>23</sup> Paul produces an exegetical argument that is at once structurally parallel and diametrically opposed to the catalogue of contrasting pairs in *Wisdom* 10.1-14: *Wisdom* identifies the correspondence between *Wisdom*'s saving benefits and human beneficiaries; Paul insists that divine decision operates irrespective of and counter to the canons of human worth.

Paul's axiomatic introduction – 'the word of God has not failed' – is underwritten by deconstruction: οὐ γὰρ πάντες οἱ ἐξ Ἰσραὴλ οὗτοι Ἰσραήλ (Rom 9.6b). The word of God, which in this context is identical to the voice of scripture (9.7, 9, 12, 13, 15, 17), is not invalidated by the present reduction of Israel to a remnant (9.27) because, as Paul argues, the divine word has always operated selectively, constituting Israel by a speech-act of judgment and grace. To make this point, Paul begins in the beginning. Repeating the οὐ...πάντες from 9.6b, Romans 9.7 indicates that the divine word recorded in scripture – ἐν Ἰσαὰκ κληθήσεται σοι σπέρμα (Gen 21.12) – establishes a curious genealogical fact: not all of Abraham's children are children (9.7). Paul clarifies his meaning (τοῦτ' ἔστιν) with the first of three οὐ...ἀλλά antitheses in this section: 'it is not the children of the flesh (τέκνα τῆς σαρκός) who are the children of God, but the children of the promise (τὰ τέκνα τῆς ἐπαγγελίας) are reckoned as his seed' (9.8). In the case of Isaac, the status 'son' is not constituted by lineal descent; it is created or called into being (καλέω, 9.7; cf. 4.17)<sup>24</sup> by the 'word of promise' (9.9). There is no indication here that the ascription (λογίζομαι, 9.8) of divine sonship corresponds to pre-established worth; Isaac is a 'child of God' because he is born as such by God's future-tense word: 'I will return and there will be...'.<sup>25</sup> According to Paul's interpretation, the promise of Genesis 18.10, as Seifrid writes, provides 'the pattern (or type) of God's saving dealings: in the face of human unbelief – Sarah's laughter – the word announces that which is humanly impossible'.<sup>26</sup>

This provocative reading of the Ishmael and Isaac narrative legitimates the thesis of 9.6 by demonstrating that, from their foundation, Israelites are not God's children on the basis of

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<sup>23</sup> F. Watson, *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles: Beyond the New Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 308-309.

<sup>24</sup> For the creative connotations of καλέω in Paul, see S.J. Chester, *Conversion at Corinth: Perspectives on Conversion in Paul's Theology and the Corinthian Church* (SNTW; London: T&T Clark, 2003), 59-112; cf. B.R. Gaventa, 'On the Calling-into-Being of Israel: Romans 9.6-29', in *Between Gospel and Election* (WUNT 257; ed. F. Wilk and J.R. Wagner; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 255-69 (260-61).

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Barclay, 'Within and Beyond Reason', 14.

<sup>26</sup> M.A. Seifrid, 'Romans', in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (ed. G.K. Beale and D.A. Carson; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 640.

their natural ethnic or genealogical relation to Abraham; God's children are '*creatura verbi Dei*'.<sup>27</sup> In Beverly Gaventa's words, 'the entity known as "Israel" ...is not a biological but a theological category'.<sup>28</sup> The selective operations of God's word are inexplicable in terms of the human criteria of lineage or race. Paul's only explanation for the scriptural speech-acts of rejection and election are that God's creative word is scandalously self-explanatory: divine speech constitutes the reality it promises.

Paul's next pair, Jacob and Esau (Rom 9.10-13), intensifies this scandal. As *Wisdom* reads the Jacob story, it is an account of rescuing of the righteous (δικαίος), thereby teaching him that 'godliness (εὐσέβεια) is more powerful than anything' (*Wis.* 10.9-12). Paul's retelling, when considered in conversation with *Wisdom*, reads like an antagonistic alternative. Emphasising the natural and genetic similarity of Jacob and Esau ('Ρεβέκκα ἐξ ἑνὸς κοίτην ἔχουσα, Ἰσαὰκ τοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν), Paul insists that the twins 'are made dissimilar only by the divine words recorded in scripture': 'The greater/older will serve the lesser/younger' (Gen 25.23; Rom 9.12); 'Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated' (Mal 1.2-3; Rom 9.13).<sup>29</sup> Thus, as in the case of Isaac, lineage is excluded as a human criterion for election, but here relative 'greatness' and/or primogeniture are added to the list of eliminated explanations. As Sigurd Grindheim observes, in this case, 'God's choice is not only free...[it] runs directly counter to anything that might be construed as a qualification for election'.<sup>30</sup> In other words, election operates according to the out-of-the-opposite logic of justification explored in the previous chapter: 'God's choice consistently embraces that which is not choice'.<sup>31</sup>

Paul's focus in Romans 9.10-13, however, is not status-worth; it is a refutation of the reason for election identified by *Wisdom* – that is, Jacob was δικαίος (*Wis.* 10.10). Working from the scriptural word to Rebecca 'before the twins were born' and thus before they 'had done anything good or bad' (πραξάντων τι ἀγαθὸν ἢ φαῦλον), Paul constructs his second antithesis:

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<sup>27</sup> M.A. Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness: Paul's Theology of Justification* (NSBT 9; Leicester: Apollos, 2000), 153. Westerholm rightly notes that Paul does not deny a relation between Abrahamic descent and divine election; he only insists that Abrahamic descent is not the basis for nor identical with being a child of God ('Paul and the Law in Romans 9-11', in *Paul and the Mosaic Law* (ed. J.D.G. Dunn; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996), 215-37 (221-22)).

<sup>28</sup> Gaventa, 'On the Calling-into-Being of Israel', 59.

<sup>29</sup> Watson, *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles*, 309-10.

<sup>30</sup> S. Grindheim, *The Crux of Election* (WUNT II.202; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 145.

<sup>31</sup> Grindheim, *The Crux of Election*, 145 n.36. Cf. F. Siegert, *Argumentation bei Paulus gezeigt an Röm 9-11* (WUNT 34; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1985), 127.

οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων ἀλλ' ἐκ τοῦ καλοῦντος (Rom 9.11-12).<sup>32</sup> In diametric contrast to *Wisdom's* linking of *Wisdom's* rescue and Jacob's righteousness, Paul insists that the temporal location and content of God's promise (cf. Gen 25.23) precludes any correlation between the divine decision and human worth, particularly worth established by human action.<sup>33</sup> The emphasis here is less on the 'who' of election than the 'how' – that is, Paul is concerned to trace the process and pattern of election and interprets the Jacob and Esau narrative as an exemplification of the autonomy and initiative of God's word: God's pre-natal choice does not respond to or recognise an antecedent human reality; it is, in Gaventa's words, 'a calling into existence, an act of creation'.<sup>34</sup> This emphasis on 'the creative initiative of God' is, as Barclay remarks, 'underlined in the purpose clause embedded awkwardly in 9.11: ἵνα ἡ κατ' ἐκλογὴν πρόθεσις τοῦ θεοῦ μένη'.<sup>35</sup> The προ- prefix indicates that divine choice precedes and therefore precludes any and all pre-existent human criteria. Thus, as Paul reads Genesis 25.23, rejection and election neither correspond to nor are contingent upon prior human difference; they are humanly unconditioned and therefore humanly inexplicable scriptural speech-acts. Rather than attempting to explain the rationale of God's selective will, Paul concludes with a ruthless restatement of God's 'pre-choice' from Malachi 1.2-3: 'Jacob I loved, Esau I hated' (Rom 9.13).<sup>36</sup>

The question Paul raises at Romans 9.14 is exactly what *Wisdom* would ask at this point in Paul's argument: 'What then shall we say, is there injustice (ἀδικία) with God?'<sup>37</sup> For *Wisdom*, God's justice is evident in Genesis precisely as the logic of the Exodus is anticipated in the

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<sup>32</sup> Dunn argues that 'works' in Romans 9.12 should be interpreted as a shorthand for 'works of law' (*Romans* 9-16, 543), but this restriction appears to ignore the general reference to good or bad conduct in 9.11.

<sup>33</sup> Philo, alert to the destabilising potential inherent in God's pre-natal and unexplained choice of Jacob over Esau, appeals to divine foreknowledge and thus argues that while God's election of Jacob precedes his deeds, it is nevertheless proleptically based on them (*Leg. All.* 3.88-89). For this, see my 'Rational or Radical: Origen on Romans 9.10-14', *Studia Patristica* 52 (forthcoming). Cf. *Jubilees* 19 in which the ante-natal choice is erased and the Jacob and Esau narrative is rewritten to highlight the correspondence between divine choice and human character.

<sup>34</sup> Gaventa, 'On the Calling-into-Being of Israel', 260. As in the citation of Genesis 21.21 in Romans 9.7, the use of καλέω here, especially as a divine predicate (ὁ καλῶν, 9.12), recalls the predication of God as ὁ καλῶν τὰ μὴ ὄντα ὡς ὄντα (Rom 4.17) and thereby evokes the creational connotations of the Pauline 'calling' motif.

<sup>35</sup> Barclay, 'Within or Beyond Reason', 15.

<sup>36</sup> Jewett, *Romans*, 508: 'The quotation fulfils the vital rhetorical function of sharpening to an excruciating degree the focus on the selectivity of God's word'.

<sup>37</sup> The history of interpretation of Romans 9.6-14 is, in large part, a history of answering this question for Paul. Chrysostom, in his *Homiliae in epistolam ad Romanos*, Homily 16 on Romans 9, followed Philo and explained election in relation to divine foreknowledge. Origen, who, like Augustine after him (see e.g. *De Spiritu et Littera*), rightly read 'not by works' as categorical rather than time-specific, still argued that the election of Jacob and rejection of Esau 'did not happen without a reason' (quomodo haec non extra rationem fiant) by insisting that Jacob was considered 'worthy of God's love' before birth 'according to the merits of his previous life' (praecedentis videlicet vitae meritis, *De Principiis* II.9.7).

correspondence between divine saving benefaction and human beneficiaries (*Wis.* 10.1-21), a correspondence that Romans 9.7-13 seems designed to deny. Thus, Paul's *μη γένοιτο*, while also appealing to the events and text of Exodus, takes a different form. While the independent operations of the divine word and the exclusion of genealogical, status and moral explanations for divine selectivity in Romans 9.7-13 invite the impression that God's choice is chaotic and capricious,<sup>38</sup> Paul insists that there is a rationale – a kind of theo-logic – behind rejection and election. Just as *Wisdom's* essential answer to the time-delay of divine justice is divine power and the prerogative of divine mercy (*Wis.* 11.15-12.27), *ἔλεος* is Paul's ultimate reply to the question of *ἀδικία*. For Paul, however, divine mercy is scripturally defined in the event *Wisdom* deletes from Israel's history – namely, the Golden Calf debacle.<sup>39</sup> Grounding (*γάρ*) his denial of divine injustice in God's words to Moses in Exodus 33.19, Paul argues that God is not unjust because, as he programmatically announced, 'I will have mercy on whom I have mercy and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion' (Rom 9.15). In other words, Paul's answer to the charge of *ἀδικία* is the apparently arbitrary mercy of God. The form of God's promise indicates that the objects of mercy are unspecifiable (*ὃν ἄν*) and its application is indeterminately future-tense (*ἐλεήσω; οἰκτιρήσω*). Here, as in the narrative of Exodus 32-34 that *Wisdom* erases and Paul exploits (cf. 1 Cor 10.7; 2 Cor 3.6-18; cf. Rom 1.23; 9.3), mercy is not the restoration of the righteous; it is the re-birth of the unrighteous – 'the generative divine force that brings something into existence'.<sup>40</sup> 'Therefore' (*ἄρα οὖν*), as Paul's third antithesis deduces from the Exodus quotation, 'it is not of the one who wills, or of the one who runs, but of the God who has mercy' (9.16). The references to *θέλω* and *τρέχω* add human disposition and achievement to the list of excluded explanations for election, but the more striking thing about this antithesis is the proposed rather than precluded explanation. In tune with Paul's explanation of God's call solely in terms of God identity as 'the one who calls' (9.12), his accounting of the operations of divine mercy is reducible to a predication: God is 'the one who has mercy'.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Grindheim, *The Crux of Election*, 144-50.

<sup>39</sup> For the Golden Calf narrative as the allusive context of Romans 9.15-16, see Wagner, *Heralds of the Good News*, 52-53.

<sup>40</sup> J.M.G. Barclay, "'I will have mercy on whom I have mercy': The Golden Calf and Divine Mercy in Romans 9-11 and Second Temple Judaism", *EC* 1 (2010): 82-106 (100). For Exodus 32-24 as an account of Israel's re-creation parallel to Genesis 6-10, see W. Moberly, *At the Mountain of God: Story and Theology in Exodus 32-34* (JSOTSup 22; Sheffield: JSOT 1983, 91-93; quoted in Barclay, 'The Golden Calf and Divine Mercy', 100 n.57.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Wagner, *Heralds of the Good News*, 50-52.

However, as the  $\delta\nu\ \acute{\alpha}\nu$  from Exodus 33.19 intimates, the autonomous agency of the divine ‘I’ is double-sided.<sup>42</sup> God’s word to Moses has its counterpart in God’s word to Pharaoh:  $\epsilon\iota\varsigma\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\acute{o}\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\tau\omicron\ \acute{\epsilon}\xi\eta\gamma\epsilon\iota\rho\acute{\alpha}\ \sigma\epsilon\ \acute{\omicron}\pi\omega\varsigma\ \acute{\epsilon}\nu\delta\epsilon\acute{\iota}\xi\omega\mu\alpha\iota\ \acute{\epsilon}\nu\ \sigma\omicron\iota\ \tau\eta\nu\ \delta\upsilon\nu\alpha\mu\acute{\iota}\nu\ \mu\omicron\upsilon\ \kappa\alpha\iota\ \acute{\omicron}\pi\omega\varsigma\ \delta\iota\alpha\gamma\gamma\epsilon\lambda\eta\ \tau\omicron\ \acute{\omicron}\nu\omicron\mu\acute{\alpha}\ \mu\omicron\upsilon\ \acute{\epsilon}\nu\ \pi\acute{\alpha}\sigma\eta\ \tau\eta\ \gamma\eta$  (Rom 9.7). This is an adapted quotation of Exodus 9.16 LXX, substituting  $\acute{\epsilon}\xi\eta\gamma\epsilon\iota\rho\omega$  for  $\delta\iota\alpha\tau\eta\rho\acute{\epsilon}\omega$  and  $\delta\upsilon\nu\alpha\mu\iota\varsigma$  for  $\iota\sigma\chi\acute{\upsilon}\varsigma$ .<sup>43</sup> As Gaventa notes, the first of these alterations signals an emphasis on divine agency: ‘it is not simply that God permitted Pharaoh to continue to live ( $\acute{\epsilon}\nu\epsilon\kappa\epsilon\nu\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon\ \delta\iota\epsilon\tau\eta\rho\acute{\eta}\theta\eta\varsigma$  in Exod 9.16 LXX) but that God actually provided Pharaoh – brought Pharaoh on the scene ( $\acute{\epsilon}\xi\eta\gamma\epsilon\iota\rho\acute{\alpha}\ \sigma\epsilon\ \acute{\omicron}\pi\omega\varsigma$  in Rom 9.17)’.<sup>44</sup> Thus, whereas *Wisdom* identifies the ungodliness of the Egyptians as an explanation for their fitting destruction (*Wis.* 15.14-16.1), Paul introduces Pharaoh, the paradigmatic Egyptian, without any reference to his stubborn and oppressive history. As Paul reads Exodus – and the use of  $\sigma\kappa\lambda\eta\rho\acute{\upsilon}\nu\omega$  indicates that Paul is reading Exodus, not just Exodus 9.16<sup>45</sup> – Pharaoh is less an acting subject than an object of divine action – he is ‘raised up’ and ‘hardened’. Interpreted this way, God’s word to Pharaoh is reread as an exact contrast to God’s word to Moses: ‘God has mercy ( $\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\epsilon\acute{\epsilon}\omega$ ) on whom he wills, and hardens ( $\sigma\kappa\lambda\eta\rho\acute{\upsilon}\nu\omega$ ) whom he wills’ (9.18). Here, as in the contrast between election/love and rejection/hate in 9.10-13, the divine decision is double-sided: mercy and hardening. This duality suggests that divine mercy is fundamentally free; it is, as Barclay recognises, ‘a matter of choice and will, not necessity’.<sup>46</sup> But this, when read with *Wisdom*, is only to sharpen the scandal. *Wisdom*’s affirmation of divine justice takes the form of identifying ‘why’ God operates selectively; Paul’s answer to the question about divine injustice is the sheer ‘thatness’ of God’s selectivity: God has mercy; God hardens.

The contrast is stark: *Wisdom*’s rereading of Israel’s scripture is a rewriting of Israel’s history that uncovers and underlines the rationale for divine action by naming the fit between God’s acts and human subjects; Paul’s retelling of foundational moments in Israel’s history excludes a series of possible explanations for the duality of divine decision (e.g. birth, status, morality, success) and celebrates the utter and autonomous singularity of God’s initiative.

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<sup>42</sup> For the divine ‘I’ in Romans 9-11, see H. Hübner, *Gottes Ich und Israel* (FRLANT 126; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984).

<sup>43</sup> See, Wagner, *Heralds of the Good News*, 55 n.36.

<sup>44</sup> Gaventa, ‘On the Calling-into-Being of Israel’, 264.

<sup>45</sup> The verb  $\sigma\kappa\lambda\eta\rho\acute{\upsilon}\nu\omega$  does not occur in Exodus 9.16 LXX, but is, as Wagner remarks, ‘a notable feature of the exodus narrative’. See Wagner, *Heralds of the Good News*, 54 n.35 for a full tabulation.

<sup>46</sup> Barclay, ‘The Golden Calf and Divine Mercy’, 101.

Considered from this comparative vantage point, Romans 9.6-18 reads like an intentional and flagrant unraveling of the fabric of *Wisdom's* stable and just moral universe, a reduction of *Wisdom's* intricate and ordered historiographic tapestry to the single and humanly inexplicable thread of divine mercy. The rhetorical question of Romans 9.19 can thus be asked in *Wisdom's* voice: 'Why does God find fault? For who can resist his will (βούλημα)?' To *Wisdom's* ears, the reduction of the difference between divine mercy and hardening to the sheer fact that 'God wills' (θέλει, 9.18) would sound like the replacement of the immutably just and therefore predictable operations of God in history with a crude and chaotic voluntarism. Paul, it seems, anticipates this kind of concern and suspends his exegesis of Exodus 9.16 in order to address it.<sup>47</sup> His answer, however, is not an explanation for the doubleness of the divine will; it is an assertion of what Kierkegaard calls the 'deep qualitative difference between God and humanity'. Paralleling *Wisdom's* affirmation of the unimpeachable justice of God (*Wis.* 12.12-18), Paul insists that the creator is not answerable to the creature and appeals to the scriptural metaphor of the potter (cf. *Wis.* 15.7) to emphasise and underwrite God's freedom to harden and to have mercy or, in this context, to form 'vessels for dishonor' and 'vessels for honor' (Rom 9.20-21).<sup>48</sup> For *Wisdom*, the image of the potter is used to explain the origin of idolatry: 'the worker in clay' is free to fashion various vessels and counterfeit gods 'out of the same clay'. For Paul, the potter metaphor is an assertion of divine freedom rather than an explanation of the twofold effect of God's word. In other words, while Paul raises the 'why' question that *Wisdom* rewrites the Pentateuch to answer, he insists that God's ways and will are ultimately inexplicable in human terms: there is no identifiable correspondence between God's actions in history and history's human subjects. The only explanation is the inexplicable freedom of God.

