

ESCHATOLOGY AND ETHICS
THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL AND THE NATIONS IN
ROMANS 15:1-13*

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Summary

This essay takes as its starting point the working hypothesis that Paul's argument in Romans 15:1-3, with its doxological focus, is determined by the Scripture cited therein, interpreted within its own canonical context. Rather than reinterpreting these texts christologically or ecclesiologicaly, the combination and sequence of quotes in 15:9-12 is shown to provide an outline of Paul's eschatology in which the future redemption of Israel and judgement of the nations is the content of the Church's hope and the foundation of her ethic of mutual acceptance.

Romans 15:7-13 is not only the climax of 14:1-15:13, but also the 'climax of the entire epistle'.¹ Nevertheless, scholarship has often overlooked this text, most likely because of its location in the 'merely' hortatory section of Paul's epistle. And in spite of the fact that Paul 'clearly has saved his clinchers for the end',² the reigning conviction that 15:1-13 makes one, fairly obvious point, with one, even more obvious Scriptural support for it, has bolstered the benign neglect of this passage. When all is said and done, Paul calls the 'strong' and 'weak' to accept one another because of the unity that Christ has created in the church by accepting them, in fulfilment of

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¹ See J.R. Wagner, 'The Christ, Servant of Jew and Gentile: A Fresh Approach to Romans 15:8-9', *JBL* 116 (1997), 473-85, 473, nn. 2-3, who in support of this analysis points to the various verbal and conceptual links between 15:7-9 and the rest of Romans.

² R. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 71. Hays views 15:7-13 to be the letter's *peroratio*.

the Scriptures' vision of the Gentiles' joining Israel in the worship of the one true God.

Read in this way, Paul's use of Scripture in 15:9-12, based on the catch-word e[qn̄h,³ was controlled by his conviction that the 'climax of the covenant' with Israel had taken place in Christ (cf. 15:3-4, 7-9),⁴ so that, in line with an 'ecclesiocentric' hermeneutic, the church, made up of Jews and Gentiles, was the fulfilment of Israel's eschatological hopes.⁵ As such, Paul's use of Scripture in 15:9b-12 was part of what Hays calls Paul's 'revisionary reading', in accordance with his 'christological ventriloquism'.⁶

³ Hays, *Echoes*, 71, adds to this their common reference to 'mercy', although this theme actually occurs only in the wider contexts of the Psalm quotes (Pss. 17:51 and 116:2 LXX).

⁴ The main point of Wright's work. According to him, Paul therefore 'subverts the Jewish story from within' (as described e.g. in N.T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1991], 235. *The New Testament and the People of God* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992], 403-409, having 'forcibly rejected' the traditional Jewish eschatological expectations [*Climax*, 20-21, 26; 28-29, 35-37, 40, 251, 261-64]). Wright sees that Paul's climax of the covenant in Christ must therefore be described as 'paradoxical', and as God's 'strange covenant faithfulness and justice, in Jesus', *Climax*, 26, 236, 244, 255. For an evaluation of Wright's broader program, see my review of his *The New Testament and the People of God*, in *JETS* 40 (1997), 305-308.

⁵ The view most cogently put forward by Hays. According to him, *Echoes*, 73, 90, 169, Paul's understanding of the church is 'an anomaly that Paul must explain', a great 'ironic', 'eschatological reversal', 'a new reading of Scripture', since, contrary to the Scriptures (they 'cannot have meant exactly what Israel supposed') and to Paul's own statement in Rom. 1:16, the Gentiles are coming into God's people ahead of the Jews. Nevertheless, when 'Scripture is refracted through the hermeneutical lens provided by God's action in the crucified Messiah and in forming his eschatological community, it acquires a profound *new symbolic coherence*' (169, italics mine). Thus, in the dialectic between Paul and the Scriptures, when the latter speak on their own, it is to 'answer back' to Paul and 'to contend against him' (*Echoes*, 177).

⁶ R.B. Hays, 'Christ Prays the Psalms: Paul's Use of an Early Christian Exegetical Convention', in *The Future of Christology: Essays in Honor of Leander E. Keck* (ed. A.J. Malherbe and W.A. Meeks; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 122-36, 124, 125, referring specifically to Paul's reading of Pss. 69 and 18 in 15:3, 9. For Hays' most recent expression of this perspective, see his 'The Conversion of the Imagination: Scripture and Eschatology in 1 Corinthians', *NTS* 45 (1999), 391-412. Here too Hays argues that in 1 Cor. the meaning of Scripture is 'reconfigured' to such a degree that Paul's interpretation of Scripture results in 'an imaginative paradigm shift so comprehensive that it can only be described as a "conversion of the imagination"' (395). The central feature of this 'conversion' is Paul's portrayal of the Gentile church as now playing the role originally assigned to *eschatologically* restored Israel (395-96). Consequently, Paul cannot be construed to be 'promulgating a linear *Heilsgeschichte* in which Gentiles were simply absorbed into a Torah-observant Jewish Christianity' (395). But Hays himself recognises that Paul's argument in 1 Cor. 5:13, based on Dt. 22:22-23:1, shows

The purpose of this paper is to test this powerful paradigm by asking a different question from a different starting point. What if the connection that held these texts together was not a reconfigured meaning tied together with the catchword ἔθνη, but the content of the Scriptures themselves as read within their own literary contexts? What then would be their contribution to Paul's larger argument that was so important by way of conclusion, as 'suggested by the greater attention paid to Scripture', that it necessitated 15:9b-12 in the first place?⁷ Koch has demonstrated the more Paul is concerned to clarify his own theological position, the more intensively he uses the biblical text.⁸ In answering these questions, it will become clear that, as Paul himself asserts in 15:4, when it comes to fulfilling the Law in love, the significance of Israel's *Heilsgeschichte* is not its fulfilment in the present, but the *hope* it fosters for the future. For to Paul, the ultimate foundation of ethics is eschatology.

The Purpose of the Scriptures (Romans 15:1-6)

In 15:1-2, Paul summarises his discussion in chapter 14 by admonishing the 'strong' (οἱ δυνατοί), himself included, to bear (βαστάζειν) the 'weaknesses' of those without such ability (οἱ ἀδύνατοι) for the good of their 'neighbour', rather than pleasing

that 'Paul thinks of his Gentile Corinthian readers as having been taken up into Israel in such a way that they now share in Israel's covenant privileges and obligations' as expressed in Dt. 5:1 (411). Was Paul's conversion not complete?