## (2) *The Prophets in the Present-Tense: Romans 9.22-29*

The return to Exodus 9.16 in Romans 9.22 is a movement towards the present. As argued above, Paul's engagement with the texts of Genesis and Exodus is occasioned by the

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<sup>47</sup> Wagner, *Heralds of the Good News*, 56 n.40: 'The objection Paul addresses here actually breaks the flow of his argument, for v. 22 continues the exposition of Exod 9.16 begun in v. 17'.

<sup>48</sup> For a detailed discussion of the potter motif in Romans 9.21 in relation to its use in Isaiah and early Judaism, see, Wagner, *Heralds of the Good News*, 56-71. For the potter motif as establishing divine freedom rather than denoting divine caprice, see R. Feldmeier, 'Vater und Töpfer? Zur Identität Gottes im Römerbrief', in *Between Gospel and Election* (WUNT 257; ed. F. Wilk and J.R. Wagner; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 377-390.

implied crisis of Romans 9.1-3. What Romans 9.22-29 suggests is that this rereading is also oriented towards and shaped by Paul's present.<sup>49</sup>

Francis Watson detects a chiasmus in Rom 9.7-29: 'the narrative sequence consists of three pairings.... The prophetic sequence is a mirror image of this construction'.<sup>50</sup> According to this reading, the distinction between being a child of Abraham and a child of God exemplified in the choice of Isaac (Rom 9.7-9) corresponds to Isaiah's prophecies about the remnant (Rom 9.27-29), the unconditioned call of Jacob (Rom 9.10-13) corresponds to Hosea's words about the incongruous call of Gentiles (Rom 9.24-26) and the duality of mercy and hardening drawn from Exodus (Rom 9.15-18) corresponds to the vessels of wrath and mercy Paul constructs from Exodus 9.16 (Rom 9.22-23). That Watson needs the Exodus material to do two jobs suggests that this chiasm is, perhaps, a little too clean. Romans 9.19-23 is an extension of Exodus 9.16 and it is not until 9.24 that the movement from scriptural past to prophetic present fully occurs (see below). This qualification notwithstanding, the ordering of Romans 9.7-18 to Romans 9.24-22 is exactly right: the narrative sequence 'deals in types'; the prophetic sequence announces 'their realization'.<sup>51</sup>

Romans 9.22-23 is an exegetical extension of Paul's adapted citation of Exodus 9.16.<sup>52</sup> God's word to Pharaoh is recast as a rhetorical question about God's ways and purposes:

εἰς αὐτὸ τοῦτο ἐξήγειρά σε ὅπως ἐνδείξωμαι ἐν σοὶ τὴν δύναμίν μου καὶ ὅπως διαγγελῆ τὸ ὄνομά μου ἐν πάσῃ τῇ γῆ (Exod 9.16 in Rom 9.17)

εἰ δὲ θέλων ὁ θεὸς ἐνδείξασθαι τὴν ὀργὴν καὶ γνωρίσαι τὸ δυνατὸν αὐτοῦ ἤνεγκεν ἐν πολλῇ μακροθυμίᾳ σκευὴ ὀργῆς κατηρτισμένα εἰς ἀπώλειαν, καὶ ἵνα γνωρίσῃ τὸν πλοῦτον τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ σκευῇ ἐλέους ἃ προηοίμασεν εἰς δόξαν (Rom 9.22-23)

This theological extension maintains the duality of the divine economy – 'vessels of mercy' and 'vessels of wrath' pick up the doubleness of mercy and hardening from 9.15-18 –, but the doubleness of the divine intention indicated by the two ὅπως clauses of Exodus 9.16 and the

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<sup>49</sup> Cf. C. Müller, *Gottes Gerechtigkeit und Gottes Volk* (FRLANT 86; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1964), 32. Watson describes the transition from Romans 9.6-18 to 9.19-29 as the move from the 'narrative sequence' to the 'prophetic sequence' (*Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles*, 317-18).

<sup>50</sup> Watson, *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles*, 317.

<sup>51</sup> Watson, *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles*, 317. Watson contrasts this ordering of narrative and prophetic material to the 'salvation-historical reading of N.T. Wright, for whom Romans 9.6-29 tells "the story of Israel from Abraham to exile and beyond"' (*Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles*, 317 n.29; quoting N.T. Wright, 'The Book of Romans', in *NIB X* [Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002], 634).

<sup>52</sup> N. Dahl, 'The Future of Israel', in *Studies in Paul* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1977), 144; Wagner, *Heralds of the Good News*, 72-78; Watson, *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles*, 314-17. For the syntactical complexities of Romans 9.22-23, especially the apparent protasis without an apodosis, see Cranfield, *Romans*, 2.492-97; Wilckens, *Der Brief an die Römer*, 2.202-205.

equivalence of mercy and hardening in 9.18 ‘shifts from symmetry to teleology’.<sup>53</sup> Here, the objects and/or instruments of wrath<sup>54</sup> still serve to demonstrate God’s power (δυνατός; cf. δύναμις in 9.17), but according to Romans 9.23, God’s act of enduring them is oriented to his purpose (ἵνα) of ‘making known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy’. Thus, whereas *Wisdom* explains the doubleness of divine action as a necessity of divine justice – God drowns the ungodly Egyptians and has mercy on righteous Israel (*Wis.* 10.15-21) –, it is, for Paul, divine mercy that is, in Barclay’s phrase, ‘the very fundament of history’<sup>55</sup> – that towards which the divine acts of hatred and hardening are directed and that which both explains and orders the duality of election and rejection. But, as the quotation from Exodus 33.19 in Romans 9.15 indicates, mercy is precisely inexplicable, its objects are unspecifiable and its operations are future-tense. To ground Israel’s history on and to orient Israel’s history towards the creative mercy of God is thus to interpret Israel’s past as a promise – that is, to read the potentiality and promissory character of Israel’s story as a pointer to its future fulfillment. According to Paul, that future is (partially) his present.

The return of first-person discourse in Romans 9.24 marks the transition from the typological testimony of Israel’s history to Paul’s present. The ‘vessels of mercy’ introduced as an extension of Exodus 9.16 (and 33.19) are identified as ‘us’ (ἡμεῖς). This ‘us’ signals that, as suggested above, Paul’s engagement with Israel’s scripture is not only occasioned by the crisis of Romans 9.1-3; it is oriented towards the current existence of a community ‘called...not only from the Jews but also from the nations’. Romans 9.24 is thus the middle point of Paul’s scriptural argument in Romans 9.6-29: Israel’s past anticipates Paul’s present; Israel’s prophets announce it in the present-tense.

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<sup>53</sup> Watson, *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles*, 315. Cranfield, explicitly dependent on Barth’s thesis of the single, saving will of God (cf. *CD II/2* §34), over-emphasises the singularity of the divine purpose and elides the duality of the divine economy (*Romans*, 2.472,488; cf. Wagner, *Heralds of the Good News*, 77 who admits that his reading, which is close to Cranfield’s, ‘imports into Romans 9.22-24 convictions that Paul does not state clearly until chapter 11’). Barclay cautions against ‘prematurely resolving the duality of Romans 9’, noting that ‘Divine mercy for Paul is neither an automatic nor a “natural” state of affairs, but a willed act, reversing God’s own equally willing (but deserved) judgement’ (*The Golden Calf and Divine Mercy*, 101 n.62; cf. Grindheim, *The Crux of Election*, 147). In Romans 9.22-23, Paul indicates that the twofold effect of the divine word is asymmetrical (God endures vessels of wrath but *makes known* his glory for vessels of mercy) and teleological (God endures vessels of wrath *in order to* communicate his glory to vessels of mercy), but this is an interpretation rather than a rejection of the doubleness of God’s will and word.

<sup>54</sup> See A.T. Hanson, ‘Vessels of Wrath or Instruments of Wrath: Romans 9.22-23’, *JTS* 32 (1981): 433-43; cf. Wagner, *Heralds of the Good News*, 72 n.92.

<sup>55</sup> Barclay, ‘The Golden Calf and Divine Mercy’, 101.

As Paul reads the present and the prophets, the calling of a people ἐξ Ἰουδαίων and ἐξ ἐθνῶν occurs ‘just as he says in Hosea’. What he records Hosea as saying, however, is rearranged, rewritten and, most strikingly, reapplied. First, citing Hosea 2.25, Paul replaces καὶ ἐλεήσω with καλέσω, fronts the reference to ‘not my people’ and substitutes ἀγαπάω for ἐλέω. As Watson notes, the inclusion of καλέω and ἀγαπάω links Hosea’s prophecy with the Jacob and Esau narrative as recalled in Romans 9.10-13, thereby indicating that the unconditioned call of Jacob is an anticipation of the incongruous call of Gentiles (cf. Rom 9.24), the creating of ‘my people’ out of ‘not my people’.<sup>56</sup> In other words, as Paul rereads Israel’s scripture, God’s current act of creating a beloved people out of the alienated and unloved Gentiles has its scriptural type in Genesis 25.23 and its prophetic announcement in Hosea 2.25. This rereading is only intelligible as a reinterpretation of Israel’s past and prophets from the perspective of Paul’s present. As Wagner remarks, this reapplication of Hosea 2.25 (and 2.1 in Rom 9.26) ‘audaciously appropriates for the Gentiles an oracle...that originally envisioned the redemption of Israel’.<sup>57</sup> Put differently, Hosea’s future-tense prophecy about the restoration of Israel is interpreted by Paul as a promise fulfilled in the present calling of non-Jews. Hosea’s words are thus subsumed under the present-tense (λέγει, 9.25), and it is therefore the nations (ἔθνη) who are the ‘not my people’ and who fulfill Hosea’s prophecy as they are created *ex contrario* – that is, as this ‘not my people’ are called (καλέω) ‘children of the living God’ (Rom 9.26; Hos 2.1). It is worth noting, however, that while this re-voicing of Hosea’s oracle involves a radical reinterpretation, it preserves what Wagner terms ‘the logic of redemptive reversal already present in Hos 1-2’.<sup>58</sup> The inclusion of non-Jews, like the calling of Isaac and Jacob (Rom 9.7-13), is a creative and incongruous act of mercy. Their adoption and belovedness contradict rather than correspond to their natural state: it is the ‘not my children’ who are called ‘my children’ and the ‘not loved’ who are called ‘loved’.<sup>59</sup> In other words, the inclusion of non-Jews

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<sup>56</sup> Watson, *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles*, 320. Cf. the discussion of Romans 9.30-32 below.

<sup>57</sup> J.R. Wagner, “‘Not from the Jews Only, But Also from the Gentiles’: Mercy to the Nations in Romans 9-11’ in *Between Gospel and Election* (WUNT 257; ed. F. Wilk and J.R. Wagner; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 417-31 (22). Wagner notes elsewhere that Romans 9.24 assumes the inclusion of Israel and accents the inclusion of the Gentiles which in turn invites the reapplication of Hosea’s words as an argument for the calling of nations (*Heralds of the Good News*, 79).

<sup>58</sup> Wagner, ‘Mercy to the Nations’, 422.

<sup>59</sup> Dahl notes that the logic of this *ex contrario* call in Romans 9.25-26 echoes Romans 4.17: (‘The Future of Israel’, 146; cf. Müller, *Gottes Gerechtigkeit*, 28).

is explainable only as a free act of the surprising and sovereign God identified as ‘the one who calls’ (9.12) and ‘the one who has mercy’ (9.16).

The election of the Gentiles, however, is only half of the twofold effect of God’s word in Paul’s present. Just as Israel’s scriptural history is typological testimony to the unconditioned call of God (Rom 9.10-13) and the distinction between Abraham’s fleshly progeny and God’s promise-born children (9.7-9), so Israel’s prophets, as reread by Paul, announce both the unexpected and incongruous call of the Gentiles (9.25-26) and the reduction of Israel to a remnant (9.27-29). As Paul reads Isaiah, he hears him ‘crying out’ in the present-tense: Ἡσαΐας δὲ κράζει ὑπὲρ τοῦ Ἰσραήλ (9.27).<sup>60</sup> Thus interpreted, Isaiah’s prophecy about the future salvation of a remnant within Israel (Isa 10.22-23) becomes a word about Paul’s present crisis (cf. 9.1-3; 11.1-4). The current catastrophe is anticipated in Israel’s history – ‘not all who are of Israel are Israel’ (9.6b); ‘not all Abraham’s children are seed’ (9.7) – and it is correspondingly announced by Israel’s prophet: the multitude of Israel is contrasted with the minority who will be saved (Isa 10.22-23 in Rom 9.27)<sup>61</sup> and it is the existence of a ‘seed’ (σπέρμα, cf. 9.7) that prevents Israel from becoming like Sodom and Gomorrah (Isa 1.9 in Rom 9.29). This identification of Isaiah’s ‘remnant’ (ὑπόλειμμα) and ‘seed’ with the ‘Israel-Israel’ of Romans 9.6b and the σπέρμα or ‘children of God’ of 9.7-8 suggests that, in itself, the remnant/seed is a salvific category (cf. σώζω, 9.27).<sup>62</sup> Paul’s focus here, however, is not on the remnant as such, but rather on the reduction of Israel to a remnant by the enactment of the promised divine ‘sentence’ (λόγον συντελῶν καὶ συντέμνων, 9.28 citing Isa 28.22).<sup>63</sup> This punitive ‘word’ appears to be the dark side of the singular divine λόγος, the operations and effects of which Paul has been tracing since Romans 9.6: God’s one word is, as heard in Paul’s present, the

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<sup>60</sup> Even the perfect of προλέγω in Romans 9.29 introduces Isaiah’s words as prophecy fulfilled: ‘just as Isaiah foretold...’

<sup>61</sup> Paul’s citation of Isaiah 10.22-23 substitutes ὁ ἀριθμὸς τῶν υἱῶν for ὁ λαός, an alteration that appears to be derived from Hosea 2.1 (Koch, *Die Schrift als Zeuge*, 168; Wagner, *Heralds of the Good News*, 95-100).

<sup>62</sup> For this reason, and because it is argued that the εἰάν of Romans 9.27 introduces a conditional clause within which the reference to the remnant is the logical conclusion, some have argued that Paul’s use of Isaiah is promissory and positive (see E. Seitz, ‘λόγον συντελῶν eine Gerichtsankündigung? (Zu Röm 9.27/28)’, *BN* 105 (2001): 59-61; cf. Wagner, *Heralds of the Good News*, 93). This reading, as we will see, overlooks the function and effect of the divine word that ‘concludes and cuts short’ (Rom 9.28). The εἰάν clause should therefore be read as a concessive: ‘Even though the number of the children of Israel were like the sand of the sea, [only] a remnant will be saved’ (so Cranfield, *Romans*, 2.471; Wilckens, *Der Brief an die Römer*, 2.198; Lohse, *Der Brief an die Römer*, 276, 283).

<sup>63</sup> For the preservation of divine judgment in the Septuagint translation of Isaiah 28.22 MT and thus the translation of λόγος as sentence in Romans 9.28, see Grindheim, *The Crux of Election*, 154. For the negative function of the remnant motif within the argument of Romans 9.24-33, see F. Wilk, *Die Bedeutung des Jesajabuches für Paulus* (FRLANT 179; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998), 186.

‘calling (καλέω) of Gentiles’ (9.24-26) and the ‘cutting short’ (or ‘cutting off’, cf. Rom 11.17, 19, 22) of most Jews (9.27-29).

At this point, the deep and essential incommensurability between the rereadings of Israel’s scripture in Romans 9.6-29 and *Wisdom* 10-19 comes fully into view. As argued above, there is a striking (and startling) contrast between *Wisdom*’s strategy of rereading and rewriting pentateuchal history so as to uncover and underline the fit between divine action and human subjects and Paul’s parading of the unconditioned and incongruous double-effect of the divine word in Romans 9.6-18. This contrast, however, is incomplete. For *Wisdom*, the identification of a correspondence between God’s gifts and their recipients is not a historiographic abstraction; it is a word of encouragement to Jewish readers: it is Israel (*qua* the righteous) who is the fitting object of God’s salvific actions. Considered from this perspective, Paul’s reinterpretation of portions of the Pentateuch as a typological testimony to, and his reactivation of Hosea and Isaiah as a present-tense announcement of the disjunctive call of the Gentiles and the traumatic reduction of Israel to a remnant reads like an intentional inversion of the logic of *Wisdom*’s pentateuchal re-narration. For *Wisdom*, the retelling of history has to be carefully calibrated because it is a recurrent concretion of the pre-creational moral order. In other words, *Wisdom*’s hermeneutic is protological. Paul’s hermeneutic is eschatological: he rereads Israel’s scripture from the arrival of the antitype and the fulfillment of prophetic promise. We are, however, in danger of getting ahead of Paul. Romans 9.6-29 is a rereading of scripture from the eschatological present; it is Romans 9.30-10.21 that names the eschatological event.

#### *The Christological Crisis: Romans 9.30-10.21*

The central claim of the last section was that Paul rereads Israel’s scripture from the perspective of his present. Israel’s past anticipates (Rom 9.7-18) and Israel’s prophets announce (Rom 9.25-29) the current crisis that Paul positively characterises as the calling of a people ‘not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles’ (Rom 9.24) and negatively describes as the reduction of Israel to a remnant (Rom 9.27, 29). As suggested above, when considered in conversation with *Wisdom*’s recasting of Israel’s history, Paul’s rereading results in a disorienting double oddity: first, election and rejection operate counter to rather than in correspondence with any comprehensible criteria of human worth; second, it is therefore the

Gentiles who are the incongruous objects of divine mercy and the majority of Jews who are subjected to divine judgment. The unanswered question at this point in Paul's argument, however, is what has occasioned this paradoxical present and thus shaped this peculiar hermeneutic? Romans 9.30-10.21, I will argue, provides an answer: the divine act that is Jesus' history is at once the shame of those who stumble on this christological stone and the salvation of those who believe on him. Put another way, the Christ-event is the singular and concrete actualisation of the scriptural anticipation and announcement of rejection and election. Thus, to say that Paul's reading of Israel's scripture is a reading from the perspective of his present is to say that he interprets the Old Testament as a typological testimony to and a prophetic promise of the event and impact of the crucified and risen Jesus.<sup>64</sup>

(1) *The Promised and Paradoxical Present: Romans 9.30-33*

Romans 9.30-32 is a redescription of Paul's present. Putting what Wagner describes as a 'comic spin on the rather pedestrian metaphor of a footrace',<sup>65</sup> Paul announces the actualisation of *theologoumena* that Israel's history anticipated: 'not by works, but by the one who calls' (Rom 9.12); 'not the one who wills or runs, but the God who has mercy' (9.16).<sup>66</sup> As argued above, God's choice of Jacob and God's word to Moses prefigure, to borrow Calvin's description, the 'singular paradox' that is Paul's present.<sup>67</sup> Paul makes this point in Romans

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<sup>64</sup> This ordering of the scriptural witness to election/rejection to what Watson calls 'its concrete realization in Christ' (*Hermeneutics*, 21 n.41) suggests that the christological content of Romans 9.30-10.21 is the hermeneutical and theological centre of Romans 9-11. So rightly, W.A. Meeks, 'On Trusting an Unpredictable God: A Hermeneutical Meditation on Romans 9-11', in *In Search of the Early Christians: Selected Essays* (ed. A.R. Hilton and H.G. Snyder; New Haven: YUP, 2002), 210-229 (217); C.K. Rowe, 'Romans 10:13: What is the Name of the Lord?', *HBT* 22 (2000): 135-73 (138-40, 158). This proposal positions me against Hays for whom 'Rom. 9:30-10.21 has a parenthetical place in the logic of the argument' (*Echoes*, 75) and Flebbe for whom the fact that Christ appears 'nur viermal, und zwar eng zusammenstehend an einer Stelle (10,4-17)', indicates that theology rather than Christology is the determinative theme of Romans 9-11 (*Solus Deus*, 275-76; cf. E.E. Johnson, *The Function of Apocalyptic and Wisdom Traditions in Romans 9-11* [SBLDS 109; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989], 204). Not only is Flebbe's tabulation of christological references highly misleading – Rowe notes that depending on the identification of the stone and the κύριος, there are as many as seventeen references to Christ in Romans 9.30-10.21 ('What is the Name of the Lord', 138 n.9) –, the dichotomizing of *theology* and Christology fundamentally misconstrues the dialectic relation of identification and differentiation between Jesus and God that characterises Paul's theological grammar (Rowe, 'What Is the Name of the Lord?', 136-37, 144, 160, 170-73; cf. E.P. Sanders, *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1983], 194; L.E. Keck, 'Toward the Renewal of New Testament Christology', *NTS* 32 [1986]: 362-77; Hahn, *Theologie*, 2.194, 301-308).

<sup>65</sup> Wagner, 'Mercy to the Nations', 423.

<sup>66</sup> The connection between Romans 9.12 and 9.30-32 is noted by S. Westerholm, 'Paul and the Law in Romans 9-11', 223-24; Watson, *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles*, 312-13.

<sup>67</sup> J. Calvin, 'Acts 14-28 and Romans 1-6', in *Calvin's Commentaries Volume XIX* (trans. J. Owen; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 377.

9.30-32 by combining the roles of apostle and athletic commentator and announcing an ironic race with an incongruous outcome: ‘Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness, that is, the righteousness by faith (ἐκ πίστεως); but Israel, running after the law of righteousness, did not catch up with the law’; and this because they raced ‘not by faith, but as by works’ (οὐκ ἐκ πίστεως ἀλλ’ ὡς ἐξ ἔργων, 9.30-32). Here, the race to righteousness is literally won ‘not by works’ and ‘not by the one who runs’. As Calvin observes, ‘nothing could appear more unreasonable or less befitting’ than the incongruous results of this footrace:<sup>68</sup> ‘the δικαιοσύνη that Paul announces’, to quote Barclay’s comment in conversation with *Wisdom*, ‘appears qualitatively different from a normal configuration of justice’.<sup>69</sup>

Paul’s interest in Romans 9.30-33, however, is not just the paradoxicality of the present; he is arguing that this current incongruity is the fulfillment of a scriptural promise. Conflating Isaiah 28.16 and 8.14 LXX, Paul, as Watson writes, ‘creates a text that announces a forthcoming divine act with two contrasting outcomes’.<sup>70</sup> As Paul rereads and rewrites Isaiah, replacing πολυτελῆ ἐκλεκτὸν ἀκρογωνιαῖον ἔντιμον (Isa 28.16) with προσκόμματος καὶ πέτραν σκανδάλου (cf. Isa 8.14),<sup>71</sup> he hears God promising to place a stone in Zion that will simultaneously occasion stumbling and salvation: ἴδου τίθημι ἐν Σιών λίθον προσκόμματος καὶ πέτραν σκανδάλου, καὶ ὁ πιστεύων ἐπ’ αὐτῷ οὐ κατασυνθῆσεται.<sup>72</sup> For Paul, to repeat a point made above in relation to Romans 9.24, his present is the realisation of this promise. The citation formula that introduces Paul’s antithetical re-voicing of Isaiah 28.16 (καθὼς γέγραπται) indicates a correspondence between the prophetic word and its fulfillment in the paradoxical present described in 9.30, 32: ‘Paul understands ὁ πιστεύων ἐπ’ αὐτῷ οὐ κατασυνθῆσεται (Rom 9.33) to speak of a righteousness that is ἐκ πίστεως (9.30, 32), just as he understands “stumbling” as occasioned by the pursuit of righteousness “by works” (9.32)’.<sup>73</sup> This suggests that the current crisis that is the stumbling of Israel and the salvation of Gentiles

<sup>68</sup> Calvin, *Romans*, 377.

<sup>69</sup> Barclay, ‘Unnerving Grace’, 108.

<sup>70</sup> Watson, *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles*, 323.

<sup>71</sup> The lexemes that Paul lifts from Isaiah 8.14 are πρόσκομμα and πέτραν. For a full discussion of Paul’s textual emendations to Isaiah 28.16 and an accompanying suggestion that Paul was writing from ‘a Septuagint text that had been reworked...to bring it closer to a Hebrew exemplar’, see Wagner, *Heralds*, 130.

<sup>72</sup> For the future form of κατασύνω as a reference to final judgment and thus as a reference to eschatological salvation when qualified by the negative particle (οὐ), see R. Bultmann, ‘αἰσχύνω κτλ.’, in *TDNT* 1 (ed. G. Kittel; trans. G.W. Bromiley; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 189.

<sup>73</sup> Watson, *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles*, 324. Watson adds that the connection between ὁ πιστεύων ἐπ’ αὐτῷ and ἐκ πίστεως ‘makes it difficult to refer ἐκ πίστεως to the faithfulness of Christ’.

is occasioned by and is the aftermath of God's act of placing a stone in Zion. In other words, the paradoxical present that generates and orients Paul's hermeneutic is the effect of a concrete divine cause.<sup>74</sup> *Wisdom*, it should be noted, for whom God's punitive actions towards Israel are limited to discipline and testing, could not imagine that God is the agent of Israel's stumble. Scripture is reread and rewritten to show that while God can act with brief educational severity, he is consistently beneficent to Israel because Israel is a consistently fitting recipient of divine benefaction. For Paul, by contrast, it is precisely God's act that occasions Israel's stumble that reconfigures Paul's reading of Israel's scripture. However, while Romans 9.30-33 announces the strange impact and scriptural foreordination of this event, it does not name or specify it. What I want to argue, building on a suggestion by Kavin Rowe, is that Romans 10.1-13 gives 'christological content' to this divine cause: the act and aftermath promised by Isaiah are fulfilled in the event and effect of God's action of sending and raising the crucified Jesus.<sup>75</sup>

## (2) *The Christological Content: Romans 10.1-13*

Romans 10.1-13 is tied together lexically and thematically by repeated references to 'salvation' (σωτηρίαν, 10.1, 10; σώζω, 10.9, 13). Paul desires and prays for the salvation of Israel (10.1), but he sees a contradiction between their admirable 'zeal for God' (10.2) and their ignorance of God's christological righteousness and salvation (10.2b-4, 6-13). In fact, as noted in the previous chapter, it is, however oddly, the people who read the pentateuchal and prophetic witness to the righteousness of God (cf. Rom 3.21) who do not know its christological content (10.2b-4). Thus, in this context, Israel's attempt 'to establish her own righteousness', and the concomitant failure to 'submit to God's righteousness', are a twofold consequence of an epistemological incapacity: Unbelieving Israelites are describable as ἀγνοοῦντες τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην (10.3) because (γάρ) they do not recognise that 'Christ is the *telos* of the law unto righteousness for everyone who believes' (10.4). In other words, that which Israel sought as the νόμος δικαιοσύνης (9.31) and Gentiles received as the δικαιοσύνη ἐκ πίστεως (9.30) is

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<sup>74</sup> For Israel's stumble as the result of intentional divine action, see M. Theobald, *Studien zum Römerbrief* (WUNT 136; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 374-78; F. Avemarie, 'Israels rätselhafter Ungehorsam. Römer 10 als Anatomie eines von Gott provozierten Unglaubens', in *Between Gospel and Election* (WUNT 257; ed. F. Wilk and J.R. Wagner; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 299-320.

<sup>75</sup> Rowe, 'What is the Name of the Lord', 139. Rowe's more specific argument is that '10.1ff. functions...to give christological content to the righteousness that is ἐκ πίστεως (9.30, 32)...to the concept of salvation (10.1) and to Israel's disobedience (9.30-33 and 10.14-21)', as well as 'christological identity to the stone/rock (9.32, 33)' (139-40).

identified in 10.4 with the one Paul calls Χριστός.<sup>76</sup> It is this contrast between ‘the righteousness of the law’ and the christological ‘righteousness of faith’ that is articulated as an antithetical rereading (and rewriting) of Israel’s scriptures in Romans 10.5-8.<sup>77</sup>

The often overlooked γάρ that connects Romans 10.5 to the preceding claim that zealous Israel is ignorant of God’s christological righteousness indicates that Israel’s epistemological failure is hermeneutically grounded. As Paul rereads Leviticus 18.5 from the perspective of the law’s christological *telos*, he encounters what Watson calls a ‘soteriological rationale’ that is ‘something other than the righteousness of faith’: Μωϋσῆς γὰρ γράφει τὴν δικαιοσύνην τὴν ἐκ [τοῦ] νόμου ὅτι ὁ ποιήσας αὐτὰ ἄνθρωπος ζήσεται ἐν αὐτοῖς (Rom 10.5).<sup>78</sup> It is notable that ‘the righteousness *from* the law’ is summarily expressed in the actual voice of the law (Lev 18.5b),<sup>79</sup> and thus Israel’s pursuit of the ‘law of righteousness’ (9.31) and attempt to ‘establish her own righteousness’ (10.3) can be read as synonymous descriptions of a scripturally determined soteriology: life is contingent on nomistically defined human action.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Hays, *Echoes*, 76; cf. Wagner, *Heralds*, 125. The important debate about the translation of τέλος (end or goal) does not impact the central claim of this section – that is, Christ is the content of scripture’s witness. However, that Romans 10.3-4 is linked to the footrace metaphor by the reappearance of δικαιοσύνη, πιστεύω and νόμος suggests that τέλος likely refers to the finish-line of the race to righteousness and therefore is the ‘end of the law’ precisely as ‘the goal of the law’ (see Wagner, *Heralds*, 120; cf. Avemarie, ‘Israels rätselhafter Ungehorsam’, 306-15 for a recent argument that τέλος is a positive description and should thus be translated as ‘Ziel’, but in a way that includes a reference to completion).

<sup>77</sup> For the argument in favor of an antithetical construal of Paul’s presentation of Leviticus 18.5 and Deuteronomy 30.12-14 in Romans 10.5-8, see P.M. Sprinkle, *Law and Life: The Interpretation of Leviticus 18.5 in Early Judaism and in Paul* (WUNT II/241; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 170-73; cf. Dunn *Romans 9-16*, 602. Against Hays’ suggestion that ‘the righteousness of the law’ and ‘the righteousness of faith’ are ‘synonymous’ rather than antithetical (*Echoes*, 76), Sprinkle notes: 1) the antithetical relationship of Leviticus 18.5 and Habakkuk 2.4 in Galatians 3.12, 2) the adversative force of δέ in Pauline constructions in which this preposition relates righteousness ἐκ πίστεως and righteousness ἐκ law/works, 3) the characteristically Pauline contrast between law/works and faith, 4) the parallel antithesis between ‘the law’ and ‘righteousness of faith’ in Romans 4.13, and 5) the elimination of the references to ‘doing the commandment’ in Deuteronomy 30.12-14 (*Law and Life*, 70-72; cf. Watson, *Hermeneutics*, 329-41).

<sup>78</sup> Watson, *Hermeneutics*, 332-33. Considering the difficult textual issue in Romans 10.5, the manuscript evidence of P<sup>46</sup> and the majority text and its status as the *lectio difficilior* incline me to place the ὅτι after τοῦ νόμου (cf. A. Lindemann, ‘Die Gerechtigkeit aus dem Gesetz: Erwägungen zur Auslegung und zur Textgeschichte von Römer 10, 5’, *ZNW* 73 [1982]: 231-50; Koch, *Die Schrift als Zeuge*, 293-94; Sprinkle, *Law and Life*, 166 n.2).

<sup>79</sup> Paul’s citation alters Leviticus 18.5b LXX by dropping the relative pronoun and changing the object to a demonstrative so that ‘the person who does these things’ has no definite antecedent, thus rendering Paul’s version of Leviticus 18.5b a suitable summary of ‘the righteousness of the law’ (Seifrid, ‘Romans’, 655).

<sup>80</sup> This reading assumes (*pace* Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, 601) that ζήσεται ἐν αὐτοῖς should be interpreted instrumentally rather than locatively. As Sprinkle argues, the early Jewish texts Dunn appeals to actually support a tradition of soteriological interpretation of Leviticus 18.5 and Paul’s correlation of life and righteousness in Galatians 3.21, together with the theme of salvation that frames Romans 10.1-13, suggests that Paul understands the reference to ‘life’ in Leviticus 18.5b as a soteriological consequence of doing the law (*Law and Life*, 141 n.38). In this vein, Watson critiques N.T. Wright’s claim that law in Romans 9.30-10.5 describes ‘a charter of racial privilege’ (*The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991], 241), noting that

In this sense, as Watson suggests, the uninformed zeal and misdirected action of Israel ‘is mediated through a text’<sup>81</sup> – that is, scripture both announces (Isa 28.16 in 9.33) and occasions (Lev 18.5b in 10.5) Israel’s foreordained failure. It is precisely as readers of Leviticus 18.5b that Paul’s ‘kinsfolk according to the flesh’ (9.3) pursued the law of righteousness as if by works and thus stumbled over the stumbling stone, thereby fulfilling the promise of Isaiah 28.16 (Rom 9.32-33). Sprinkle, I think rightly, resists construing the logic of Paul’s contrast between ‘the righteousness of the law’ and ‘the righteousness of faith’ in terms of an abstract antithesis between either legalism/faith<sup>82</sup> or nationalistic exclusivity/ethnic inclusion,<sup>83</sup> arguing instead that the exclusion of human action as an explanation for election (9.11-12, 16, 32; 10.3), and especially Paul’s deletion of the repeated references to ‘doing the commandment’ in Deuteronomy 30.12-14 (Rom 10.6-8, see below), suggest that Paul interprets the implied soteriology of Leviticus 18.5b as ‘contrary to the theological structure of the gospel’ because it ‘enjoins a human activity as a precondition for blessing’ whereas ‘the righteousness of faith’ is determined ‘by God’s unilateral act’.<sup>84</sup> In other words, the Pauline antithesis is not between two modes of human agency; it is between divine and human agency. However, lest this contrast become another abstract polarity, it is essential to note that the argumentative function of Romans 10.5 as grounding the claim that ‘Christ is the *telos* of the law’ and Paul’s christological rewriting of Deuteronomy 30.12-14 in Romans 10.6-8 indicate that the intended antithesis is not between divine and human action *per se* or *in abstracto*, but between nomistic human agency and a single and specific divine act – that is, between doing the law and the Christ-event. For Paul, then, in contrast to *Wisdom*, righteousness is not defined by its congruence with the ultimate pre-creational structures of the cosmos. Rather, as argued in chapter seven, God’s righteousness is defined in and as an event, or more specifically, in and as the Christ-event.

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while ‘privilege is an appropriate term for the items listed in [Romans] 9.4-5, in 9.30-10.5 the emphasis is on the *praxis* that corresponds to the privilege of νομοθεσία’ (Watson, *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles*, 328-29 n.44; emphasis original).

<sup>81</sup> Watson, *Hermeneutics*, 333.

<sup>82</sup> E.g. Cranfield, *Romans*, 2.510; H. Hübner, ‘Was Heisst bei Paulus “Werke des Gesetzes”?’, in *Glaube und Eschatologie* (ed. E. Grässer and O. Merk; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1985), 123-33; D.J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 619.

<sup>83</sup> E.g. Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, 581-83; Wright, *Climax*, 242; cf. Sanders, *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People*, 36-41; Wagner, *Heralds*, 158 n.122

<sup>84</sup> Sprinkle, *Law and Life*, 176.

In Romans 10.6-8, the christological content of this concrete divine action is spoken by ‘the righteousness of faith’ as a subversive re-saying of the prohibited quest motif of Deuteronomy 30.12-14. Paul’s editorial activity eliminates the reference to ‘the commandment’ (ἡ ἐντολή) that opens the passage in Deuteronomy 30.11 LXX and erases the threefold occurrence of ποιέω (Deut 30.12, 13, 14 LXX),<sup>85</sup> thus creating a text that is lexically dislocated from and soteriologically opposed to Leviticus 18.5. Whereas Leviticus 18.5b invites human action with the verb ποιέω, Paul deletes this verbal link between Deuteronomy and Leviticus and reactivates the deuteronomic prohibition against supra-human acting as an inner-pentateuchal antithesis to ‘the righteousness of the law’.<sup>86</sup> As noted above, however, the contrast between Leviticus 18.5 and Paul’s rewritten Deuteronomy 30.12-14 is not an abstract antithesis between divine and human initiative; it is a concrete antithesis between a soteriologically intended observance of the law and God’s single and specific act that is the incarnate and risen Christ. Thus, Paul not only represses the references to ‘the commandment’ and ‘doing’ in Deuteronomy 30.11-14;<sup>87</sup> he rewrites the text with an introduction taken from Deuteronomy 8.17/9.9 LXX and replaces the references to doing the commandment with christological glosses.<sup>88</sup> In its rewritten form and as an antithesis to Romans 10.5, Deuteronomy 30.12-14 cautions the ἄνθρωπος of Leviticus 18.5 not ‘to say in his or her heart’ either ‘who will ascend to heaven’ or ‘who will descend into the abyss’ because both questions suppose that Christ is a passive prize rather than the incarnate and risen subject of God’s saving initiative (10.6-7). The proper soteriological statement is therefore predicated on God’s christological action rather than nomistic human agency: ἀλλὰ τί λέγει; ἐγγύς σου τὸ ῥῆμα ἐστὶν ἐν τῷ στόματί σου καὶ ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ σου (10.8a). In this context, the present word is the preached Christ (10.8b; cf. 10.17).<sup>89</sup> The fault-line between ‘the righteousness of the law’ and ‘the righteousness of faith’ is thus irreducibly christological. As Sprinkle concludes, “‘their own righteousness’ refers to righteousness that is sought through human means’, or more

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<sup>85</sup> For a detailed discussion, see Koch, *Die Schrift als Zeuge*, 295.