⁷ Perceptively asked by cf. L.E. Keck, 'Christology, Soteriology, and the Praise of God (Romans 15:7-13)', in *The Conversation Continues: Studies in Paul and John: In Honor of J. Louis Martyn* (ed. R.T. Fortna and B.R. Gaventa; Nashville: Abingdon, 1990), 85-97, 85, who concludes that 'the horizon of 15:7-13 is nothing short of the entire argument'. Keck rightly argues against the theories of Pallis, O'Neill, and Schmithals that 15:7-13 is an interpolation or later editorial addition of Pauline material. Keck's own hypothesis that Paul himself inserted vv. 9-11 into a Hellenistic Jewish tradition represented by vv. 8, 12 is created by his unnecessary assumption that a tension exists between the first three quotes, with their emphasis on the Gentiles, and the last one, with its emphasis on the Davidic messiah.

⁸ D-A. Koch, *Die Schrift als Zeuge: Untersuchungen zur Verwendung und zum Verständnis der Schrift bei Paulus* (BHT 69; Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1986), 101. For Paul's pattern of bringing major sections of his letters to a close with summarising Scripture quotes, cf. 1 Cor. 1:26-31; 5:1-13; 15:54-55; 2 Cor. 5:16-6:2; Rom. 3:10-18; 9:25-33; 10:18-21; 11:33-36 as pointed out by Koch, *Schrift*, 277-85.

themselves.⁹ Indeed, Paul stresses that they were ‘obligated’ or ‘indebted’ to do so (cf. the emphatic position of ὀφείλομεν in 15:1). Since social ‘obligation’ was the basis of the Roman patronage system and, as such, one of the most powerful of the Roman cultural values, this reference to fulfilling one’s ‘obligation’ was one of the strongest ‘cultural bullets’ Paul could fire against the Romans.¹⁰ For his part, Paul too pays his debt (cf. ὀφειλέτης εἰμί) to the ‘civilised and uncivilised, wise and the ignorant’ (1:14) as an expression of the power of God unleashed in the gospel (cf. 1:15-17).

In the same way, the overarching ethical principle in 15:1-2 (cf. Gal. 6:2), in fulfilment of Leviticus 19:18 (cf. Paul’s other uses of *phsivon* in Rom. 13:9-10; Gal. 5:14), is based on the messiah’s bearing his people’s sins as the Servant of the Lord, first by way of allusion to Isaiah 53:4 in 15:1, and then explicitly in 15:3a.¹¹ In turn, Christ’s own actions are grounded by way of comparison in a quote from Psalm 68:10 LXX:¹² Christ did not please himself *just as* the

⁹ For a helpful overview of the five views on the identity of the ‘weak’ see M. Reasoner, *The Strong and the Weak: Romans 14:1-15:13 in Context* (SNTSMS 103; Cambridge: CUP, 1999), 1-23. For our purposes, the exact identity of the ‘weak’ need not detain us; it is important merely to emphasise that they were *Christians*, whether Jewish or Gentile, who were committed to the observance of the Jewish dietary laws and calendar as a matter of sincere service to the Lord (cf. 14:5-6, 14, 20). Reasoner has demonstrated how these practices also found support in the pagan values, philosophies, superstitions and concern for social status that existed in the Rome of Paul’s day. Against the theory of M.D. Nanos, *The Mystery of Romans: The Jewish Context of Paul’s Letter* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), that the weak were pious, non-Christian Jews, see now R.A.J. Gagnon, ‘Why the “Weak” at Rome Cannot Be Non-Christian Jews’, *CBQ*, forthcoming (with thanks to the author for sharing his manuscript with me), esp. his treatment of Rom. 14:15 (cf. 1 Cor. 8:11), 19, and his demonstration that Paul’s use of ‘brother’ to refer to the weak in faith (cf. 14:10, 13, 15, 21) must be a reference to Christian brotherhood, as it is elsewhere in its 128 unqualified uses in the Pauline corpus (cf. 1 Cor. 8:11-13).

¹⁰ So B.W. Winter, ‘Roman Society and Roman Law in Romans 12-15’, address at the Tyndale Fellowship NT Study Group, Cambridge, July 6, 1999. On the role of ‘obligation’ as that which held Roman culture together and its consequent strategic place in Paul’s argument, see Reasoner, *The Strong*, 175-99, who defines the Roman practice of ‘obligation’ as ‘the ethic of reciprocity’ (176), and ‘patronage’ as ‘a reciprocal exchange of material items or service’ (184). For its place in Romans, see 1:14, 21; 8:12; 11:35; 13:8; 15:1; 16:2.

¹¹ Following M. Thompson, *Clothed with Christ: The Example and Teaching of Jesus in Romans 12:1-15:13* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), 210-11, 221-25, who points, among others, to Is. 53:4 in Mt. 8:17 as the only extant text that links βασιτάζειν with ἄσθενεῖαι and J.D.G. Dunn, *Romans 9-16* (WBC 38B; Dallas: Word, 1988), 837-38. On Christ’s not pleasing himself, cf. Rom. 5:6, 19; 14:15; Mk. 10:42-45; Jn. 8:29; Phil. 2:5-8; 2 Cor. 8:9.

¹² Contra those who, like Thompson, *Clothed*, 222-23, see Christ himself as the speaker of the psalm, pointing to the widespread Christological use of Ps. 69 in the

suffering righteous of the psalm experienced the rebellion of the unrighteous that was aimed at God himself.¹³

Initially, however, Paul's logic in 15:1-3 is not immediately clear. The parallel between Christ's taking on suffering *from* others because of their *rebellion against* God, and the strong's bearing with the weaknesses *of* others because of the latter's desire to *please* the Lord (cf. 14:6) is not direct. Thus, the common attempt to argue for the direct imitation of Christ in this passage cannot be sustained. Nor is it an *a fortiori* argument, as often assumed, since the point of *contrast* between Christ and the 'strong' needed to make such arguments is missing. That is to say, Paul does not argue, 'If Christ suffered *to the point of death* at the hands of the *unrighteous*, *how much more* should the "strong" be willing to suffer *mere self-limitation* for the sake of *God's people*.'

The difficulty in understanding Paul's argument is further compounded by his reference to 'obligation', since in hearing this the Romans would naturally ask what Paul envisaged as the reciprocity of exchange that is to take place between the strong and the weak or between Christ and those from whom he suffered.¹⁴ Paul remains conspicuously silent concerning what the weak could do, in return, for the strong, or what the rebellious could do for Christ (or, for that matter, the Greek and Barbarian, or the wise and uneducated, for Paul, 1:14).¹⁵

early church (see Jn. 2:17; 15:25; 19:28; Acts 1:20; Rom. 11:9-10; Phil. 4:3; Heb. 11:26; Mt. 27:34, 48; Mk. 3:21; 15:23, 36; Lk. 13:35; 23:36; Rev. 3:5; 16:1).