<sup>86</sup> Sprinkle, *Law and Life*, 181. ‘The exegetical result’ of Paul’s rewritten text is, as Sprinkle adds, ‘a theological point that is antithetical both to Lev 18.5 and the original context of Deut 30’ (*Law and Life*, 180).

<sup>87</sup> Koch, *Die Schrift als Zeuge*, 295.

<sup>88</sup> Watson, *Hermeneutics*, 340: ‘Where Deuteronomy speaks of the doing of the commandment, Paul rewrites it so that it will speak of Christ and faith’.

<sup>89</sup> Romans 10.8b and 10.17 are ‘complementary descriptions of the gospel’; τὸ ῥῆμα τῆς πίστεως points to ‘the call to faith that is inherent to God’s work in Christ’, τὸ ῥῆμα Χριστοῦ underscores ‘the unchanging content of that address’ (Seifrid, ‘Romans’, 663).

concretely, righteousness via the Mosaic Law, ‘while “the righteousness of God” is God’s saving action in Christ’.<sup>90</sup> In other words, the witness of Israel’s scripture – the law and the prophets – to the righteousness of God just is scripture’s witness to the divine act that is Jesus’ single and saving history.

This christological centering of Paul’s hermeneutic is confirmed and deepened in Romans 10.9-13. While the christological glosses of 10.6, 7 imply that the sent and exalted Christ is the content of ‘the word of faith’, the *ὅτι* that connects 10.8 and 10.9 signals a specification of the subject matter of the kerygma as the ruling and resurrected Jesus. Here, the content of confession is ‘Jesus is Lord’ (κύριος Ἰησοῦς) and the object of faith is God’s act of raising him from the dead. This ‘christo-theological’<sup>91</sup> soteriology is explained and expanded in 10.10 and then scripturally grounded in 10.11 (λέγει γὰρ ἡ γραφή). Re-citing Isaiah 28.16 (cf. 9.33) with the slight yet significant addition of *παῶς*,<sup>92</sup> Paul underwrites his claim that confession of and faith in the reigning and risen Christ is salvific with the scriptural promise that ‘everyone who believes on him (ἐπ’ αὐτῷ) will not be put to shame’. While it is possible to argue that the object of faith indicated by ἐπ’ αὐτῷ refers either to God (θεός) or God’s act of raising Jesus from the dead,<sup>93</sup> it is far more likely that Jesus Christ is the referent of ἐπ’ αὐτῷ.<sup>94</sup> The nearest and most natural pronominal antecedent is the unambiguously christological αὐτόν of 10.9 and the object of faith in 10.9 is not θεός *per se*, but rather, as the *ὅτι* indicates, the divine act that establishes *Jesus* as the resurrected one. It is thus the identity of Jesus as Lord and risen, an identity that is inseparable from his history as a divine act, that is the content of confession and object of faith.<sup>95</sup> Paul’s reading of Isaiah 28.16 is therefore only explicable as a *christological rereading*: Isaiah’s oracle is re-voiced as a promise that all who believe in Jesus will be saved.

Both of these Pauline innovations to Isaiah – i.e., the ‘all’ and the christological content – are picked up and radicalised in Romans 10.12-13. The addition of the *παῶς* to Isaiah 28.16 LXX

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<sup>90</sup> Sprinkle, *Law and Life*, 175.

<sup>91</sup> Rowe, ‘What Is the Name of the Lord’, 144.

<sup>92</sup> Wilk, *Bedeutung des Jesajabuches*, 61 notes that the *παῶς* establishes a lexical and thematic connection with the soteriological universalism of Romans 10.12-13 indicated by the threefold *παῶς* and the phrase οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶν διαστολή Ἰουδαίου τε καὶ Ἑλλήνου.

<sup>93</sup> See e.g. Meeks, ‘On Trusting and Unpredictable God’, 217

<sup>94</sup> So most commentators, e.g. Cranfield, *Romans*, 2.531; Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, Wilckens, *Der Brief an die Römer*, 2.228.

<sup>95</sup> Cf. Rowe, ‘What Is the Name of the Lord’, 143-44.

is grounded (γάρ) in the claim that ‘there is no distinction between Jew and Greek’ (cf. Rom 3.22), a soteriological assertion that is itself grounded in a theological confession: ὁ γὰρ αὐτὸς κύριος πάντων (10.12). However, as argued in relation to the mutually-interpreting interaction of justification and the *Shema* in Romans 3.30 (see chapter seven), Paul is not arguing from an axiomatic affirmation of divine oneness (‘there is one Lord’) to a soteriological universalism (‘the same Lord is Lord of all’). Rather, as the identification of Jesus as the κύριος indicates,<sup>96</sup> God’s act that is the universally salvific history of the incarnate and risen Christ reconfigures Paul’s articulation of ‘kyriotic identity’<sup>97</sup> and thus grounds Paul’s rethinking and reapplication of the logic and limits of the Lord’s singularity. As the conclusion of 10.12 suggests, it is as this single, saving and christological Lord is describable as ‘richly giving to all who call upon him’ (πλουτῶν εἰς πάντας τοὺς ἐπικαλουμένους αὐτόν) that he is identified as ‘Lord of all’. In other words, the christological character and identity of the κύριος are known *from* the christological content and anthropological indiscrimination of the saving event: the *universality* of Jesus’ lordship is deduced from the christological call of a people ‘not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles’ (Rom 9.24); Jesus’ identity as *Lord* is disclosed in and through God’s saving act *in Christ*.

This dramatic and theologically daring christological identification of the Lord is intensified and ‘inscripturated’ in Romans 10.13. The verb ἐπικαλέω in Romans 10.12 both echoes what Rowe calls ‘the oracular dimension of vv. 9-10 (ὁμολογήσης, ὁμολογεῖται)’<sup>98</sup> and provides a lexical link between the Christology and soteriology of 10.12 and its scriptural grounding in 10.13. In a radical re-saying of Joel 3.5a LXX,<sup>99</sup> Paul appropriates the phrase τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου as a christological title and announces that ‘everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord [Jesus] will be saved’.<sup>100</sup> This is a christological hermeneutic with subtle yet significant theological consequences. As Rowe argues, the application of Joel’s ‘the name of the Lord’ to Jesus requires a relational and dynamic account of divine identity in which ‘Jesus

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<sup>96</sup> That Jesus is the intended referent of κύριος is confirmed by the explicit association of κύριος and Ἰησοῦς in Romans 10.9 and the christological identification of ἐπ’ αὐτῷ in 10.11 (Rowe, ‘What Is the Name of the Lord’, 146; cf. Cranfield, *Romans* 2.531; Dunn, *Romans* 9-16, 610).

<sup>97</sup> C.K. Rowe, ‘Luke and the Trinity: An Essay in Ecclesial Biblical Theology’, *SJT* 56 (2003): 1-26 (25).

<sup>98</sup> Rowe, ‘What Is the Name of the Lord’, 151.

<sup>99</sup> Paul’s citation is verbatim except that it drops the καὶ ἔσται that opens Joel 3.5 LXX.

<sup>100</sup> The identification of Jesus as ‘Lord’ in 10.9 and 10.12 make the christological referent of κύριος in 10.13 indisputable.

Christ is to be understood theologically' and 'God is to be understood christologically'.<sup>101</sup> This hermeneutical revolution, however, is also a clear indication that Paul's understanding of Israel's failure and soteriological future are essentially and inescapably christological.<sup>102</sup> The salvation of his 'kinsfolk according to the flesh' for which Paul longs and prays (9.1-3; 10.1) has its kerygmatic content in the ruling and risen Jesus (10.6-8, 17) and is therefore realisable in and as the confession of his Lordship. Expressed from the other side, God's act of placing a stumbling stone in Zion is, as the explicitly christological repetition of Isaiah 28.16 in Romans 10.11 makes plain, identical to and therefore identifiable as Jesus Christ. In other words, both the present stumble and the promised salvation of Israel are effects of the Christ-event.

### (3) *A Christological Rereading: Romans 10.14-21*

The identification of God's act of placing a stumbling stone in Zion as Jesus Christ brings us back to the central thesis of this section: the divine cause of the current crisis that defines Paul's present and restructures his hermeneutic is the divine act that is Jesus' severe and saving history. In other words, to repeat a point made above, Paul's reading of scripture is only intelligible as a *christological rereading*. Romans 10.14-21 confirms this hermeneutical point.

Whether Romans 10.14-18 refers to the preaching of the gospel to Israel<sup>103</sup> or Paul's own Gentile mission,<sup>104</sup> the citation of Isaiah 52.7 (Rom 10.15) and Isaiah 53.1 (Rom 10.16) rereads the prophet's phrases about 'those who proclaim good news' (οἱ εὐαγγελιζόμενοι [τὰ] ἀγαθὰ) and 'the message' (ἡ ἀκοή) as references to 'the gospel' (τὸ εὐαγγέλιον) and thus fills the prophetic-*protoevangelium* with christological content: τὸ ῥῆμα Χριστοῦ (10.17). In this context, the apostolic announcement of Jesus Christ is the agent of judgment and grace as rejection and election are concretely realised in and as unbelief ('not all have obeyed the good news', 10.16) and belief ('faith comes by hearing').<sup>105</sup> It is therefore the preached gospel of God's Son that occasions the incongruous present that Paul hears promised in Israel's prophets (9.25-29, 33;

<sup>101</sup> Rowe, 'What Is the Name of the Lord', 160, 172.

<sup>102</sup> Pace, e.g., L. Gaston, *Paul and the Torah* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 1987), 148-49; J.G. Gager, *Reinventing Paul* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 142.

<sup>103</sup> The majority reading, so e.g., Cranfield, *Romans*, 2.533; E. Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans* (trans. G.W. Bromiley; Grand Rapids, 1980), 294; Moo, *Romans*, 664.

<sup>104</sup> See Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, 620; Watson, *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles*, 331-32.

<sup>105</sup> Cf. Westerholm, 'Paul and the Law in Romans 9-11', 224.

10.19-20) and thus orients Paul's hermeneutic to scripture's christological content. In other words, 'the holy scriptures' are readable as a pre-promise of the gospel of God's Son (Rom 1.2-4) only as they are reread as promise fulfilled. The pattern of non-correspondence that Paul uncovers in Israel's history (Rom 9.7-18) and hears in Israel's prophets (9.25-26) is a typological anticipation and pre-announcement of a moment that Paul is able to describe in the aorist tense: εὐρέθην [ἐν] τοῖς ἐμὲ μὴ ζητοῦσιν, ἐμφανῆς ἐγενόμην τοῖς ἐμὲ μὴ ἐπερωτῶσιν (Rom 10.20; citing Isa 65.1). As in Romans 9.30-33, this incongruity is the effect of a concrete christological cause. Just as the divine act of placing a christological stone in Zion occasioned the contradiction between running after and receiving righteousness, the proclamation of 'the word of Christ' produces a paradox: 'I was found by those who did not seek me'. It is thus the event, announcement and aftermath of the christological gospel that patterns Paul's paradoxical hermeneutic.

At this point *Wisdom's* perspective is again suggestive. As indicated in the previous section, *Wisdom's* rereading and rewriting of Israel's scripture is characterised by a patterned correspondence between the form and objects of divine action. Thus, in contrast to Paul's paradoxical claims that righteousness is attained by those who do not pursue it (Rom 9.30) and that God is found by those who do not seek him (Rom 10.20), *Wisdom* insists on an affinity between the beneficence and beneficiaries of σοφία: 'she is discerned by those who love her' (6.12a), 'she seeks those who are worthy (ἄξιος) of her' (6.16), and, in direct antithesis to Romans 10.20, 'she is found (εὐρίσκω) by those who seek (ζητέω) her' (6.12b). For *Wisdom*, as noted above, this 'fit' between divine saving action and human recipients is a necessary instantiation of the protological conviction that σοφία is both 'the fashioner of all things' (ἡ πάντων τεχνίτις, 7.21) and the one who 'governs all things well' (διοικεῖ τὰ πάντα χρηστῶς, 8.1b). In this sense, *Wisdom's* rereading of the Pentateuch is a reading from the beginning (or from before the beginning): Israel's history is a repeated concretion of an ordered and just pre-creational pattern of correspondence as Israel *qua* the righteous and Egypt *qua* the ungodly are the recurrent and respective objects of salvific favor and divine judgment.

Paul's hermeneutic is different. Rather than interpreting the canonical past as a recurrent exemplification of an immutable protological order, Paul reads Israel's history as an anticipation of an event. In this sense, for Paul, history's temporal beginning is not its hermeneutical beginning. To borrow a couple of phrases from David Horrell, in Pauline

historiography, the Christ-event is the ‘determinative centre’ and the ‘generative beginning’.<sup>106</sup> As I suggested in the introduction, for Pauline hermeneutics, Christology has a centrifugal and generative significance – that is, Jesus Christ both orders and occasions Paul’s rereading of Israel’s scripture. In other words, whereas *Wisdom* rereads scripture from a pre-creational pattern and thus as a repeated concretion of the protological order, Paul rereads scripture from the divine act that is Jesus’ history and thus as a typological anticipation and prophetic promise of the Christ-event. It is in this sense that the advent and impact of Jesus represent scripture’s ‘Das Jetzt der Lesbarkeit’: the disjunctions and paradoxes that Paul traces in the law and prophets have their logical and hermeneutical antecedent in the event and aftermath of the crucified and risen Jesus.<sup>107</sup>

Christology, then, is the essential hermeneutical fault-line that divides *Wisdom* and Paul. As suggested in the introduction to this chapter, *Wisdom* and Paul are connected by a canon – they read the same texts – yet disconnected by a hermeneutic – they read the same texts differently. The nature of this hermeneutical difference is now specifiable: *Wisdom* reads from and in the form of the cosmic order; Paul reads after and according to the Christ-event. It is this contrast between pre-creational and christological hermeneutics that ultimately explains the incommensurable exegeses of Israel in *Wisdom* 10-19 and Romans 9-11. For *Wisdom*, an acknowledgment of Israel’s stumble (Rom 9.32), ignorance (Rom 10.2), insubordination (Rom 10.3), unbelief (Rom 10.16) and disobedience (Rom 10.21) would foreclose the possibility of a salvific future. For Paul, however, a reading of Israel’s history occasioned by and oriented towards God’s unconditioned and incongruous act in Christ reveals that God’s grace has never been conditioned by or contingent upon any pre-existing worth in Israel. It is precisely as a ‘disobedient and contrary people’ that Israel remains within the sphere of soteriological hope.<sup>108</sup> If God’s counterintuitive and creative call in Christ is the

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<sup>106</sup> D.G. Horrell, ‘Paul’s Narratives or Narrative Substructure? The Significance of “Paul’s Story”’, in *Narrative Dynamics in Paul: A Critical Assessment* (ed. B.W. Longenecker; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 157-71 (167 n.18).

<sup>107</sup> A similar point could be made from Romans 5.12-21. If Adam is a type of Christ (Ἀδὰμ ὅς ἐστιν τύπος τοῦ μέλλοντος, 5.14), then Adam is presented as patterned after and therefore logically posterior to Jesus Christ. In Pauline hermeneutics and historiography, the Christ-event is the first thing.

<sup>108</sup> Avemarie (‘Israels rätselhafter Ungehorsam’, 315-320) suggestively notes that Paul asks but does not directly answer the question ‘Hat Israel etwa nicht erkannt’ (Rom 10.19) and thereby, in tandem with the citations of Deuteronomy 32.21 and Isaiah 65.1-2 (Rom 10.19-21), points beyond Israel’s disobedience to ‘die Handlungssouveränität Gottes’ – that is, ‘zunächst zu der These von der Verstockung und von da zu dem alles überwältigenden Mysterium von Israels Errettung’ (320).

grounds of Israel's salvation (Rom 10.1-13; cf. 9.24-26), then the disjunction between Israel's current disobedience and God's δικαιοσύνη is an opportunity for rather than an impediment to the incongruous grace of God. In other words, if the Christ-event is what orients and interprets Israel's past and present history (Rom 9-10), there is reason to hope that that same divine act is the hermeneutic and basis for Israel's soteriological future.

This is where Romans 10 ends, in crisis and hope. Paul's citations of Deuteronomy 32.21's promise that God will make Israel jealous of a 'no people' and Isaiah 65.2's description of God's outstretched arms (Rom 10.19, 21) leave the prayer of Romans 10.1 open but unanswered. I will argue that Romans 11 points towards and imagines God's Christ-shaped 'yes' to Paul's heartfelt prayer.

#### *The Christ-Shaped Hope: Romans 11.1-36*

The last two sections suggest a single thesis: Paul's reading of Israel's scripture in Romans 9-10 is occasioned by and oriented towards the act and aftermath of the Christ-event. In Romans 9.7-29, Paul rereads Israel's past and prophets as, respectively, a typological anticipation and promissory announcement of his paradoxical present. In Romans 9.30-10.21, Paul argues that the current crisis of Gentile election and Israelite rejection anticipated and announced in scripture is an effect of a concrete, christological cause. Thus, read together, Romans 9 and 10 indicate that Paul's interpretation of Israel's scripture is a christological reinterpretation: the holy writings pre-promise (Rom 1.2), witness to (Rom 3.21) and only now (v̄v) reveal (Rom 16.26) the event and impact of the risen and preached Jesus. Put another way, for Paul, the Christ-event is the hermeneutic for reading history. There is, however, a possible objection to this thesis: Romans 11.

With the disputed exception of the phrase ἤξει ἐκ Σιών ὁ ῥυόμενος (Rom 11.26; citing Isa 59.20), Romans 11 locates the present and future of salvation history within the 'unsearchable judgments' and 'untraceable ways' of God (11.33) without a single explicit reference to Jesus Christ. While the significance of this christological lacuna is explained in various ways, the net effect is almost always a dislocation of Christology from the material centre of Romans 9-11. For some, the relative christological silence of Romans 11 is indicative

of a more or less non-christological *Sonderweg* for Israel.<sup>109</sup> This minority reading is able to capitalise on the lack of explicit references to Christ in Romans 11, but the implied argument from the non-reference to Christ to a non-christological soteriology is ultimately an exegetical *non sequitur*. Not only does it make of the somewhat artificial chapter divisions of Romans a sound-proof barrier that prevents the association of Christology and salvation announced in Romans 10.1-13 (and 3.21-8.39!) to be heard from within the argument of Romans 11, it wrongly supposes that Romans 11 is about the *grounds* of Israel's salvation. But this is precisely what Romans 11, unlike Romans 10.1-13, is not about. As I will argue below, whereas Romans 10.1-13 *grounds* soteriology in Christology, Romans 11 is about how the specifically christological salvation of Israel (and all) announced in Romans 10.1-13 unfolds and is actualised in Israel's present and future.<sup>110</sup> A second and ultimately more significant realisation of the interpretive potential of the christological silence of Romans 11 is the (sometimes implicit) suggestion that, for Paul, Christology is subsumable and interpretable within something more hermeneutically basic than the Christ-event. So, for example, Flebbe argues that the fact that Christ appears 'nur viermal, und zwar eng zusammenstehend an einer Stelle (10,4-17)' in Romans 9-11 indicates that Paul's hermeneutic and account of history is theological rather than christological.<sup>111</sup> Or, from a different angle, N.T. Wright regularly suggests that 'an essentially Jewish story' provides the narrative and interpretative frame within which Paul plots Jesus as 'climax' and 'subversive twist'<sup>112</sup> and thus Romans 9-11 is characterised as 'a retelling of the story of Israel, from Abraham to (Paul's) present day'.<sup>113</sup> The christological consequence of these admittedly different readings is that the single and saving history of Jesus Christ is referred to and explained within a more essential and comprehensive reality. The result is that God's act in Jesus is afforded (at most) tectonic rather than

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<sup>109</sup> E.g. Gaston, *Paul and the Torah*, 148-49; K. Stendahl, *Final Account: Paul's Letter to the Romans* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 40.

<sup>110</sup> The standard arguments against a *Sonderweg* interpretation of Romans 11 – e.g. the references to faith in 11.20 and the mention of 'the redeemer from Zion' in 11.26 (cf. Grindheim, *The Crux of Election*, 167 n.114) – are correct as far as they go, but ultimately this line of argumentation concedes too much as it assumes that Romans 11 is about the grounds of Israel's salvation. Watson's reply to Gaston takes the right approach: 'such a reading...can offer no coherent explanation of Romans 10.1-13 in its relation to the prayer for Jewish salvation in v.1. Indeed, it becomes incomprehensible how Paul could ever have prayed such a prayer' (*Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles*, 329 n.45).

<sup>111</sup> Flebbe, *Solus Deus*, 275-76.

<sup>112</sup> N.T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (London: SPCK, 1992), 79, 405.

<sup>113</sup> Wright, 'Romans', 622. It should be noted that Wright is able to turn the interpretative direction around and speak in terms more compatible with the reading offered here; e.g. 'Romans', 625: 'Israel...is Messiah-shaped. The pattern of Israel's history...is none other than the pattern of death and resurrection'.

centrifugal significance: the Christ-event is hermeneutically consequential, not hermeneutically central.

The thesis of this section is that Romans 11 makes the opposite point. Rather than marginalising the hermeneutical and historiographic importance of Jesus, the Christ-shaped reimagining of Israel's soteriological present and future in Romans 11 indicates that the divine act that is the concrete and *sui generis* history of Jesus Christ is the gravitational centre of Pauline theology. Just as Paul's rereading of Israel's scripture in Romans 9-10 suggests that the Christ-event makes sense of and gives meaning to (rather than primarily gaining meaning from) Israel's past (9.7-18; cf. 11.2-4) and present (9.24-10.21; cf. 11.1, 5-22), the projection of the Christ-pattern over and onto Israel's future (11.23-32) precludes any perspective on history that eclipses, de-centres and/or abstracts from what J. Louis Martyn calls Paul's 'evangelical, cosmic, history-creating Christology'.<sup>114</sup> Thus, as I will argue, Romans 11 is not a subsuming of Jesus in or under an axiomatic meta-theology (Flebbe), nor is it a plotting of the Christ-event within a substructural meta-narrative (Wright). On the contrary, the hermeneutical logic of Romans 11 is only legible as a reimagining of Israel's present and future from the hermeneutical perspective of, and as a soteriological effect of, the shape and singularity of God's action in Jesus Christ.

### (1) *The Past and the Present: Romans 11.1-10*

Romans 11 opens by confronting the crisis that closes Romans 10. Israel's characterisation as 'a disobedient and contrary people' (10.21) raises a question that the reference to God's outstretched arms (10.21) implicitly answers: μή ἀπόσατο ὁ θεὸς τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ; (11.1). Paul grounds his emphatic no (μή γένοιτο) to this rhetorical question with a reference to his personal present and its analogous scriptural past.<sup>115</sup> Paul can say, echoing 1 Kingdoms 12.22 and Psalm 93.14 LXX (Rom 11.2),<sup>116</sup> that 'God has not rejected his people/inheritance' both because God has not rejected Paul – an Israelite from the seed of

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<sup>114</sup> J.L. Martyn, 'Events in Galatia: Modified Covenantal Nomism Versus God's invasion of the Cosmos in the Singular Gospel: A Response to J.D.G. Dunn and B.R. Gaventa', in *Pauline Theology: Volume One* (ed. J. Bassler; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 160-79 (165).

<sup>115</sup> Cf. Käsemann, *Romans*, 299. Gaston is right to emphasise that it is Paul's particular identity as a Jewish believer that grounds his 'no', but it is an over-reading to suggest that Paul's identity as a Jewish *apostle* indicates that the 'remnant' of the present time (11.5) is limited to Jewish preachers to Gentiles (*Paul and the Torah*, 142).

<sup>116</sup> The allusion to Psalm 93.14 LXX is strengthened if the minority witness of P<sup>46</sup>, F, G, Ambrosiaster, Pelagius and the Gothic is adopted, replacing λαὸν with κληρονομίαν (Wagner, *Heralds*, 222).

Abraham and the tribe of Benjamin (11.1b) – and because this present is paralleled in Israel’s history. This biographical and scriptural evidence of God’s faithfulness to Israel functions as an argument and announcement that while the reduction of Israel to a remnant is always an enactment of divine judgment (cf. Rom 9.27-29), the divine saving action of ‘leaving behind’ (καταλείπω, 11.4) a remnant, whether in the days of Elijah (3 Kgdms 19) or in Paul’s present, means that reduction is not rejection – that ‘grace’, as Seifrid puts it, ‘operates at the “null point” of God’s judgment’.<sup>117</sup> In the case of Paul, his self-description as an ‘Israelite from the seed of Abraham’ (ἐγὼ Ἰσραηλίτης εἰμί, ἐκ σπέρματος Ἀβραάμ, 11.1b), demonstrates that the privileges and promises given to ‘Israelites’ (Ἰσραηλῖται, Rom 9.4-5) are being realised rather than revoked (cf. Rom 11.29), and that this soteriological fulfillment is continuous with the scriptural pattern of God’s unconditioned and creative ‘reckoning’ (Rom 9.8) and ‘leaving’ (9.29, citing Isa 1.9) of a ‘seed’ (σπέρμα). Paul is thus able to anchor his reaffirmation of divine faithfulness (οὐκ ἀπόσωτο ὁ θεὸς τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ) by asking an exegetical question: ἢ οὐκ οἴδατε ἐν Ἡλίᾳ τί λέγει ἡ γραφή; (11.2). Citing only a selection of the spoken words of 3 Kingdoms 19.10-18, Paul constructs a simple dialogue consisting of Elijah’s complaint ‘against Israel’ (κατὰ τοῦ Ἰσραήλ, 11.2) – ‘they have killed your prophets...I alone am left’ (11.3) – and ‘the divine response’ (ὁ χρηματισμός) – ‘I have reserved for myself (κατέλιπον ἑμαυτῷ) seven thousand who have not bent the knee to Baal’ (11.4).

For Paul, however, as the interpretative deductions of Romans 11.5-6 suggest, the Elijah story is not just an anchor-point for a theological affirmation; the narrative, as reread by Paul, is analogous to and an anticipation of his present. There is, in other words, a correspondence (οὕτως οὖν) between God’s act of reserving seven thousand non-idolaters for himself and the current coming-into-being of a remnant according to the election of grace (11.5). Wagner notes that the ‘resumption of “remnant” language in Romans 11.3-5 recalls the words of Isaiah quoted earlier (Rom 9.27-29)’, but rightly adds that Paul’s time-specification (ἐν τῷ νῦν καιρῷ) indicates that he ‘understands Isaiah’s words to refer to the present time: Isaiah’s τὸ ὑπόλειμμα σωθήσεται...is realized in Paul’s own day as λείμμα κατ’ ἐκλογὴν χάριτος γέγονεν’.<sup>118</sup> The correspondence between scriptural past and Paul’s present, however, is not just typological; it is, to stress etymology over connotation, ‘charismatic’ – that is, the Elijah story

<sup>117</sup> Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness*, 161.

<sup>118</sup> Wagner, *Heralds*, 235.

prefigures the existence of the remnant and the unconditioned act of electing grace that establishes it. While it is possible to read the Elijah story as implying that God preserved a remnant *because* they were faithful, Paul’s activation of this text as an analogy to the aftermath of the Christ-event precludes this interpretation. In other words, because *this* text anticipates *this* present, it is retrospectively readable only as an exemplification of God’s unconditioned grace. The exegetical extension of the Elijah story into Paul’s present in Romans 11.5-6 confirms this. Paul’s addition of the reflexive pronoun to the divine speech of 3 Kingdoms 19.18 (‘I will reserve *for myself* [ἐμαυτῶ]) signals an emphasis on divine initiative that it sharpened to exclusivity by the antithesis Paul derives from the narrative: εἰ δὲ χάριτι, οὐκέτι ἐξ ἔργων (11.6).<sup>119</sup> Thus, according to Paul’s rereading of 3 Kingdoms 19, ‘the refusal to bend the knee to Baal’, as Seifrid remarks, ‘represents the content of divine deliverance and not its basis’.<sup>120</sup> In other words, the Elijah story anticipates Paul’s present not just as an analogous instance of the simultaneity of divine judgment and grace evident in the reduction of Israel to and the reservation of a remnant. The seven thousand that God kept for himself corresponds to those who are currently ‘called from the Jews’ (Rom 9.24) because, when 3 Kingdoms 19 is reread as a typological analogy to Paul’s present, both groups are describable as a λείμμα κατ’ ἐκλογὴν χάριτος (11.5). It is thus Paul’s christologically occasioned present and a reread scriptural story from that perspective that ground Paul’s hopeful insistence that ‘God has not rejected his people’.

If Romans 11.1-6 sounds the note of hope for Israel in the form of the remnant, Romans 11.7-10 emphasises the current crisis that is God’s act of hardening (or making insensible)<sup>121</sup> ‘the rest’ (οἱ λοιποί, 11.7). The structural analysis of Enno Edzard Popkes convincingly argues that while the phrase ἡ ἐκλογὴ ἐπέτυχεν (11.7) points back to the existence of a remnant embodied by Paul (11.1-6), it is the phrase οἱ λοιποὶ ἐπωρώθησαν that introduces the theme of

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<sup>119</sup> As noted in the previous chapter, Paul’s additional statement, ἐπεὶ ἡ χάρις οὐκέτι γίνεται χάρις, indicates that his particular definition of grace is deduced from God’s unconditioned and unfitting gifting of Christ; cf. H. Moxnes, *Theology in Conflict: Studies in Paul’s Understanding of God in Romans* (NovTSup 53; Leiden: Brill, 1980), 49.

<sup>120</sup> Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness*, 161.

<sup>121</sup> For the translation of πωρώω with terms indicating sensory and intellectual incapacity and obtuseness, see Wagner, *Heralds*, 240 n.68. For ἐπωρώθησαν as a ‘*passivum divinum*’, see E.E. Popkes, “‘Und David spricht...’ Zur Rezeption von Ps LXX 68,23f. im Kontext von Röm 11,1-10’, in *Between Gospel and Election* (WUNT 257; ed. F. Wilk and J.R. Wagner; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 321-37 (324); cf. Romans 9.18.

Romans 11.7-10 and initiates the catena of scriptural quotations that follows (11.8-10).<sup>122</sup> The ironic redescription of Israel seeking (ἐπιζητέω) yet failing to obtain (οὐκ ἐπιτυγχάνω, 11.7) evokes the antithesis between running after and receiving righteousness in 9.30-33 and thus, together with the reference to σκάνδαλον taken from Psalm 68.23 LXX (Rom 11.9), indicates that the current contrast between the elect and the rest is an effect of the same concrete divine cause announced in Romans 9.33-10.13. As Seifrid writes, ‘it is the proclamation of the crucified and risen Christ that brings the present moment of judgment and hardening upon Israel’.<sup>123</sup> This christological conditioning of the present, however, is more than an inference from Romans 9.30-10.13 (and 9.1-5, 24-29); it is essentially a restatement of Romans 10.16-21: ‘the word of Christ’ is the agent of election (‘faith comes by hearing’, 10.17) and rejection (‘not all have believed our message’, 10.16). Thus, just as Moses and Isaiah were re-voiced in that context as witnesses against Israel in the aftermath of the christological kerygma (10.19, 21), Romans 11.8-10 rereads Deuteronomy 29.4 LXX and Psalm 68.23-24 LXX as imprecatory promises fulfilled in Paul’s christologically occasioned present. This link between Israel’s past and Paul’s present is signaled by the citation formula that opens the scriptural series (καθὼς γέγραπται): the current crisis that is the divine act of rendering Israel insensible occurred ‘just as it is written, God gave them a spirit of stupor (πνεῦμα κατανύξεως),<sup>124</sup> eyes to not see and ears to not hear, to the present day’ (Rom 11.8). As Wagner notes, ‘the final temporal phrase’, ἕως τῆς σήμερον ἡμέρας, ‘taken from Deuteronomy 29.4, is particularly important, for it affords Paul the hermeneutical leverage to treat the citation as a diagnosis of the condition of “the rest” of Israel in his own day’. To borrow a sentence from Erich Auerbach, the current crisis indicated by the aorist of πωρόω (11.7) ‘makes recognisable (*erkennbar*) and establishes (*herstellen*) a connection between two events’,<sup>125</sup> or more precisely in this case, a connection between God’s unfinished and therefore forward-pointing act of blinding Israel and its concrete and antitypical recapitulation in and as the impact of ‘the word of Christ’. The citation of Psalm 68.23-24 LXX sharpens this christological point. The reappearance of σκάνδαλον in the Davidic malediction (Rom 11.9) recalls the influence of Isaiah 8.14 in Romans 9.32-33 and thereby evokes the christological cause of Israel’s present stumble. Wagner

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<sup>122</sup> Popkes, “‘Und David spricht...’”, 322-24.

<sup>123</sup> Seifrid, ‘Romans’, 671.

<sup>124</sup> This phrase is lifted from Isaiah 29.10 LXX.

<sup>125</sup> Auerbach, ‘Figura’, 53.

captures this intertextual dynamic: ‘For Paul, “the rest” of Israel suffers the effects of the Davidic curse because they have not put their trust for deliverance in the “stone” – the God who has now acted in Jesus Christ to effect Israel’s redemption’;<sup>126</sup> or as I would prefer to put it, Israel’s stumble is an effect of the divine act that is the history and proclamation of Jesus Christ.

For Paul, then, the connection between Israel’s scriptural past and Paul’s christologically determined present is not a hermeneutical creation; it is an exegetical recognition of anticipations of the event and the impact of Jesus’ history from the vantage point of its aftermath. As John David Dawson says about figural interpretation in general, Paul’s ‘acts of interpretation are mimetic rather than constructive: [he] does not turn a past person or event into a *figura*; instead, [he] discovers past persons or events to have been a *figura*’.<sup>127</sup> But this is merely to restate the argument thus far: Paul’s reading of Israel’s scripture is a rereading that hears Israel’s history as a typological testimony and prophetic promise of the history, proclamation and impact of Jesus Christ. The implicit question generated by Paul’s emphatic double assertion that God has not rejected his people (11.1, 2), however, is not primarily about the correspondence between Israel’s scriptural past and Paul’s present; it is about the relationship between the current christological crisis and Israel’s soteriological future. For *Wisdom*, the present possibility of sin does not foreclose Israel’s future – ‘even if we sin we are yours’ – because Israel knows God’s power (*Wis.* 15.2a). This potential sin, however, as argued in chapter four, is an actual impossibility because Israel knows that God knows Israel and because such knowledge is ‘complete righteousness’ (ὀλόκληρος δικαιοσύνη, 15.2b-3). In other words, *Wisdom*’s confidence about Israel’s future is tied to a two-part epistemic affirmation that grounds a predicate: Israel knows and is known by God and is therefore righteous. Romans 11.11-32 is equally emphatic in its insistence on Israel’s soteriological future, but, as will be argued presently, this confidence is anchored in God’s christological and unconditioned mercy rather than in Israel’s righteousness.

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<sup>126</sup> Wagner, *Heralds*, 264. Wagner wants to push this connection further, suggesting that the lexical link between Psalm 68.23 and Isaiah 8.14, παγίς and σκάνδαλον, indicates that ‘for Paul the two passages fit within the same underlying story’ and thus that the citation of ‘David’s imprecatory prayer’ in Romans 11.9-10 ‘becomes a plea for God to visit on the wicked the fate threatened in Isaiah’s oracle’.

<sup>127</sup> Dawson, *Figural Reading*, 122.

(2) *Soteriological Solidarity: Romans 11.11-24*

The reference to Israel's stumble in the quotation from Psalm 68.23 LXX (Rom 11.9) raises a question: μή ἔπταισαν ἵνα πέσωσιν; (Rom 11.11a).<sup>128</sup> Paul's answer, μή γένοιτο, is a denial of the finality of the current condition of Israel and thus an invitation to imagine a different, salvific future. In other words, the rejection of the teleological ultimacy suggested by the phrase ἵνα πέσωσιν is an implied argument that the present is penultimate – that Israel's hardening is 'the middle point' rather than *telos* of God's redemptive plan.<sup>129</sup>

Romans 11.11b points towards this other and open future: 'through [Israel's] trespass salvation has come to the Gentiles, in order to make them jealous'. As Watson observes, this statement contains 'a double teleology': 1) Israel's παράπτωμα is instrumental in the salvation of the Gentiles; 2) Gentile salvation intends Israel's salvation (cf. 11.30-32).<sup>130</sup> The first movement of this *sub contrario* salvation history echoes the teleological ordering of rejection and election articulated in Romans 9.22-23. In that context, God's word to Pharaoh – 'for this very reason I raised you up, so that (ὄπως) I may demonstrate my power in you and so that (ὄπως) my name may be proclaimed in all the earth' (Rom 9.17; citing Exod 9.16) – grounds the more general assertion that divine wrath is oriented towards and intends divine mercy (9.22-23). The same scriptural logic appears to structure Paul's repeated claim that Israel's trespass/rejection/unbelief/disobedience issues in and in a certain sense effects the Gentiles' reception of salvation/riches/reconciliation/mercy (11.11, 12, 15, 19, 30). As Wright puts it, 'Israel's hardening relates to Gentile salvation somewhat as Pharaoh's hardening related to the exodus (9.17)'.<sup>131</sup> The second movement – from Israel's rejection to re-election – is also derived from scripture. In an exegetical extension of Deuteronomy 32.21 (quoted in Rom 10.19), Paul insists that the salvation of the Gentiles, and thus his ministry as apostle to the Gentiles, intends the salvation of Israel through their provocation to jealousy (παραζηλώω, 11.11, 14).<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> Cf. Popkes, "Und David spricht...", 326.

<sup>129</sup> Grindheim, *The Crux of Election*, 162.

<sup>130</sup> Watson, *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles*, 338.