¹³ Again with Dunn, *Romans*, 839, who argues, contra Hanson's suggestion that the speaker of the psalm in 15:3 is the pre-existent Christ, that a typological interpretation is the most natural reading. Contra too Hays, 'Christ Prays the Psalms', 122, who argues that here and in 15:9b Paul uncharacteristically 'attributes the words of the psalm directly *to* Christ.' Hays admits that such an identification is 'anomalous in Paul' (123). Indeed, Hays sees this Christological interpretation to be such a departure from Paul's customary 'ecclesiocentric' reading of the OT that he attributes it to Paul's adaptation of a pre-Pauline tradition or hermeneutical convention.

¹⁴ Cf. Reasoner, *The Strong*, 179: 'There is no relationship of obligation that involves only the unilateral extension of goods or services between members. No matter how different in status the two members of the relationship are, if obligation is present in their relationship there is an expectation that goods or services must be extended from each side to the other in a continuing relationship.'

¹⁵ Here I again follow Reasoner, *The Strong*, 181, who points to the standard legal definition of *obligatio* at the interpersonal level found in *The Digest of Justinian* 44.7.3: 'The essence of obligations does not consist in that it makes some property or a servitude ours, but that it binds another person to give, do, or perform something for us' (trans. Alan Watson).

The force of Paul's argument only becomes clear in the following maxim, which explicates his use of this particular Scripture and of Scripture in general (cf. 1 Cor. 9:10; 10:11; Rom. 4:23-24). Far from being an interpolation,¹⁶ the dictum of 15:4 is therefore the key to Paul's argument, since it makes explicit Paul's rationale for moving from Scripture to Christology to Christian ethics.¹⁷ In 15:4, Paul explains that *all* Scripture (cf. ο{sa), including Psalm 68:10, was written for the sake of teaching those now in Christ, in order that, through the encouragement that comes from reading the holy writings, they might have *hope* (cf. the close parallel in 1 Mac. 12:9).¹⁸ So in quoting this psalm, Paul's point is not that the strong, like Christ, are to suffer the insults of the ungodly. The weak too are sincere believers. Nor is Paul fixing a Scriptural foundation for the necessity of Christ's suffering.¹⁹

Rather, believers are to learn from the *experience* of the psalmist (v. 3b), now replayed in that of the messiah (v. 3a), that those who join the righteous in *enduring* in the midst of suffering (cf. οἱ ὑπομένοντες in Ps. 68:7 LXX = 69:6 MT), in the *hope* of God's deliverance (cf. ἀπὸ τοῦ ἐλπίζειν ἐπὶ τὸν θεόν μου in 68:4), will

¹⁶ Contra L.E. Keck, 'Romans 15:4—An Interpolation?', *Faith and History: Essays in Honor of Paul W. Meyer* (ed. J.T. Carroll, C.H. Cosgrove, and E.E. Johnson; Atlanta: Scholars, 1990), 125-36. Like others before him, Keck is troubled by the fact that while 15:3 seems to characterise the entire life of *Christ* as one of *suffering*, 15:4, though presented as a ground for this assertion, goes on to speak about the Scripture's function of instructing *Christians* to have *hope* (cf. 126). The link between vv. 3 and 4 becomes clear, however, once Ps. 68:10, read in its context, is seen to present the reason why Christ's experience of suffering, like that of the psalmist, leads to hope.

¹⁷ That 15:4 was seen to be the focus of Paul's argument becomes evident in its textual history, since, as Keck, 'Interpolation', 128, points out, there are more textual variants for this one verse than for all five surrounding verses put together. In Keck's words, 'Copyists too seem to have regarded v. 4 as an important precept; that is why they made sure that the text's wording was "right" by repeatedly "correcting" their predecessors' (128).

¹⁸ Taking διὰ τῆς ὑπομονῆς and διὰ τῆς παρακλήσεως τῶν γραφῶν in 15:4 to be independent phrases; cf. Thompson, *Clothed*, 225, n. 2, who supports this position by pointing to the repetition of διὰ and the fact that 'the Scriptures offer comfort but not endurance, and the latter is always a characteristic of *persons* in Paul.' Thompson, 225-27, then argues that the endurance in view could be that of Christ at his passion, though more likely a reference to the experience of the believer as an extension of the endurance of Christ.

¹⁹ Contra, e.g., Koch, *Schrift*, 324-26, who sees no meaning other than a reference to Christ's passion as even possible, though he denies, contra Wilckens, that the use of the psalm includes a reference to the atoning significance of Christ's death. Rather, its purpose is simply to show that in his suffering Christ did not please himself. But this minimalist reading misses the hope-producing function of the psalm.

not be put to shame (cf. αἰσχυνθείησαν in 68:7 with Rom. 1:16; 5:5; 9:33; 10:11), but will be comforted by God (cf. the contrast in 68:21).²⁰ The experience of the psalmist, now replayed in Christ's own experience, is a pathway to hope. So Paul's point in 15:3b is not simply, 'act like Christ', as often argued. Rather, in accordance with the principle of 15:4, Paul's affirmation is: 'be motivated by the hope that motivated Christ, even as he was motivated by the experience of the psalmist'.²¹ The Scriptures and the experience of the Christ teach us that God's final redemptive triumph at the end-point of history, not following the moral example of Christ per se, is the *ultimate* foundation and motivating force of what the Romans would have heard to be Paul's social ethic of 'obligation'.²² The only thing the weak and the strong owe each other in their obligation as fellow believers is love (cf. 13:8 with 15:1). For in pleasing one's neighbour (the love command), *God* is the one to whom the faithful are, in fact, 'obligated', since he is the 'father' of the Lord Jesus Christ in whom they find their new family relationship (15:6).

²⁰ I owe these links to Hays, 'Christ Prays the Psalms', 131, and to Thompson, *Clothed*, 224, n. 4. In Hays' view, 'the connection between the exhortation and its warrant is a bit imprecise' (131), suggesting that Paul's point is that the strong should take up the prayer of Ps. 69:6, which Hays suggests is now identified with Christ's own prayer. Hence, the strong should say, "'Do not let one for whom Christ died be put to shame because of me'" (cf. Rom. 14:15)' (132). This is two steps removed from the original meaning of the psalm itself but, according to Hays, Paul 'was not deterred by such constraints' (132). In contrast, I am suggesting that it is precisely the 'constraints' of the psalm's original meaning that provide the key to Paul's argument. Thus, Thompson, *Clothed*, 224, n. 4, moves in the right direction when he observes that in the context of the psalm the verse Paul quotes is 'part of a larger picture of the attitude and experience of Christ,' but does not carry this through to the interpretation of Rom. 15:3 itself, suggesting instead an *a fortiori* understanding of Paul's argument (cf. 223).

²¹ Cf. U. Wilckens, *Der Brief an die Römer*, 3. Teilband: *Röm 12-16* (EKK VI/3; Zürich: Benziger, 1982), 103, who rightly relates Christ's experience to the encouragement of the believer, 'nämlich in der Gewißheit, daß kein Mittragen von Schwachheiten in diesen Schwachheiten verenden muß, weil die Liebe des Gekreuzigten in seiner Auferweckung zu eschatologischem Sieg gekommen ist.' But in contrast to the view taken here, Wilckens suggests that Paul is arguing from the impact of the atonement as the basis of the believer's hope, rather than from the psalmist's and Christ's own *experience* of endurance and vindication.

²² So also Hays, 'Christ Prays the Psalms', 132-33, G.S. Oegema, *Für Israel und die Völker: Studien zum alttestamentlich-jüdischen Hintergrund der paulinischen Theologie* (SupNovT 95; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 206-207, and T.R. Schreiner, *Romans* (BECNT 6; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 749, but not taken as decisive for Paul's subsequent use of the Scripture in 15:9-12.

Hence, those who persevere in pleasing others in the present God will please in the end. In fulfilling their 'obligation' to love one another, God will fulfil his obligation to them (of course, God's 'reciprocity' is a matter of *mercy*, since he is obligated to *no one*; cf. 11:34-36). Those who fulfil the law in regard to the 'weak' do so since they too, like Christ, are empowered not by what the 'weak' can do for them in return, but by their confidence in *God's* ultimate vindication of their giving of self for the sake of others.²³

By arguing eschatologically for his ethics, Paul therefore transforms the Roman cultural value of obligation theocentrically. Instead of grounding his command in verse 2 by referring to Christ's regard for others, as we might expect, Paul pointed to Christ's regard for God.²⁴ From Paul's perspective, the goal of history is the glorification of God in the new creation as the reversal of unrighteous mankind's refusal to honour God (cf. 1:18-21, 23 and 3:23 with 8:18-25, 11:33-36, and 15:5-6). For now, as then, glorifying God through 'thanksgiving' is the believer's obligation in response to God's provision. Reasoner therefore emphasises that from Paul's perspective, 'the means of ensuring that present obligations of social harmony in the church are fulfilled is by remembering the eschatological obligation to glorify God'.²⁵

Indeed, as the inauguration of this final redemption, believers, whether 'weak' or 'strong', *already* fulfil God's saving purposes by offering thanksgiving for their respective 'days' and 'food', *thereby* rendering them clean as part of the new creation. As such, they are beyond the purview of the other's condemnation (cf. 14:6, 14, 20). Thus, when Paul's use of Psalm 68 is viewed in the light of 15:4, it becomes evident that the means to the fulfilment of Paul's corresponding prayer in 15:5-6 for the glorification of God is the hope that comes from the Scripture's message of God's ultimate deliverance of his people. As a result of this eschatology, the Roman cultural value of obligation is undergirded, while at the same time

²³ The striking nature of Paul's argument is evident when compared to *Herm. Sim.* II.5-6, where in giving money to the poor the rich can expect, by way of obligation, that the poor will reciprocate by praying for the rich. In this way, both the rich and the poor give of their respective 'wealth' to one another, thereby fulfilling their obligation by meeting each other's needs. I am indebted to Douglas Mohrman for reminding me of this parallel.

²⁴ So W. Thüsing, *Per Christum in Deum: Studien zum Verhältnis von Christozentrik und Theozentrik in den paulinischen Hauptbriefen* (NTAbh N.F. 1; Münster: Aschendorff, 1965), 40.

²⁵ *The Strong*, 191.

being transformed by being placed within a new social history, namely, that of the ongoing history of the people of God.

The Structure and Presuppositions of Romans 15:7-13

With Paul's argument from eschatology in 15:1-6 as its backdrop, the first thing to note concerning our passage is that the same pattern of argument introduced in 15:1-6 is recapitulated in 15:7-13. Once again Paul moves from an admonition in verse 7a (cf. vv. 1-2), to its Christological support in verses 7b-9a (cf. v. 3a), to its Scriptural grounding in verses 9b-12 (cf. vv. 3b-4), to its corresponding prayer in verse 13 (cf. vv. 5-6). Given these parallels, it is striking that in Paul's closing paragraph the obligation aimed at the strong in 15:2 is broadened out in 15:7 to encompass *both* the strong and the weak (cf. προσλαμβάνεσθε ἀλλήλους).

Following these same parallels, Christ's not pleasing himself from 15:3 is interpreted in 15:8-9a by the fact that 'Christ became a servant (διάκονος) of the circumcision on behalf of the truth of God in order that he might establish the promises of the fathers' (15:8).²⁶ In accordance with its use in profane literature and in Judaism, this reference to Christ as a 'servant' (διάκονος), unique in Paul's writing, refers not primarily to Christ's identity, but to his activity of mediation and role as a representative agent, with the connotation of the constraint and duty (but not lowliness) associated with being a slave (cf. Phil. 2:7).²⁷ As such, Christ is entrusted with taking on a task for another, in this case that of confirming the promises on behalf of God as a mediator of God's glory. In this sense, Paul's διάκονος

²⁶ For these promises, see Rom. 4:13-16, 20-21; 9:4, 8-9. Given this explicit reference to the promises granted to the *Fathers*, Keck's view, 'Christology', 90, that it is unlikely that Χριστὸν διάκονον γεγενῆσθαι περιτομῆς 'means more than that Christ became a servant who belongs to the Jewish people' cannot be maintained. Contra Keck, 90-91, the truthfulness of God now at stake, given Israel's history of rebellion and exile, is not that the messiah would be Jewish, but that the messiah would preserve Abraham's descendants and bring about the restoration and final establishment of Israel as a great nation (cf. Rom. 3:3-4; 11:1, 11).

²⁷ For a survey of the use of διάκονος in the LXX, post-biblical Judaism, and Paul, see my *Paul, Moses, and the History of Israel: The Letter/Spirit Contrast and the Argument from Scripture in 2 Corinthians 3* (WUNT 81; Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck] and Peabody: Hendricksons, 1995/6), 110-19.

parallels that of Christ's.²⁸ Paul, the διάκονος of the new covenant (cf. 2 Cor. 3:6), can use this same title to refer to Christ as the one who was sent to inaugurate it. It is important to keep in view the observation often made, but not often developed, that Paul's use of the perfect tense γεγενῆσθαι in verse 8, over against the simple aorist γενέσθαι, indicates Christ's *continuing* to be a servant to the circumcision. As we will see, the argument from Scripture that follows makes this emphasis *central* to Paul's argument.