<sup>131</sup> Cf. Wright, 'Romans', 680. For a detailed survey of interpretative options relating to the salvific connection between Israel's rejection and Gentile election, see R.H. Bell *Provoked to Jealousy: The Origin and Purpose of the Jealousy Motif in Romans 9-11* (WUNT II/63; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1994), 110-13; idem, *The Irrevocable Call of God: An Inquiry into Paul's Theology of Israel* (WUNT 184; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 245-49. We will return to this question below.

<sup>132</sup> Bell, *The Irrevocable Call*, 249: 'The term παραζηλοῦν here takes on a positive meaning in the sense of provoke to emulation'; cf. K. Haacker, who describes the provocation as being 'zu einem heilsamen Wettbewerb' (*Der Brief des Paulus an die Römer* [ThHK 6; Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1999], 226).

God's word of judgment – 'I will make you jealous of a no-nation' – is reinterpreted as a word of divine grace: Israel's jealousy is not the end; it is a means to a soteriological end – that is, the way in which God's christological accomplished salvation of Israel will become actual for Israel.

The soteriological solidarity between Jew and Gentile, and the double-teleology that describes its outworking in history, can thus be said to be structured by scripture. The movement from Israel's rejection to Gentile election is formally parallel to Exodus 9.16; the movement from Gentile election to Israel's re-election is an exegetical extension of Deuteronomy 32.21. The driving question of this chapter, however, is not simply whether Paul reads Israel's scripture; the question is why he rereads scripture in a particular way. Applied to the double-teleology Paul derives from Exodus 9.16 and Deuteronomy 32.21, the question is what Paul's 'exegesis' indicates about his hermeneutic. Two observations help to answer this question: 1) the salvific roles of both Israel and the Gentiles are instrumental rather than causal; 2) both the salvific instrumentality and soteriological hope of Israel are Christ-shaped.

To the first point, while Israel's rejection and Gentile salvation are oriented to and in some sense effective of the salvation of the other, the grammar with which Paul expresses this soteriological relationship indicates that their salvific function is that of a means or instrument rather than that of material cause or basis.<sup>133</sup> In the case of the Gentiles, their part in the salvation of Israel is articulated exclusively with purpose clauses (εἰς + articular infinitive, 11.11; ἵνα, 11.31), thus pointing past their instrumental function to God's intentions of provocation and mercy. Israel is shown mercy because of the mercy shown to the Gentiles, but it is God who shows mercy. In Wagner's words,

The role the Gentiles have been given to play in the restoration of Israel is...not the part of benefactors, but of instruments wielded by the hand of God. It is not as active agents, but precisely as recipients of the blessings promised to Israel that these Gentiles provoke God's people to seek jealously after God's favor.<sup>134</sup>

Israel's salvific function is described with more variety (dative case, 11.11, 30; purpose clause, 11.19; predicate nominative 11.12, 15), but the effect is similar. Israelite branches were broken

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<sup>133</sup> Watson's comment that 'In Romans 11 [Israel's] violent hostility to the gospel...is placed almost on par with the saving act of Christ' overlooks this distinction between salvific instrumentality and salvific ground/material cause (*Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles*, 336). Suzanne McDonald's phrase 'two acting subjects, one saving agent' nicely encapsulates this dynamic (*Re-Imaging Election: Divine Election as Representing God to Others and Others to God* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010], 151 n.12).

<sup>134</sup> Wagner, 'Mercy to the Nations', 426.

off the olive tree because of unbelief and so that Gentile branches could be grafted in, but both the cutting off and the grafting in are divine actions (11.17-21). Or again, Gentiles are shown mercy because of Israel's disobedience, but it is God who acts in mercy (11.30). Put another way, God is the sole (implied) subject of salvific verbs (ἐγκεντρίζω 11.17, 19, 23, 24; σώζω, 11.26; ἀφαιρέω, 11.27; ἐλέεω, 11.30, 31, 32).<sup>135</sup> The theological point of this grammatical observation is that the links between, on the one hand, Israel's rejection and Gentile salvation and, on the other hand, the present salvation of the Gentiles and the future salvation of Israel point past themselves to the material cause for which they are the instrumental, historical outworking. In other words, rather than grounding the salvation of the other, the salvific function of Israel and the nations are an instrumental description of the aftermath of the Christ-event: God's act in Jesus intends and effects the reduction of Israel to a remnant and thereby the calling of the Gentiles and thereby the salvation of Israel.<sup>136</sup> As Watson suggests, 'the mechanism by which Israel is rejected for the sake of Gentiles is established by the citation in 9.33 of Isaiah 26.16 (+ 8.14)'; it is the divine act of placing the shaming and saving stone that is the crucified and risen Christ.<sup>137</sup> The severe and saving history of Jesus is thus the single soteriological cause (9.30-10.13); the soteriological solidarity of Jew and Gentile describes the instrumental realisation of this christological salvation in history.

This brings us to our second point: Israel's salvific instrumentality and soteriological hope are Christ-shaped. Both parts of this claim are evident in Romans 11.15: 'For if their rejection (ἀποβολή) is the reconciliation (καταλλαγή) of the world, what is their acceptance but life from the dead' (ζωὴ ἐκ νεκρῶν). As suggested above, the logic of Israel's salvific instrumentality is structurally parallel to the teleological ordering of hardening and mercy Paul derives from Exodus 9.16: God hardens Israel in order to have mercy on the nations. The particular way in which Paul describes this scriptural pattern, however, indicates that he is interpreting Israel's history through the lens of the crucified and risen Christ. The concept of rejection effecting reconciliation is one that Paul brings to the scriptural ordering of rejection

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<sup>135</sup> The one exception is that Paul is the subject of σώζω in 11.14, but, as Wagner suggests, this is an exception that proves the rule: '[Paul] portrays himself as the *sole active intermediary*' ('Mercy to the Nations', 426; italics added). The nouns that name Israel's salvation also point to God as the acting subject: πλήρωμα, 11.12; πρόσληψις, 11.15.

<sup>136</sup> Cf. Dahl, 'The Future of Israel', 150; D. Zeller, *Juden und Heiden in der Mission des Paulus: Studien zum Römerbrief* (FB 8; Suttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1973), 209-13.

<sup>137</sup> Watson, *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles*, 337.

and election; and he brings it from the Christ-event. Just as the death of God's Son means the reconciliation of God's enemies (Rom 5.10), so the rejection of God's people – the people ἐξ ὧν ὁ Χριστὸς τὸ κατὰ σάρκα (Rom 9.5) – means the reconciliation of the world (11.15).

A similar point can be made about the shape of Israel's soteriological hope. While Paul's confidence that 'God has not abandoned his people' (11.2) is grounded in the fact that 'the gifts and call of God are irrevocable' (11.29), the interpretation of Israel's salvation as resurrection suggests a christological imagination. It is sometimes argued that 'the phrase "life from the dead"', to borrow Käsemann's words, 'designates what Paul elsewhere calls ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν and thus refers to the parousia',<sup>138</sup> but the γάρ that links Romans 11.14 and 11.15 suggests that Paul is employing resurrection language as a description of the salvation of his 'flesh' he hopes to accomplish through his Gentile mission.<sup>139</sup> In fact, the severity with which Paul characterises Israel's stumble requires a divine saving act that is resurrection or new creation.<sup>140</sup> From the anthropological side Israel's error is describable as a 'trespass' or a 'misstep' (παράπτωμα, 11.11), but from the theological side Israel is the object of a divine act of 'rejection' (ἀποβολή, 11.15) or 'imprisoning' (συγκλείω, 11.32). Accordingly, Paul's soteriological hope for Israel is necessarily hope in the God who 'justifies the ungodly' (Rom 4.5), 'gives life to the dead' and creates out of nothing (4.17) – that is, Israel's salvation must be 'life from the dead' (ζωὴ ἐκ νεκρῶν, 11.15) and mercy (ἐλεέω, 11.31, 32). The olive tree metaphor makes exactly this point. While affirming and exploiting Israel's status as natural branches (κατὰ φύσιν κλάδων, 11.17), Paul's description of the unnatural grafting of Gentiles and the unnatural re-grafting of Jews emphasises the kindness and severity of God (χρηστότητα καὶ ἀποτομίαν θεοῦ, 11.22). As Wagner argues, the unnaturalness of God's gardening, evident both in the inclusion of Gentiles and in a process of 'cutting off' (ἐκκλάω, 11.17, 19, 20) and re-grafting (ἐγκεντρίζω, 11.23, 24) Israel, presents God as 'the unconventional horticulturalist' and effectively demonstrates both that God is 'the primary actor' and that the salvation history implied by the olive tree metaphor is *sub contrario*: saving grace operates on the other side and out of divine judgment.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> Käsemann, *Romans*, 307; cf. Moo, *Romans*, 694-96.

<sup>139</sup> Wright, 'Romans', 683; cf. Zeller, *Juden und Heiden*, 243.

<sup>140</sup> C. Müller, *Gottes Gerechtigkeit*, 99.

<sup>141</sup> Wagner, 'Mercy to the Nations', 427'.

For our purposes, the essential point to note is that both the severity of Israel's diagnosis and the shape of Israel's soteriological prognosis are christological: rejection and resurrection are descriptive of Israel's situation and salvation only as Israel's present and future are reimagined around the rejected and resurrected Jesus. In other words, just as Paul brings God's christological acts of justification and resurrection to the Abraham narrative in Romans 4, pointing to Abraham's reckoning of righteousness as the justification of the ungodly (4.3-5) and Abraham's age and Sarah's barrenness as states of deadness that require resurrection (4.17-21), so in Romans 11 Paul moulds Israel's ongoing story into the shape of the crucified and risen Christ. Thus, while Jesus is integrated into the history of Israel as 'the seed of David' (Rom 1.3), 'the root of Jesse' (15.12) and the 'Messiah from [Israel] according to the flesh' (9.5), the hermeneutical direction is not from Israel's story to her Christ; it is from Israel's Christ to Israel's story of sin and salvation. Expressed in terms of this chapter's thesis, just as Romans 9-10 is a christological rereading of Israel's scripture, so Romans 11.11-24 is a christological reimagining of Israel's present and future. More concisely, Paul's historiography is 'christomorphic'; Paul's hermeneutic is Jesus Christ.

### (3) *The Justification of Ungodly Israel and Everyone: Romans 11.25-32*

Romans 11.25-32 is an apostolic apocalypse. Lest his Gentile auditors overestimate their wisdom, Paul reveals a 'mystery': ὅτι πῶρωσις ἀπὸ μέρους τῷ Ἰσραὴλ γέγονεν ἄχρι οὗ τὸ πλήρωμα τῶν ἐθνῶν εἰσέλθῃ καὶ οὕτως πᾶς Ἰσραὴλ σωθήσεται (11.25-26a). Two features of Paul's particular unveiling are relevant: 1) Paul grounds the mystery in Israel's scripture (11.26b-27); 2) Paul's explication of this scripturally grounded mystery evinces the Christ-shaped theo-logic of Paul's hermeneutic.

As Paul rereads Israel's scripture in the aftermath of the Christ-event he sees both that the present sinfulness and the promised salvation of Israel are consonant with (καθὼς γέγραπται) Isaiah 59.20-21 and 29.7a LXX. In what Wagner aptly describes as 'a rather deft conflation of two texts',<sup>142</sup> Paul ties his announcement that 'all Israel will be saved' to the prophetic promise that 'the redeemer will remove ungodliness from Jacob' (Isa 59.20) and 'I will take away their sins' (Isa 27.9a; Rom 11.26b-27). Thus, as in Romans 16.25-26, 'mystery', to quote Seifrid, 'signifies the disclosure of truth to which Scripture already bears witness....the

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<sup>142</sup> Wagner, *Heralds*, 280.

knowledge of a “mystery” entails insight into the message of Scripture, which, although present, formerly was hidden and unknown’.<sup>143</sup> In other words, Paul’s hermeneutical moment is, to return to Agamben’s suggestive phrase, scripture’s ‘Das Jetzt der Lesbarkeit’. Paul’s description of the mystery (11.25-26a), emendations to Isaiah 59.20-21 and 29.7a LXX (11.26b-27), and exegetical extension of the Isaianic oracles (11.28-32) point to the newly legible witness of Israel’s scripture and all suggest a christological hermeneutic.

In the first place, ἄχρι οὗ (11.25) and οὕτως (11.26) indicate that the content of the mystery is not so much the fact of Israel’s future salvation as its sequence and shape. As Wagner notes, Romans 11.25-26a narrates a ‘temporal scheme’: ‘The “insensibility” (πώρωσις) that has come upon “the rest” of Israel will last only until (ἄχρι οὗ) the “fullness” of the Gentiles comes in to God’s people’, then ‘God will act to save “all Israel”’.<sup>144</sup> This suggests that Bockmuehl’s argument from a modal interpretation of καὶ οὕτως (11.26a) to the proposal that μυστήριον refers ‘to one particular...aspect of God’s plan of salvation’ – i.e., Israel’s salvific instrumentality – requires temporal supplementation:<sup>145</sup> together with ἄχρι οὗ (11.25), καὶ οὕτως unveils the divinely appointed means and the redemptive historical order of Israel’s salvation. As Wagner summarises, the salvation of all Israel will occur ‘as a result of and subsequent to the entrance of the full number of Gentiles’.<sup>146</sup> Notably, while Paul’s subsequent citations of Isaiah ground the fact of Israel’s sinfulness and the promise of Israel’s salvation in Israel’s scripture (11.26b-27), this sequential ordering appears as an apostolic *novum* – that is, a reordering of *Heilsgeschichte* as the effect and aftermath of the Christ-event. It is God’s act of

<sup>143</sup> Seifrid, ‘Romans’, 672; cf. Wagner, *Heralds*, 276-77.

<sup>144</sup> Wagner, *Heralds*, 277. The reference to πᾶς Ἰσραὴλ is probably best understood in terms of the division between ἡ ἐκλογή and οἱ λοιποὶ (11.7). So Grindheim, *The Crux of Election*, 165-66: ‘The most natural way to under the expression “all Israel” is in relation to v. 25, where a part of Israel has been hardened, reflecting the partition of Israel into the remnant and the rest explained in v. 7. Verse 26 describes the situation when this internal division will be overcome’; cf. Cranfield, *Romans*, 2.576-77; Dunn, *Romans* 9-16, 681; Haacker, *Der Brief des Paulus an die Römer*, 239; Wilckens, *Der Brief an die Römer*, 2.255-56. See also Wagner, *Heralds*, 277-78, though he adds the possibility that “all Israel” may also include those Gentiles who have “come in” (11.25)’. For a detailed discussion of the interpretative options, see C. Zoccali, ‘And So All Israel Will Be Saved: Competing Interpretations of Romans 11.26 in Pauline Scholarship’, *JSNT* 30 (2008): 289-318.

<sup>145</sup> M. Bockmuehl, *Revelation and Mystery in Ancient Judaism and Pauline Christianity* (WUNT II/36; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1990), 170-75, 226.

<sup>146</sup> Wagner, *Heralds*, 279 n.194. This reading follows the majority, modal interpretation of οὕτως (‘thus’) – e.g. Dunn, *Romans* 9-16, 681; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 622; Wilckens, *Der Brief an die Römer*, 2.255 – but it is able to account for the sequential emphasis of Romans 11.25-26a urged by proponents of the revived temporal interpretation (‘then’) – e.g. P.W. van der Horst, “Only Then Will All Israel be Saved”: A Short Note on the Meaning of καὶ οὕτως in Romans 11.26’, *JBL* 119 (2000): 521-25; cf. Grindheim, *The Crux of Election*, 165 n.112. For a modal interpretation that stresses the salvation historical sequence, see J.M. Gundry-Volf, *Paul and Perseverance: Staying in and Falling Away* (WUNT II/37; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1990), 180-81.

placing the christological stone that is the hardening of part of Israel and the salvation of the Gentiles (9.30-33; 11.11ff.) Thus, as Watson suggests, ‘salvation is still “for the Jew first, and also for the Gentile” (cf. 1.16)’ – soteriological priority – but the christological consequence that is Israel’s rejection and Gentile election indicates ‘that the order might have to be reversed’ – sequential priority.<sup>147</sup> Put another way, the history and proclamation of the crucified and risen Jesus is a stumbling block to Israel and thereby the initiation of a *sub contrario* sequence: Israel’s hardening then (and thereby) the fullness of the Gentiles, then (and thereby) all Israel. This is historiography with a christological hermeneutic: the crucified and risen Christ both generates and shapes salvation history.

As noted above, Paul claims that his assertion of the fact of Israel’s current sinfulness and announcement of the promise of Israel’s future salvation correspond to the witness of Israel’s scripture: καθὼς γέγραπται... (11.26b). Even here, however, in Paul’s argument from scripture, Christology remains determinative for the reimagined *Heilsgeschichte* of Romans 11. The tight consonance between apostolic and prophetic promise is ensured by some significant emendations to Isaiah 59.20-21 LXX and its conflation with Isaiah 29.7a LXX. First, whereas Isaiah 59.20 refers to the redeemer coming ‘on account of Zion’ (ἔνεκεν Σιων),<sup>148</sup> Paul’s reworked citation reads ‘the redeemer will come from Zion’ (ἐκ Σιων). While it is possible that Paul’s *Vorlage* read ἐκ, the hypothesised process that this suggestion requires – ἐκ as a mistransmission of an unattested septuagintal rendering of the MT with εἰς<sup>149</sup> – is too complex to be compelling. It is cleaner to see Paul’s alteration as ‘theologically motivated’, both because the ἐκ helps to secure the christological identity of ὁ ῥυόμενος and because it establishes Israel’s ‘exile’.<sup>150</sup> While most commentators agree that ‘the redeemer’ is a reference to Jesus based on the parallel predication in 1 Thessalonians 1.10 and the switch from third to first person between Romans 11.26b and 11.27,<sup>151</sup> the confirmation of this christological identification by the change from ἔνεκεν to ἐκ generally goes unnoticed. Romans 9.33

<sup>147</sup> Watson, *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles*, 330; cf. Grindheim, *The Crux of Election*, 165.

<sup>148</sup> The MT has the redeemer coming ‘to Zion’.

<sup>149</sup> Wilk, *Bedeutung des Jesajabuches*, 39-40.

<sup>150</sup> Seifrid, ‘Romans’, 674; Wagner, *Heralds*, 284-86; cf. Hübner, *Gottes Ich und Israel*, 115-16 who suggests that the eschatological notion of the Gentiles ‘coming in’ (11.25) accounts for the change to ἐκ.