But here the clarity in our understanding of Paul's syntax in 15:8-9a ends, even as the debate over its meaning begins. The question of the relationship between verses 8 and 9 has long been recognised to be a vexed one, centring on the meaning of δέ as the linking conjunction between the two verses and on the syntactical function of τὰ ἔθνη and δοξάσαι in verse 9. Of the four competing answers to this question, the consensus view still remains the most persuasive.²⁹ The majority of scholars argue that τὰ ἔθνη is the subject of the infinitive δοξάσαι, and that together they form a second purpose clause in parallel to βεβαιῶσαι, both being governed by the εἰς τό of v. 8, with δέ carrying a simple co-ordinate meaning.³⁰ Read in this way, Paul's point is that Christ has become a servant of the circumcision on behalf of the truth of God in order to confirm or guarantee (βεβαιόω)³¹ the covenant promises of the fathers *and [as a*

²⁸ For Paul's use of the διακον-terminology to describe his apostolic ministry, cf. Rom. 11:13; 2 Cor. 3:3, 6, 8-9; 4:1; 5:18; 6:3-4; 11:8; Eph. 3:7; Col. 1:23, 25; 1 Tim. 1:12 and J.N. Collins, *DIAKONIA: Reinterpreting the Ancient Sources* (Oxford: OUP, 1990), esp. 195-215 on Paul's usage. Collins concludes that in regard to himself Paul uses the terminology to refer not to general Christian service, but to the specific function of being a 'spokesman' for the gospel and a 'medium' of God's glory (cf. 197-98, 203-205). This accords with its more general meaning in the NT as 'messengers on assignment from God or Christ' (p. 195).

²⁹ For the relevant bibliography and a detailed exposition of each of the four views, see Wagner, 'The Christ', 477-84.

³⁰ So, as Wagner, 'The Christ', surveys scholarship, e.g., Barrett, C.H. Dodd, Hays, Keck, Käsemann, Lietzmann, Michel, Murray, Schlatter, Schlier, Zahn, and most English translations.

³¹ Cf. 4:16; 11:29; 2 Cor. 1:20-21. For this meaning of βεβαιόω, see 1 Cor. 1:6 and Dunn, *Romans*, 847, et al., and Thüsing, *Per Christum*, 44. 'Fulfilled' (so Michel and Käsemann) is too strong, given the fact that in light of the perfect tense γεγενῆσθαι Christ is still in service to the circumcision and that Paul's argument from Scripture in vv. 9b-12 will show that these promises, though having been confirmed, are still to be fulfilled. Thus, correctly, Schreiner, *Romans*, 755: 'The verb... is a legal term, denoting the certainty with which the promises would be fulfilled (MM 108)', referring to Gn. 12:3; 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14; cf. Acts 3:25, and Mi. 7:20 LXX.

consequence] in order that the Gentiles might glorify God on behalf of [his] mercy.³²

As the above rendering suggests, the only adjustment to the majority view is the need to take the *δέ* not merely as co-ordinate, but also as *sequential*.³³ As a result, the purpose clause of v. 9 adds to and *builds on* the purpose of v. 8b, thereby removing the apparent lack of syntactical balance between the two verses, the difficulty of trying to take *ὑπὲρ ἀληθείας* with both purpose clauses,³⁴ and the seemingly ‘harsh’ switch in subject in v. 9.³⁵ In fact, Paul’s choice of *dev* in 15:3 may serve to alert his readers to the change in subject that is coming

³² Perceiving the switch in subject in vv. 8-9a from Christ to the Gentiles as too harsh and out of context, Wagner, ‘The Christ’, offers a new reading in order to maintain a uniform subject from vv. 7b through v. 9. He does so by construing τὰ ἔθνη as an accusative of reference to διάκονον γεγενῆσθαι, parallel in function to περιτομῆς, and δοξάζω as a purpose clause in parallel to εἰς τὸ βεβαιῶσαι. ‘For I say that the Christ has become a servant of the circumcision on behalf of the truthfulness of God, in order to confirm the promises made to the patriarchs, and [a servant] with respect to the Gentiles on behalf of the mercy [of God] in order to glorify God’ (481-82). Read in this way, *Christ* is the servant to both Jew and Gentile, on behalf of the truthfulness and mercy of God respectively, and *Christ* both confirms the promises to the patriarchs and glorifies God. The strength of Wagner’s view is the parallel it creates between ὑπὲρ ἀληθείας θεοῦ and ὑπὲρ ἐλέους as both modifying γεγενῆσθαι, thereby avoiding having to take ὑπὲρ ἐλέους with δοξάζω, which is otherwise unattested in the Greek of this period (cf. 482). But Wagner’s view is not without its own problems. If, in parallel to περιτομῆς, τὰ ἔθνη were the second modification of Christ’s having become a servant, we would expect the genitive ἀκροβυστίας, as we find in 3:30 and 4:11-12, not the accusative ἔθνη. Wagner, 482, offers no rationale for this mismatch in vocabulary, and his explanation that Paul chose the accusative of reference instead of the expected genitive in order to avoid a possible confusion with the immediately preceding τῶν πατέρων is weak, given the clear use of *δέ* to demarcate the new clause. Moreover, Wagner himself points out, 479, n. 30, that Paul may have chosen ὑπὲρ ἐλέους, instead of the usual *διά* or *ἐπί*, because of a desire to balance it with ὑπὲρ ἀληθείας, just as ὑπὲρ is used with the close synonym εὐχαριστέω to indicate the reason for giving thanks (cf. 1 Cor. 10:30; Eph. 1:16). Finally, Wagner’s concern over the apparently non-contextual switch in subject in vv. 8-9a is dependent on seeing Christ as the subject of Ps. 17:50, which need not be the case (see below).

³³ Nor can it be taken as establishing a contrast between the two purposes or two motives (i.e. truth and promises versus mercy and glory), since the promises to the patriarchs envision the inclusion of the Gentiles on the one hand (cf. 4:13-25) and Israel receives mercy on the other (cf. 11:31-32), all to the glory of God (11:33-36; 15:7b). Indeed, the granting of the promises to the fathers is itself an act of God’s mercy.

³⁴ As Wagner, ‘The Christ’, 478, points out, in Romans the truthfulness of God is related to the promises to Israel (cf. 3:4; 9:4-6; 11:1, 11), not to the inclusion of the Gentiles.

³⁵ For these objections, see Wagner, ‘The Christ’, 478-79.

on the semantic horizon.³⁶ Moreover, if Christ is not the immediate subject of Psalm 17:50 in v. 9b, as will be argued below, then the switch in subject in v. 9a is not harsh at all, but the natural transition into the argument to follow. Clearly, Paul's chain of Scripture focuses on the purpose of redemptive history *with regard to the Gentiles*, rather than referring to the inclusion of the Jews and Gentiles equally.³⁷

Read in this way, Paul's point in 15:8-9a is of one piece with the sequence established in 1:16. It also recognises the parallel between 15:8-9a and Paul's earlier emphasis in 4:16-17, where, in accordance with the promise of God from Genesis 17:5, Abraham becomes the father of all those Jews *and Gentiles* who likewise hope in the promise of one day inheriting the world (cf. 4:11-13). Moreover, a sequential reading of the purpose clauses in 15:8-9a construes the Gentiles' glorification of God in v. 9a as the ultimate purpose of Christ's becoming a servant to the circumcision, in parallel to the purpose of Christ's having accepted the Romans 'to the glory of God' in v. 7b. Finally, this reading of Paul's thought is in line with the parallel use of *dev* in 15:13, where it likewise indicates a consequential continuation of the argument.

Second, ὁ Χριστός in 15:3 and 7-8 is titular and serves to emphasise Jesus' messianic role, thus calling attention to the fulfilment of the history of redemption in Jesus. Furthermore, in fulfilment of the pattern established in Abraham himself (cf. 4:20), Jesus' role as the messiah serves a doxological purpose (cf. 15:6): the Christ accepted the Romans, both strong and weak, εἰς δόξαν τοῦ

³⁶ I owe this suggestion to Stephanie L. Black, 'What Do Καί and δέ "Mean"? A Procedural Approach to the Semantics of Intersentential Conjunctions', unpublished paper, Roehampton Institute, London, Dec., 1998, 1-25. Though no comparable study has been done on Paul's writings, Black has demonstrated that within the narrative framework of Matthew's Gospel when the 'theme' or first element in a clause or sentence is an explicit subject, 'the presence of δέ following the newly introduced (or reintroduced) word serves to reinforce that the grammaticalised subject which has just been processed is indeed to some degree discontinuous with discourse immediately previous' (22). Specifically, in 90% of the sentences in Matthew in which δέ occurs, the subject changes (235 of the 257 sentences in his narrative framework) although in general only 70% of the narrative sentences in Mt. involve such a change in subject (cf. p. 22).

³⁷ The assumption that Paul is supporting all of 15:9b-12 lead Wilckens, *Römer*, 108, to posit that the chain of Scripture quotations does not fit the context well because it may be a pre-formed tradition. He thereby explains why its scope does not agree with both vv. 8 & 9a. But such an apparent mismatch between 15:8-9a & 9b-12 disappears once 9a is seen as the main point of 8-9a.

θεοῦ (15:7b),³⁸ *because* (γάρ) Christ's servanthood to the circumcision (15:8) leads, in turn, to the Gentiles' glorifying God (δοξάσαι) for his mercy (15:9a).

Third, what Christ confirms, according to Paul, is the *promises* to the Fathers. But as 'promises', they are *not yet* fulfilled. This promise-establishing character of Christ's servanthood in 15:8-9a corresponds to Paul's emphasis throughout the letter on the *future* orientation of salvation. Like Abraham, the believer is saved in *hope* of that which is promised, but *not yet* fully realised (cf. Rom. 1:17; 2:5-16; 4:17-25; 5:1-10; 8:24-25; and climactically, 13:11-12).³⁹ And as 15:4 reminds us, when Paul speaks about 'hope' he has not left his Scriptural roots for some more abstract conception of ἐλπίς. For 4:17-21 illustrates from Abraham's life that the ground of hope is trust in the promises of God. And the ground of this trust, which earlier fuelled Abraham's faith and has now been demonstrated in Christ's resurrection, is God's ability to give life to the dead (4:17-20). It is this ability which continues to ground the believer's ongoing faith in the promise to Abraham (and his seed) that he would be the 'heir of the world', now related to the resurrection of the righteous (4:13, 17, 25; cf. Ps. 68:10 in 15:3). But 15:8 makes clear that by the 'promises' of God to the patriarchs Paul also includes, as an integral part of this inheriting the world at the final resurrection, the prophetic hope that derives from the promises to Abraham, in which

the central role of Israel as the people of God is everywhere assumed and used as a basis for depicting the future...It is...the belief that Israel's election must mean something, both for Israel itself and for the nations which would be blessed through it, that lies at the heart of these convictions. In calling Abraham, God had begun a task which he had not completed.⁴⁰

³⁸ So too the majority of modern commentaries, taking εἰς δόξαν τοῦ θεοῦ with προσελάβετο, its closest predicate, rather than προσλαμβάνεσθε. Read in this way, the prepositional phrase indicates the intended purpose of the messiah's ministry. For this view and the secondary literature pro and con, see Wagner, 'The Christ', 475, esp. n. 13. As he points out, this reading 'is reinforced by the consideration that Christ's actions remain the focus of the following sentence' (475).

³⁹ Contra the common conviction that in 15:8-9a Paul is talking about the fulfilment of these promises in the church. Typical is the position of Wilckens, *Römer*, 102. Moreover, part of the reason why Keck, 'Interpolation', 132, sees 15:4 to be so foreign to Paul's argument is that he fails to recognise that Gn. 15-17 in Rom. 4 shows that the structure of Abraham's faith was a future-focused hope in the promises of God, just like that of the believer who follows in his footsteps.

⁴⁰ 'R.E. Clements on Law and Promise', in *The Flowering of Old Testament Theology: A Reader in Twentieth-Century Old Testament Theology, 1930-1990*

As a result, the Gentiles glorify God for what he has promised to do for Israel, since the future redemption of the nations, including the resurrection from the dead and redemption of the world (cf. Rom. 5:17; 8:19-22, 31-39), is tied to that of Israel. The current experience of Jews and Gentiles in the church therefore takes on its importance precisely because it is a foretaste of this consummation yet to come for both Israel and the nations.