<sup>151</sup> See especially P.T. Gadenz, *Called from the Jews and from the Gentiles: Pauline Ecclesiology in Romans 9-11* (WUNT II/267. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 283-86; cf. Cranfield, *Romans*, 2.578; Wilckens, *Der Brief an die Römer*, 2.256; Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, 682; Jewett, *Romans*, 704. For the minority report, that the redeemer is God rather than Christ, see L. Gaston, ‘Israel’s Misstep in the Eyes of Paul’, in *The Romans Debate* (ed. K.P. Donfried; Peabody: Hendrickson, 1991), 309-26 (319).

interprets Isaiah 28.16 (+ 8.14) as announcing the placement of a christological stone in Zion that occasions the stumble of Israel. This both locates Christ in Zion and signifies Israel's divinely intended disobedience. Paul's rewriting of Isaiah 59.20 LXX as a reference to the redeemer coming ἐκ Σιων to 'remove ungodliness from Jacob' picks up this christological location and the implied dislocation of Israel as a result of her disobedience. As Wagner notes, 'the variant ἐκ Σιων reflects a fundamental interpretative shift'; it both points to the messianic identity of the redeemer and indicates that the event of his coming is 'viewed from the standpoint of the Diaspora'.<sup>152</sup> Paul's earlier citations from Isaiah (Rom 9.27-29; 10.21; 11.8), Deuteronomy (Rom 10.9; 11.8), 3 Kingdoms (Rom 11.2-4) and Psalms (Rom 10.18; 11.9) suggest that the proclamation of the christological gospel has occasioned an exile of sorts: the advent and announcement of Israel's messiah is the concrete enactment of Israel's rejection. The christological redeemer thus comes from Zion and to a disobedient (11.30-32) and dead (11.15) Israel.

The second half of this sentence – 'a disobedient and dead Israel' – points to a second material difference between Romans 11.26b and the Isaianic texts it quotes. While both Isaiah 59.20 LXX and Romans 11.26b read ἀποστρέψει ἀσεβείας ἀπὸ Ἰακώβ, the context of the Isaiah passage (see especially Isa 59.16-21 LXX) indicates that the coming of the redeemer 'on account of Zion' (ἕνεκεν Σιων) to 'turn away ungodly things from Jacob' (Isa 59.20) refers to the deliverance of Israel from her ungodly enemies rather than the deliverance of ungodly Israel. Paul's reapplied citation, by contrast, has the redeemer coming to hardened, rejected, stumbling, cut off, disobedient Israel in order to remove the ungodliness of Jacob. As Seifrid puts it, '[Paul] interprets Is. 59.20 in terms of the justification of the ungodly'.<sup>153</sup> This redirection of Isaiah's promised redemption is confirmed by the addition of a phrase from Isaiah 27.9a LXX to the continued quotation of Isaiah 59 in Romans 11.27. Opening with a verbatim citation of Isaiah 59.21a LXX (καὶ αὕτη αὐτοῖς ἡ παρ' ἐμοῦ διαθήκη), Paul interprets the content of this covenant with another Isaianic promise: ὅταν ἀφέλωμαι τὰς ἀμαρτίας αὐτῶν (Rom 11.27; citing Isa 27.9a LXX). By combining these texts Paul announces both the unilateral nature of God's covenant with Israel – it is 'a covenant from me' (ἡ παρ' ἐμοῦ διαθήκη) and 'for them' (αὐτοῖς) – and its necessary actualisation as the salvation of sinful

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<sup>152</sup> Wagner, *Heralds*, 284.

<sup>153</sup> Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness*, 166 n.49.

Israel. In other words, the conflation of Isaiah 59.21 and 27.9a suggests that, in this context, God's covenant with Israel just is his promise to forgive Israel. Thus, read together with the rewritten and redirected citation of Isaiah 59.20 LXX in Romans 11.26b, Romans 11.27 reimagines Israel's promised salvation as the christologically accomplished act of the justification of the ungodly. The logic and basis of Israel's future salvation are therefore identical to the present justification of Jew and Gentile: soteriology is christologically grounded and grace-shaped – that is, God acts in Jesus to save sinners (cf. Rom 3.23-26). Paul's exegetical extension of Isaiah 59.20-21 and 27.9a in Romans 11.28-32 bring out precisely this point.

Romans 11.28 presents Israel's existence as a both/and: according to the gospel, ἐχθροί; according to election, ἀγαπητοί. The phrase διὰ τοὺς πατέρας appears to anchor Israel's belovedness in her ancestry, but the γάρ that links 11.28 and 11.29 suggests that the perdurance of the promises to the patriarchs is grounded in the irrevocability of 'God's gifts and call' (τὰ χαρίσματα καὶ ἡ κλήσις τοῦ θεοῦ). In other words, grace grounds Israel's belovedness. As Barclay observes, 'Israel is special to God because of its ancestry.... But it is special only because of its election (because of God's χαρίσματα and κλήσις)'.<sup>154</sup> Thus, in contrast to the author of *Wisdom* for whom Israel is differentiated from the nations *qua* the righteous, for Paul, Israel is unique *qua* Israel – that is as the chosen and graced people of God. To quote Barclay again, 'Israel's particularity is, interestingly, more important to Paul than to *Wisdom*.... But her destiny is, according to Paul, to bear witness to the electing mercy of God, which operates within her as well as for her, despite her failures and ultimately beyond her "stumble"'.<sup>155</sup> In other words, Israel is both an instrument and object of divine mercy. Israel's elected uniqueness is therefore bound up with the doubleness of her status: simultaneously enemy and beloved. Israel's sinfulness cannot void the promise of salvation – 'the gifts and call of God are irrevocable' – and yet it is precisely as *disobedient* Israel that Israel realises her salvific vocation. As Paul puts, Israel is an enemy 'for your sake' (11.28): the once disobedient

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<sup>154</sup> Barclay, 'The Golden Calf and Divine Mercy', 104. Rather than arguing from the γάρ in Romans 11.29, Barclay points to 'the processes of "selection" operative in [Israel's] foundation (9.6 ff)' and the promise of 'divine redemption out of disobedience and unbelief (11.11 ff)'. The soteriological significance of 'the fathers' in 11.28 recalls Paul's principle that 'if the root is holy, so also are the branches' (11.16) and may suggest that 'the root is not so much the fathers themselves as the calling, the election, or mercy of God operative in them' ('The Golden Calf and Divine Mercy', 103; cf. N. Walter 'Zur Interpretation von Römer 9-11', *ZTK* 81 [1984]: 172-195).

<sup>155</sup> Barclay, 'Unnerving Grace', 108.

Gentiles have received God's mercy because of Israel's disobedience (τῆ τούτων ἀπειθεία, 11.30). But this is only half of the double teleology noted above and thus, because 'the gifts and call of God are irrevocable', only half of the soteriological story. Just as disobedient Gentiles receive mercy because of Israel's disobedience, so the mercy shown to the once disobedient Gentiles becomes instrumental in God's act of showing mercy to disobedient Israel (11.31). As Paul rereads the scriptural past and reimagines the soteriological future, disobedience is both a means and the sole meeting place of mercy – a contradiction, in other words, is the condition of grace and the criterion of salvation history. Paul's conclusion makes exactly this point: 'For God has consigned all people to disobedience (ἀπειθεία), in order that he might have mercy (ἐλεέω) on all' (11.32).

Contained in this terse and paradoxical conclusion is what Stuhlmacher calls 'the quintessential structural law of God's gracious work' and 'history's fundamental principle'.<sup>156</sup> For Paul, salvation is always enacted as the justification of the ungodly (Rom 4.5) and salvation history is therefore the history of God justifying the ungodly (11.32). At this point it is necessary to break *Wisdom's* silence, for the 'quintessential structural laws' and 'fundamental principles' of history that emerge from Romans 9-11 and *Wisdom* 10-19 are ultimately incommensurable. Whereas *Wisdom* retells the events of Genesis and Exodus/Numbers as, respectively, anticipations and recapitulations of the correspondence between divine action and human subjects paradigmatically exemplified at the Red Sea, Paul rereads Israel's scripture and re-imagines Israel's future as the consistent concretion of a destabilising dialectic: life out of death, justification out of ungodliness, creation out of nothing. In other words, as *Wisdom* rereads and rewrites Israel's pentateuchal past, *correspondence* is the criterion; as Paul rereads and reimagines history in past, present and future tenses, *contradiction* is the criterion. As has been evident throughout this chapter, however, the structural differences between *Wisdom* and Romans are symptoms of a more essential, hermeneutical fault-line. Put another way, that both authors have an historiographic criterion indicates that Romans 9-11 and *Wisdom* 10-19 purport to offer a rereading 'with the grain of the universe', but the incommensurability of their criteria suggests that they read with the grain of equally incommensurable configurations of the cosmos – that their divergent readings find

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<sup>156</sup> P. Stuhlmacher, *Revisiting Paul's Doctrine of Justification: A Challenge to the New Perspective* (trans. D.P. Bailey; Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2001), 30, 71; cf. E. Käsemann, 'Justification and Salvation History in the Epistle to the Romans', in *Perspectives on Paul* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), 60-78 (70, 75-76).

and follow irreconcilable hermeneutical theo-logics. The final question, then, which has been the question of this chapter from the beginning, is not whether Paul and the author of *Wisdom* read differently. The final question is *why* Paul and the author of *Wisdom* read differently. Answering this question brings this chapter full circle, and thus to its conclusion.

For *Wisdom*, the patterned correspondence that constitutes history is a repeated illustration of the theological and cosmological fact that God ‘has ordered all things by measure, number and weight’ (*Wis.* 11.20). In other words, *Wisdom*’s reading of Israel’s scripture is a rereading from and according to the pre-creational order. This suggests that, for *Wisdom*, *correspondence* constitutes what might be called the *formal criterion* of history and hermeneutics whereas *protology* constitutes the *material criterion*: correspondence is the concretion of the pre-creational order. For Paul, as Romans 11.32 indicates, contradiction constitutes salvation history because God operates *ex contrario* – that is, because God, in the idiom of Romans 4, is ‘the one who justifies the ungodly’ (Rom 4.5), ‘gives life to the dead and calls non-being being’ (4.17). As Paul’s christologically determined predications of God in Romans 4.5 and 4.17b indicate, however, God is only identifiable as *this* God as Paul brings the christological acts of justification (Rom 4.5; cf. 3.21-26) and resurrection (4.17; cf. 4.24-25) to the acting subject of Genesis 15 and Genesis 17.15-18.15. In other words, God is known as the one who acts *ex contrario* from the divine act that is the Christ-event. Applied to Paul’s reinterpretation of Israel’s scripture and reimagining of Israel’s future in Romans 9-11, Paul’s exegesis exploits incongruity because his hermeneutic is christological. Or again, in Romans 9-11, Paul’s historiography is ‘christomorphic’ because his hermeneutic is christological. In this sense, *contradiction* can be said to be the *formal criterion* of Pauline historiography and hermeneutics whereas *Christology* is the *material criterion*. This means that, for Paul, the Christ-event is not an illustration of something else, whether that something else is named the paradigm of self-giving,<sup>157</sup> the metaphysical beyond<sup>158</sup> or even the justification of the ungodly.<sup>159</sup> In Badiou’s

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<sup>157</sup> Horrell, ‘Paul’s Narratives or Narrative Substructure’, 166.

<sup>158</sup> The tendency to reduce Christ to a cipher for the transcendent or the impossible touching of eternity and time is especially evident in K. Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans* (trans. E.C. Hoskyns; Oxford: OUP, 1933), 92. Such a characterisation does not apply to Barth’s later Christology, especially as developed in *CD IV/1*.

<sup>159</sup> See Käsemann, ‘Justification and Salvation History’, 75; idem, *Romans*, 317-18, for whom ‘the doctrine of justification’ functions as the *heilsgeschichtliche* hermeneutic. However, note the insistence that ‘justification is Paul’s interpretation of Christology’ (‘Justification and Salvation History’, 73). For an account of the hermeneutical function of justification as ‘the basis and boundary of theology’ that maintains the link between

provocative phrase, 'Christ is not a mediation'<sup>160</sup> – that is, the Christ-event is not an example or even paradigmatic instantiation of a reality more foundational than itself; it is that towards which history points and that from and through which history makes sense. In other words, for Paul, the Christ-event is the beginning and centre of history; its hermeneutical significance is both generative and centrifugal. In Romans 9-11, this christological hermeneutic is evident as Israel's scriptural past is reread as a typological testimony to the event and impact of Jesus (9.7-19), as Israel's prophets are re-voiced as a present tense announcement of God's act that is the Christ-event and its aftermath (9.25-29, 33; 10.18-21; 11.8-10) and as Israel's present and future are reimagined according to and ultimately as effected by the history, proclamation and promised coming of Jesus Christ (9.30-32; 10.14-17; 11.1-32). Stated in terms of the thesis of this section, Paul's christological rereading of Israel's scripture and christological reimagining of Israel's future precludes any perspective on history that eclipses, de-centres and/or abstracts from the divine act that is the concrete history of the crucified and risen Christ. To quote Dietrich Bonhoeffer as a summary exegesis of Romans 9-11, Paul's christologically occasioned, oriented and patterned reinterpretation of history in past, present and future tenses suggest that, as he rereads scripture and *Heilsgeschichte*, 'the reality of Christ comprises the reality of the world in itself'.<sup>161</sup>

Thus the comparative conclusion: *Wisdom* rereads and rewrites Israel's pentateuchal past according to the formal criterion of correspondence exemplified in the Exodus and from the material criterion of protology embedded in the pre-creational order; Paul rereads and re-imagines Israel's history according to the formal criterion of contradiction evident in the operations of unconditioned election and incongruous grace and from the material criterion that is Jesus Christ.

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justification and its christological ground, see O. Bayer, 'Justification as the Basis and Boundary of Theology', trans. C. Helmer; *Lutheran Quarterly* 15 (2001): 273-92.

<sup>160</sup> A. Badiou, *Saint Paul: The Foundation of Universalism* (trans. R. Brassier; Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 48.

<sup>161</sup> D. Bonhoeffer, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works: Volume Six, Ethics* (ed. C. Green; trans. R. Krauss, et. al.; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), 64.

## Chapter 9

### Concluding the Conversation

Scandalous and foolish. This classification of the ‘word of the cross’ by Jews and Gentiles introduced this thesis as a question: how would the Diaspora Jew who wrote the *Wisdom of Solomon* engage and evaluate the theology of Paul’s letter to the Christians in Rome? In an effort to imagine the answer to this heuristic question, the preceding chapters employed a comparative method I labeled ‘exegetical eavesdropping’, joining *Wisdom* and Romans in a dialogue in the expectation that, to borrow Bakhtin’s image, both texts would come alive ‘by coming into contact with another text’.<sup>1</sup> In this way, the introductory question has proven to be a precise conclusion to this contextual conversation: scandalous and foolish captures the double-offense that has characterised our reconstructed reaction of the author of *Wisdom* to Romans. Considered in conversation with *Wisdom*, Romans sounds scandalous to its Jewish sensibilities and foolish to its middle-platonic conceptualities. This conclusion raises a question, however. As the Pascal quote that opened this thesis insists, ‘In every dialogue and discourse we must be able to say to those who take offence, “Of what do you complain?”’ This concluding chapter will attempt to answer this essential hermeneutical question by reviewing and linking the argumentative threads of the previous chapters in an effort to specify the theological incommensurability of Romans and *Wisdom* and thus to identify the material cause of *Wisdom*’s offence.

#### *The Christological Fault-Line*

As argued in the introduction, the long and productive history of comparing *Wisdom* and Romans does not disqualify Monya McGlynn’s observation that ‘The coincidences between Paul’s epistle to the Romans and *Wisdom*...have never been adequately studied and compared’ because most comparative projects fail to offer a full reading of *Wisdom* and, partly as a result, are typically content to identify points of continuity and discontinuity without probing the

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<sup>1</sup> M. Bakhtin, ‘Toward a Methodology for the Human Sciences’, in *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays* (eds. C. Emerson and M. Holquist; trans. V.W. McGee; Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986), 159-72, (162).

hermeneutical rationale and theological basis for this similarity-in-contrast.<sup>2</sup> This thesis has attempted to fill this gap by, first, in part one, providing a comprehensive reading of *Wisdom* without reference to Romans and then, secondly, in part two, rereading pivotal sections of Romans in conversation with *Wisdom* in an effort to sharpen the theological profile of each text and thus pinpoint the generative basis and material cause for their broad continuity and their ultimate incommensurability.

The reading of *Wisdom* gave voice to a text with an expansive theological and cosmological vision, one in which God's illimitable love is comprehended within the operations of his immutable justice. For *Wisdom*, the bedrock of theological reality is the axiomatic status of a carefully and equitably ordered cosmos: God 'arranged all things by measure and number and weight' (11.20) through the divine σοφία who fashioned (7.22) and orders (8.1) all things and who is thus able and eager to gift an 'unerring knowledge of what exists' (7.17) to those who are 'worthy of her' (6.16). This protological pattern is prototypically exemplified in the correspondence between the anthropological and soteriological symmetries of the Exodus – Wisdom brought the righteous over the Red Sea and she drowned the ungodly (10.15-21) – and functions as the criterion by which *Wisdom* rereads and rewrites pentateuchal history (*Wis.* 10-19) and imagines the necessary outcomes of future judgment (*Wis.* 2-5). The present suffering of the righteous and the current flourishing of the wicked is a cosmological contradiction because it appears to disconnect the congruence between the form and object of God's actions, thus disrupting the operations of divine justice and destabilising the symmetry and equilibrium that characterise the rational, moral and cosmic order. *Wisdom* is thus simultaneously a theodicy and a pastoral word of hope: as in the re-narrated canonical past, the eschaton will evidence the inexorable goodness and justice of God as he acts to overcome chaos with correspondence – that is, the loving God will act with the necessary doubleness of divine justice to judge the ungodly and graciously reward the righteous. For *Wisdom*, then, σοφία is the architect of a precisely calibrated cosmos, one in which the divine arrangement of all things 'by measure and number and weight' is principally instantiated in the congruence between anthropological and soteriological symmetries. These protologically grounded binaries shape *Wisdom's* anthropology, determine the definition of *Wisdom's* theological

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<sup>2</sup> M. McGlynn, *Divine Judgment and Divine Benevolence in the Book of Wisdom* (WUNT II, 139; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 222.

vocabulary and provide the formal hermeneutical criterion for *Wisdom's* rereading of Israel's scripture. In this way, these topics expose and exemplify the deep logic of *Wisdom's* theology and thus focus the comparison of Romans and *Wisdom*.