Fourth, the commonplace observation that 15:3-4 is unpacked in 15:9b-12 with a series of quotes from the Law, the Prophets, and the writings (cf. καθὼς γέγραπται in 15:9b⁴¹) is important as an indication of the wide, canonical sweep from which Paul draws for his argument. But in analysing the function of these quotes it is even more important to note that they present a sequence of thought, rather than simply being a fourfold reiteration of the same basic point. Though this judgement must be made materially from the content of the quotes themselves, the conclusion that Paul is building a continuous argument from vv. 9b-12 is supported by the switch in verbs from γράφω in v. 9b to λέγω in vv. 10-12, the subsequent threefold repetition of καὶ πάλιν λέγει in verses 10-12, and the unpacking of the perfect tense in v. 9b (γέγραπται) by the present tenses in the introductory clauses of verses 10-12 (λέγει). Hence, the chain of Scripture in verses 9b-12 can be seen to be *one* long argument, with four stages, the last three introduced with καὶ πάλιν λέγει (cf. the similar use of πάλιν in 1 Cor. 3:20). It is to this argument that we now turn our attention.

Psalm 17:50 LXX

Paul begins his support for the Gentiles' glorifying God in fulfilment of the promises to the Fathers by quoting Psalm 17:50 LXX (18:49 MT = 2 Sa. 22:50⁴²). As one of the undisputed 'royal' thanksgiving-

(ed. B.C. Ollenburger, E.A. Martens, and G.F. Hasel; Winona Lake, IL: Eisenbrauns, 1992), 218-32, 228-29.

⁴¹ C.D. Stanley, *Paul and the Language of Scripture, Citation Technique in the Pauline Epistles and Contemporary Literature* (SNTSMS 69; Cambridge: CUP, 1992), 253, argues that καθὼς γέγραπται is in fact the only fixed citation formula used by Paul, being used 18 out of the 66 places where various formulae occur, though the words γράφειν or λέγειν appear in almost every introduction.

⁴² Against the majority, Schreiner, *Romans*, 757, following Reasoner, takes the quote to be from 2 Sa. 22:50 because of the latter's inclusion of a reference to Jesse (2 Sa. 23:1) and its use of ἀνίστημι, thereby linking it to Is. 11:10 in v. 12. But in contrast to Ps. 17:50 and Paul's quotation, the best attested reading of 2 Sa.

psalms, the primary speaker is David himself, who praises God for having delivered him from his enemies, including Saul (cf. 17:1 with 2 Sa. 22:1, and Ps. 17:33-49), and from death and Sheol (Ps. 17:4-6).⁴³ The importance of this simple observation for our present purposes is twofold.

First, David speaks in verse 50 as God's 'anointed' *king* (see τῷ Χριστῷ αὐτοῦ in 17:50), who is expressing his *individual* thanksgiving to God for having delivered him in response to David's righteousness (cf. Rom. 4:6-8). God is praised since even David's righteousness is born of David's *hope* in *God's* saving power (cf. ἐλπίζω in Ps. 17:3, 31; cf. 17:21, 25). Because God has so delivered and exalted him (17:49, cf. 17:4), *for this reason* (Greek of 17:50: διὰ τοῦτο) David will worship him 'among the Gentiles' (Greek ἐν ἔθνεσιν).⁴⁴ Specifically, David praises God for the 'second-exodus' deliverance he has experienced which, like the Exodus itself, becomes a testimony of God's faithfulness and sovereign glory to the nations (cf. the portrayal of David's deliverance in 17:8-20 with Ex. 15:1-8 and the Sinai theophany⁴⁵).

In the same way, the portrayal of God as David's 'rock' in the MT of Psalm 18:3, 32 parallels the song of Moses in Deuteronomy 32:4, 15, 18, 30, 31 (though this link in specific terminology is missing in the LXX, where the metaphor is decoded in both passages in terms of God himself or his strength), while the reference to God's causing David to walk on his 'high places' in Psalm 18:33 parallels

22:50 reads ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν and ἐν τῷ ὄνομαι; cf. Koch, *Schrift*, 34-35. The only difference between Ps. 17:50 LXX and Rom. 15:9b is that Paul omits the vocative address, κύριε. The reason for this omission is not clear. Koch suggests (*Schrift*, 87, 121) that Paul does so to avoid the impression that Ps. 17:50 is speaking about Christ, rather than YHWH. Wagner and Hays ('The Christ', 476, n. 17) posit that it is omitted because Paul takes Ps. 17:50 to be Christ himself speaking. Against these views, Stanley, *Paul*, 180, observes that Paul has retained κύριος in v. 11, where the referent is still YHWH.

⁴³ On the question of identifying the royal psalms, see Steven J.L. Croft, *The Identity of the Individual in the Psalms* (JSNTSup 44; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1987), esp. pp. 37, 76 on Ps. 18.

⁴⁴ As early as Calvin, David's praise 'among the nations' has been taken as a reference to the nations' *conversion* to YHWH as a consequence of witnessing the Lord's victory through his king. This interpretation is possible for three reasons (though here judged not probable): the use of worship terminology in 17:50 itself; David's declaration in 17:44-45 that 'people whom I had not known served me', etc., which is distinct from those enemies over whom David triumphs directly (cf. 17:46-48); and Paul's own use of the psalm in relationship to the Gentiles' glorifying God.

⁴⁵ So P.C. Craigie, *Psalms 1-50* (WBC 19; Waco: Word Books, 1983), 173-74.

Deuteronomy 32:13 (cf. 33:29; Hab. 3:19).⁴⁶ These links between the songs of Moses and David's psalm demonstrate that the testimony to the nations brought about by Israel's deliverance at the Exodus is replicated in David's testimony among the Gentiles. Moreover, the parallels between Psalm 18 and Deuteronomy 32 anticipate Paul's transition from David's psalm to the song of Moses.

Second, since David is God's anointed king, more is at stake in his rescue than simply his personal safety. In spite of Israel's history of disobedience, David's deliverance entails God's commitment to establish David's dynasty in accord with God's covenant promise in 2 Samuel 7:14.⁴⁷ Hence, *David's* being able to praise the Lord in the midst of the nations because of his *own* deliverance (vv. 4-49) leads the *psalmist* to reaffirm God's mercy (ἔλεος) 'to his seed forever' (note the switch to the third person in 17:51 LXX τῷ σπέρματι αὐτοῦ ἕως αἰῶνος). As a result, this link between the vindication of David and God's covenant promises to David's seed 'forever' allowed Psalm 17:50 to be taken as looking *forward* to the time in which Israel will be vindicated with and by her messiah.

Furthermore, Hays is certainly correct that the early Christians, following the lead of their Jewish contemporaries, therefore 'read all the promises of an eternal kingdom for David and his seed typologically', since Israel's historical experience of oppression meant that these promises had to have an eschatological fulfilment.⁴⁸ 'Thus "David" in these psalms becomes a symbol for the whole

⁴⁶ So already E.W. Hengstenberg, *Commentary on the Psalms: Vol. I* (3rd ed.; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1860), 284-86, 290-21, 314, who also points to a possible parallel between the superscription to Ps. 18 and the introduction to the songs of Moses in Ex. 15:1 and Dt. 31:30, as well as to Ex. 18:10, concluding, 286, that David's 'deliverance was for him the same as the redemption out of Egypt was for Israel'.