Chapter six took up the old question of the relationship between the anti-idolatry polemic of *Wisdom* 13-15 and the formally parallel Romans 1.18-2.5. While recognising and emphasising the lexical, thematic, and argumentative similarities between the two passages, the reconsideration of their relationship in light of their rhetorical function and the essential theological structures of both texts led to the conclusion that the probable literary engagement of Romans 1.18-2.11 with *Wisdom* 13-15 occurs within an antithetical argument: whereas *Wisdom* contrasts the idolatry and immorality of the non-Jewish world with the religious and moral innocence of Israel in order to reinforce the irreducible distinction between Israel *qua* the righteous and non-Israel *qua* the ungodly, Paul situates his accusation within the apostolic and apocalyptic kerygma and introduces a series of alterations into the polemical tradition that subtly includes Israel within the human history of sin and thereby reduces the Jew-Gentile binary to a single anthropological denominator, *homo peccator*. Chapter seven compared the meaning and relationship of two theological terms – δικαιοσύνη and χάρις – that are central to both texts. Paul and the author of *Wisdom*, it was argued, are both theologians of grace and righteousness, but these shared lexemes represent a common vocabulary that is deployed in incommensurable theological grammars. For *Wisdom*, justice and grace are instantiations of the protological pattern and as such, by pre-creational pre-definition, God's righteousness is located in the correspondence between the form of divine action – judgment or grace – and the object of divine action – the righteous or the ungodly. Within this comprehensive and ultimately cosmological definition, God's gifts and grace are instances rather than antitheses of God's justice: divine benefits, while emphatically unearned, are necessarily explicable in terms of a 'fit' between God's gifts and their human recipients. For Paul, by contrast, the righteousness and grace of God are not *exemplified* in an event; they are *enacted in and as* the event that judges ungodliness and thereby justifies the ungodly. For this reason, Paul's definitions of grace and righteousness are re-definitions that are deduced from and descriptive of the disjunction between the form and object of divine action – God justifies the ungodly – and the incongruence between the gift and recipients of God's Son – 'when we were weak...Christ died for the ungodly' (Rom 5.6). Lastly, chapter eight compared the

rereadings of Israel's scripture in *Wisdom* 10-19 and Romans 9-11. In *Wisdom's* reordered and re-narrated account of Genesis, Exodus and Numbers, pentateuchal history is, as the Red Sea crossing exemplifies, the recurrent and programmatic concretion of the correspondence between divine action and human subjects: God, with tempering mercy, judges and destroys the ungodly Egyptians and, with mild pedagogical and paternal testing, rescues and rewards righteous Israel. In Romans 9-11, rather than detecting a canonical pattern of correspondence, Paul traces the unconditioned and often contradictory operations of the divine word in Israel's pentateuchal past and prophetically announced present and future. Rereading Israel's scripture and reimagining Israel's future from the current crisis that is the divinely-effected stumble of Israel and incongruous call of Gentiles, Paul is able to summarise salvation history as the operations of the God who works *ex contrario*: 'God has consigned all people to disobedience so that he might have mercy on all' (Rom 11.32).

The identification of these anthropological, semantic and hermeneutical differences, however, rather than ending the comparison, functioned as invitations to press the 'why' question – to enquire after the theological rationale for these formal incompatibilities in an effort to identify the material basis for the recurrent incommensurability. It was in repeatedly asking and answering *why* Romans and *Wisdom* configure the theological world differently that a single thesis emerged: *Wisdom's* theology is governed by the protological order that σοφία fashioned, manages and reveals; the theology of Romans is determined by the Christ-event. The essentialness of this contrast does not mean that *Wisdom* and Romans are always or necessarily antithetical. As emphasised throughout this thesis, *Wisdom* and Romans share a range of theological vocabulary, topical interests, argumentative patterns and theological methods. These commonalities, however, are comprehended within ultimately incommensurate configurations of reality, not because the theologies of Romans and *Wisdom* are unrelated opposites but because the anchor-point and organising hermeneutic of their respective theologies are finally different.

This fundamental or hermeneutical difference is evident in each of the comparative chapters. For *Wisdom*, the irreducible distinction between Jew and non-Jew (*qua* the righteous and the ungodly) is constitutive of the rational and moral order that σοφία architected and engineers. The symmetrical structuring of created reality requires an anthropological binary that can relate to the respective forms of divine action with just equilibrium. For Paul, the

proclamation of the christological kerygma reveals the universal scope of divine wrath (Rom 1.18) and thereby announces the gospel's verdict on the world: 'Jew and Gentile are under sin' (Rom 3.9). Similarly, whereas for *Wisdom*, righteousness and grace are, by protological pre-definition, a δικαιοσύνη determined by correspondence and a χάρις defined by congruence, for Paul, by christological re-definition, God's righteousness and grace are a disjunctive δικαιοσύνη and an unconditioned and incongruous χάρις. In both cases, these definitions are not ideals or univocal abstractions; they are semantic consequences and descriptions of what each author considers the basic theological reality: the well-ordered cosmos and the ineluctable justice of the illimitably loving God (*Wisdom*) or the unconditioned and disruptive divine act that is the single and saving history of Jesus Christ. Finally, the exegetical difference between the rereadings of Israel's scripture in *Wisdom* 10-19 and Romans 9-11 were shown to be symptomatic of an essential hermeneutical incommensurability: *Wisdom* rereads and rewrites pentateuchal history according to the formal criterion of correspondence because canonical history is necessarily the paradigmatic exemplification of the pre-creational order; Paul rereads and re-imagines Israel's history according to the formal criterion of contradiction (*ex contrario*) because he hears Israel's past as a typological testimony to and Israel's prophetic tradition as a pre-announcement of the unconditioned and incongruous event and impact that is God's act in Jesus. In this way, the various anthropological, semantic and hermeneutical differences between *Wisdom* and Romans point to and are generated by a single, material contrast: *Wisdom's* theology is governed by and reflective of the nuclear significance of the protological order σοφία fashioned, sustains and reveals; the theology of Romans is determined by and radiates from the generative and centrifugal significance of the divine act that is the event, impact and proclamation of Jesus Christ.<sup>3</sup>

### *Paul and Wisdom – Paul and Judaism*

As emphasised in the introduction, the particular question of the relationship between Romans and *Wisdom* is part of but by no means equivalent to the larger question about Paul's relationship to early Judaism. It would thus be a category mistake to translate the results of the

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<sup>3</sup> One way to further this comparison between *Wisdom's* protological orientation and Paul's 'evental' and eschatological perspective would be to consider together the nature and functions of σοφία in *Wisdom* 6-7 and the character and operations of the Spirit in Romans 8.

present two-text comparison into a series of conclusions about ‘Paul and Judaism’. Rather, the more specific question raised in the introduction was whether the ‘paradigm’ – that is, the interpretative and evaluative frame – within which comparisons of Pauline and early Jewish literature typically occurs clarifies or obfuscates the deep logic of *Wisdom*’s theology and thus whether the standard comparative questions about the degree and priority of grace and/or the causal or instrumental function of human obedience tunes into or mutes a theological dialogue between Romans and *Wisdom*. The purpose of this concluding section is to make the implicit answers to these questions throughout the thesis explicit by specifying points at which the comparison of Romans and *Wisdom* exposes and qualifies some of the assumptions that govern reconstructions of Paul’s theological relationship to early Judaism.

One of the central arguments of the introduction was that the tacit influence and presuppositional status of an interpretative paradigm – a shared constellation of beliefs about the method, objects and principles of investigation and evaluation – is evident in the assumed univocity of grace and the related assumption that human obedience and God’s grace are necessarily in tension. This presupposition is clearly operative in the value-loaded conclusions of E.P. Sanders: Palestinian Judaism ‘kept grace and works in the *right* perspective’; ‘the gift and demand of God were kept in a *healthy* relationship’.<sup>4</sup> The evaluative language here – ‘right perspective’ and ‘healthy relationship’ – points to a presupposed definition of divine grace: grace is necessarily ‘groundless’, ‘free’, ‘not earned’ and ‘unmerited’.<sup>5</sup> This assumed univocity is also evident in the work of Sanders’ critics. Chris VanLandingham fundamentally disagrees with Sanders’ summary of early Jewish soteriology as ‘a religion of grace’, insisting instead that a ‘post-mortem or Last Judgment of God determines an individual’s eternal destiny’ and that ‘an individual’s behavior...provides the criterion for this judgment’.<sup>6</sup> However, while standing ‘in direct opposition to Sanders’ on the role of grace and works in Jewish soteriology,<sup>7</sup> VanLandingham agrees with Sanders’ presupposed definition of grace. Disputing the graciousness of Philo’s use of χάρις based on Philo’s insistence on the correspondence between God’s grace and Abraham’s worth, VanLandingham remarks, ‘considering what “grace” means,

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<sup>4</sup> E.P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1977), 427 (italics added).

<sup>5</sup> Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 394-96.

<sup>6</sup> C. VanLandingham, *Judgment and Justification in Early Judaism and the Apostle Paul* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2006), 15.

<sup>7</sup> VanLandingham, *Judgment and Justification*, 15.

Philo's portrayal of Abraham's election cannot be characterized as such'.<sup>8</sup> But what does grace mean? *Wisdom* would be happy with Sanders' insistence that God's gifts are 'not earned' and 'free', but to call grace 'groundless' would, for *Wisdom*, render its operations inexplicable and thus jeopardize the goodness and justice of the gracious God. Similarly, responding to VanLandingham, it is easy to imagine *Wisdom* redacting his comment to turn his incredulity into a complement: considering what grace means – that is, considering it is an unearned though explainable benefit directed towards a fitting beneficiary – Philo's portrayal of Abraham's election can only be characterised as such.

The point here is not to replace one definition of grace with another, but to note that the comparison of *Wisdom* and Romans suggests that the meaning of grace is not univocal. This observation invites a method of analysis that is not, in the first instance, concerned with the question of *degree* – how much grace is there in a given text – but enquires after *definition* – what grace means in a particular text. This line of questioning resists the imposition of an alien interpretative framework because it demands that a text's theological vocabulary be defined contextually and exegetically. In the case of *Wisdom*, it is ultimately obfuscating to ask whether it keeps grace and works in the 'right perspective' because such a question presupposes an evaluative criterion other than the grammar of the text's own discourse. *Wisdom's* definition of grace as an emphatically *unearned* (i.e. non-contractual, voluntary) though necessarily *explainable* (i.e. congruous) divine benefit gifted to a fitting human beneficiary is both an instance of contextual commonsense – it reflects the social patterns of Greco-Roman gift-exchange – and theological consistency – because God is good his acts of grace are necessarily comprehended within and consistent with the operations of divine justice. To read *Wisdom* with a presupposed definition of divine grace as ungrounded and incongruous is thus to erase its emphatic celebration of the gifts and grace of God because its contextually locatable and theologically consistent use of χάρις conflicts with a semantic *a priori*.

A similar observation can be made about the significant studies of Friedrich Avemarie.<sup>9</sup> As argued in the introduction, the novel and needed contribution of Avemarie's work is that it

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<sup>8</sup> VanLandingham, *Judgment and Justification*, 27.

<sup>9</sup> F. Avemarie, *Tora und Leben: Untersuchungen zur Heilsbedeutung der Tora in der frühen rabbinischen Literatur* (TSAJ 55; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996); idem, 'Erwählung und Vergeltung: Zur optionalen Struktur rabbinischer Soteriologie', *NTS* 45 (1999): 108-26.

identifies and acknowledges the co-existence of ‘recompense’ (*Vergeltung*) and ‘election’ (*Erwählung*) as soteriological principles in rabbinic literature without attempting to subordinate election to recompense (Billerbeck) or recompense to election (Sanders).<sup>10</sup> Avemarie’s own solution to this ‘problem’ of co-existence, as endorsed and summarised by Gathercole, ‘is to recognize the *diversity* of rabbinic views.... The better model is...one of tension’.<sup>11</sup> The doubleness of this conclusion – its recognition of the apparent commensurability of gracious election and recompense and its evaluative claim that the co-existence of grace and reward language is, despite appearances, a theological tension – exposes a presupposition: it assumes rather than asks after the meaning of grace. For *Wisdom*, however, there is no tension: the moral, rational and/or social worth of the recipient of God’s gifts do not conflict with or diminish the graciousness of grace; affinity between benefit and beneficiary ensures that God’s gifts are good, reasonable and just rather than arbitrary, irrational or unfair.

The tension, then, is not, in *Wisdom*, between God’s grace and human worth but between presuppositions about the meaning of grace and the actual definition of grace in *Wisdom*. To quote Pascal again, ‘Les mots diversement rangés font un divers sens’.<sup>12</sup> As argued in chapter seven, *Wisdom* and Romans both articulate theologies of grace, but their definitions of grace are ultimately incommensurable – they deploy a shared vocabulary in distinct theological grammars. Applied to the comparison of Paul and Judaism more generally, this suggests that if we are to ask after rather than assume the meaning of theological terms, we need to allow a text’s theological grammar to define its theological vocabulary.

This need to get to a text’s grammar – to penetrate its deep logic – can be teased out in dialogue with the central thesis of the ‘new perspective’. As indicated in the introduction, the diverse readings of Paul and early Judaism subsumed under the label the ‘new perspective’ agree on two basic points: first, Sanders’ reconstruction of Jewish soteriology is basically right and therefore (i.e. because legalistic Jewish soteriology is a fiction), second, Paul’s polemic against ‘works of law’ targets ‘national righteousness’ rather than ‘works righteousness’. The comparison of *Wisdom* and Romans qualifies both of these claims. First, for *Wisdom*, though

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<sup>10</sup> Avemarie, ‘Erwählung und Vergeltung’, 113.

<sup>11</sup> S.J. Gathercole, *Where is Boasting? Early Jewish Soteriology and Paul’s Response in Romans 1-5* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 155.

<sup>12</sup> Blaise Pascal, *Pensées* (Brunschvicg edition, 1897), I.23.

there is a necessary and irreducible distinction between Israel and the nations, this anthropological binary is a concretion of the symmetrical structuring of the cosmos and, more pertinently, is based on moral and rational criteria. Israel and non-Israel are distinct *qua* the righteous and the ungodly, and this dualism is the necessary correlate of the respective divine acts of judgment and grace because God's justice is evident in the fit between the form and objects of his action. A distinction between 'national righteousness' and 'works/worth righteousness' thus fails to capture the logic of *Wisdom's* anthropology: Israel's soteriological privilege is grounded in Israel's innocence from idolatry and immorality. Second, as chapter six argued, comparing *Wisdom's* perspective with Paul suggests that the function of Paul's polemic in Romans 1.18-3.20 is, as the 'new perspective' rightly notes, to reduce the Jew/Gentile distinction to a single anthropological denominator and, as the new perspective tends to overlook, to do so on the basis of the apostolic announcement of universal human sinfulness. In other words, if for *Wisdom* Jew and non-Jew are different *qua* the righteous and the ungodly, for Paul Jew and Gentile share an anthropological status because 'all are under sin'.

This anthropological conclusion, however, as noted above (and as argued in chapter six), is a theological consequence of the Christ-event: it is the apostolic announcement of the christological gospel that reveals the universal scope of divine wrath (Rom 1.18). This suggests, as argued in chapter seven, that it is the divine act that is Jesus' single and saving history that finally accounts for Paul's anthropological and soteriological universalism. While proponents of the 'new perspective' have rightly insisted on Paul's Gentile mission as the *Sitz im Leben* for this anthropological and theological universalism, there has been a failure to probe the rationale for Paul's subversive social practice and theology. Appeals to Gentile rights,<sup>13</sup> the implications of monotheism<sup>14</sup> and the axiomatic attribute of divine impartiality<sup>15</sup> tend, on the one hand, to impose an ideological assumption about the superiority of universalism over particularism<sup>16</sup> and, on the other hand, to forget that the authors of texts like *Wisdom* confess a God who is both singular and just. The essential though regularly unasked question is, Why? –

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<sup>13</sup> K. Stendahl, *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976), 2.

<sup>14</sup> N.T. Wright, 'The Book of Romans', in *NIB X* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002), 482.

<sup>15</sup> J.M. Bassler, *Divine Impartiality: Paul and a Theological Axiom* (SBLDS 59; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1982); cf. C.H. Cosgrove, *Elusive Israel: The Puzzle of Election in Romans* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1997).

<sup>16</sup> Cf. D. Boyarin, *A Radical Jew: Paul and the Politics of Identity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).

why did Paul conclude that ‘there is no distinction’? For *Wisdom*, God’s particular and discriminate acts of saving grace are a necessary instantiation of divine justice. For Paul, by contrast, it is because the saving event of divine righteousness and grace that Paul calls ‘the redemption that is in Christ Jesus’ (Rom 3.24) is unconditioned by any criterion of human worth, including worth defined in terms of Jewish ethnicity or law-observance, that the Christ-gift is given to Jew and Gentile, male and female, slave and free. In other words, the logic and basis for Paul’s announcement of incongruous and boundary-breaking grace is not a theological principle or doctrinal *a priori*; it is the shape and effect of God’s act of justifying the ungodly in Jesus. Thus, while the ‘new perspective’ is right to insist on the social impact and exigent application of justification evident in Galatians and Romans, it is the christological basis and content of justification that ultimately grounds and shapes Paul’s anthropological and soteriological universalism. The contrast between *Wisdom*’s insistence that Israel alone is righteous and will be rewarded and Paul’s law-free mission to the Gentiles is thus more essential than Paul widening Judaism’s (or at least *Wisdom*’s) anthropological boundaries. *Wisdom*’s theology requires an anthropological distinction; the Christ-event announces and effects the end of anthropological distinctions. The basic difference, then, is not between abstract commitments to particularism or universalism; the contrast is a product of two different and ultimately incommensurable theological anchor-points: *Wisdom*’s distinction between Jew and Gentile is determined by and reflective of the symmetrical structuring of the cosmos fashioned and ordered by σοφία; Paul’s announcement that ‘there is no distinction’ (Rom 3.22) is generated by the unconditioned and centrifugally significant divine act that is the history and proclamation of Jesus Christ.

The import of these observations is not, to repeat the point, a series of general conclusions about ‘Paul and Judaism’ derived from the relationship of Romans and *Wisdom*. Rather, by identifying a number of presuppositions that tactically determine the investigation and evaluation of early Jewish literature, the particular comparison of Romans and *Wisdom* contributes to the larger question about ‘Paul and Judaism’ by challenging comparative projects to deepen their theological soundings – to ask ‘why’: Why do some Jewish texts coordinate divine grace and human worth when Paul sets them in antithesis? Why do election and recompense coexist in some Jewish texts without any indication of incompatibility when Paul emphasises the unconditioned operations of God’s electing word? Why do some Jewish

texts make up for the Pentateuch's occasional failure to specify the human quality that makes divine blessing sensible and just, when Paul's exegesis often exploits that same silence? Why, in basic terms, are Paul and various Jewish texts different?

This thesis has been an attempt to ask and answer these essential hermeneutical questions by specifying the theological continuity and discontinuity between *Wisdom* and Romans and then pressing beneath this similarity-in-contrast to locate its theological rationale and material cause. This approach enabled the essential structures of *Wisdom's* theology to emerge without the evaluative restrictions embedded in the usual comparative questions, but it also gave the sharp and revolutionary edge back to Paul's theological voice. When read with *Wisdom*, Paul's distinctiveness is not located in his emphatic stress on divine grace (*Wisdom* is equally emphatic); it is the radical redefinition of grace he deduces from and uses to describe the Christ-event that would shock and offend *Wisdom*. Similarly, what divides Romans and *Wisdom* – and what from *Wisdom's* perspective makes Romans so theologically dangerous – is not that Paul emphasises God's righteousness or theologises with and from Israel's scripture (*Wisdom* does both); the scandal and folly of the theology of Romans is that Paul redefines righteousness and rereads Israel's scripture in consequence of the divine act that is the justification of the ungodly by Jesus' single and saving history. This christologically-focused conclusion cannot be generalised into a statement about the essential fault-line between Paul and Judaism; it can only raise questions in that direction. What it does suggest, however, is that the particular Diaspora Jew who wrote *Wisdom*, for all his similarities and sympathies with Romans, would finally respond to Paul's christological gospel with the cry of the Thessalonian synagogue: 'This man turned the world upside down' (Acts 17.6).

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