⁴⁷ See G.H. Wilson, *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter* (SBLDS 76; Chico: Scholars Press, 1985), who argues, 155, 209-214, that every psalm in Book One of the Psalter (Pss. 2-41) is attributed to David, either explicitly or by implied combination with its predecessor (cf. Pss. 10, 33), and that Ps. 2:7-9, in alluding to 2 Sa. 7:14, introduces the book by providing the covenant promise from YHWH which undergirds God's commitment to establish David's throne, while Ps. 41:1-2, 11-12 concludes the book by providing the king's corresponding assurance of God's protection and preservation. This promise is then extended to the king's son in Ps. 72 (the end of book two of the Psalter) and to David's descendants forever in Ps. 89:3-36 (the end of book three). Though this covenant has been broken through the disobedience of Israel and her kings (cf. Ps. 89:38-39, 44), the psalmists' hope is that in his love and faithfulness YHWH will still remember his covenant, keep his promise to David, and restore the Davidic kingdom (Ps. 89:1, 29-37, 46, 49-50).

⁴⁸ Hays, 'Christ Prays the Psalms', 130.

people and, at the same time, a prefiguration of the future Anointed One (ὁ Χριστός) who, as David's seed, will be the heir of the promises and restorer of the throne.⁴⁹ But this is no warrant for taking the next step and positing that, from Paul's perspective, Christ *himself* is consequently speaking in the psalm. In view of the principle established in 15:4 and the reference to Christ's confirming the promises in 15:8, the point is just the opposite. As part of the testimony of the Scriptures, it is important for Paul's argument that the speaker of the psalm is *still* David, but David as the one to whom the promise of the eternal kingdom had been made which has now been confirmed in Jesus as the Davidic Christ.⁵⁰

Paul's point in our present passage is that the messiah's διάκονος to Israel confirms the promise that God made and confirmed to David. Just as the suffering of the righteous in Psalm 69:10 LXX prefigured Christ's *death*, so too David's deliverance from 'the birth-pains of death' (cf. Ps. 17:5: ὠδῖνες θανάτου) becomes a harbinger of Christ's *resurrection*. Like David, Jesus too, as the messianic son of David, has been delivered from death and vindicated over his enemies. And according to Psalm 17:50 LXX, it is the deliverance of the anointed one from his enemies, including those within Israel herself, that establishes God's continuing commitment to David's seed 'forever', for which he will praise God in the midst of the nations. Thus, as God's initial victory over these messianic 'birth pains' (cf. Acts 2:24; Mt. 24:8; Mk. 13:8), and against the backdrop of Psalm 17:50, the resurrection-enthronement of the Davidic messiah as God's Son (cf. Rom. 1:4) reaffirms God's ongoing commitment to Israel as well. As a result, Jesus too will praise God among the nations for having been established as Israel's messianic King, the one who accepted God's eschatological people to the glory of God (cf. 15:7b, 9b with 1 Cor. 3:23; 10:11; 11:3; 15:24, 28; 2 Cor. 6:2, 16-18; Eph. 5:27; Phil. 2:11; Col. 3:4; etc.).⁵¹ In this way the messiah too, as the

⁴⁹ Hays, 'Christ Prays the Psalms', 130.

⁵⁰ Contra those who, like Wagner, Cranfield, Hays, Keck, Lagrange, Michel, Wilckens, etc., take the speaker to be Christ directly (cf. Wagner, 'The Christ', 475, esp. n. 16). Nor is it David as one who foreshadows Jewish Christians (as Dunn, *Romans*, 849, suggests), or Paul himself (as Käsemann argues, now followed by Koch, *Script*, 282, n. 24).

⁵¹ Against this conclusion it is sometimes objected that Christ cannot be seen as praising God along with the church (see, e.g., Schreiner, *Romans*, 758, following Koch, Keck; Schreiner himself takes it as fulfilled in the Jewish Christians who now praise God among the Gentiles). But this focus on the present misses the eschatological typology of the psalm in which the focus is on the future. But even now, by virtue of his resurrection, Christ has already inaugurated, though not

embodiment of his people, inaugurates and provides the model for the theocentric, doxological focus of all God's designs (cf. 15:9b with 15:9a and with thinking κατὰ Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν to the glory of God in 15:5-6b).⁵²

So we must be careful here. Psalm 17:50 LXX is about David's praise of God *in the midst of* the nations—it is not about the salvation of or praise from the nations themselves.⁵³ And this holds true for its eschatological application to the Christ as well. Psalm 17:50 supports Paul's point in 15:8, not 15:9a.⁵⁴ To relate everything Paul says in 15:8-9a to each of his quotes is to obscure the careful sequencing of Paul's argument. Rather, Psalm 17:50 LXX functions as the *initial* step in Paul's argument from Scripture by indicating the *way* in which Jesus' *diavkono*" established the truthfulness of God in regard to the promises to the Fathers. The messiah's vindication at his resurrection, for which he will (and already does) praise God among the nations, points forward to that day when Israel too will share in the messiah's triumph as a result of having experienced the same steadfast love already experienced by her king. In the light of Israel's continuing rejection of the messiah, which seems to call this word of God into

consummated (cf. 1 Cor. 15:28), his final role of honouring God as the exalted Son who joins all creation in glorifying God. On this entire problem, see Thüsing, *Per Christum*, esp. pp. 8-60, and to 15:8, pp. 42-44, who argues that just as Christ's suffering was to the glory of God in 15:3-6, so too the exalted Christ glorifies God in 15:7, 9. Thüsing's point holds, even if Christ himself is not the direct speaker in v. 9 or the 'choir director of the nations', as Thüsing, 43, argues.

⁵² So too Thüsing, *Per Christum*, 41. D.J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 871, points out that given Paul's insistence that the 'strong' and 'weak' respect each other's views, the 'thinking the same thing according to the Messiah Jesus' in 15:5 cannot refer to having the same opinion, but rather to their sharing 'a common perspective and purpose'. In my view, that purpose and perspective is praising God in the present in anticipation of his promised eschatological deliverance under the Lordship of Christ (cf. the reintroduction of κύριος in 15:6). In contrast, most commentators, Moo included, stress the believer's current responsibility to serve one another in service to Christ.

⁵³ Such an Israel-specific, messianic understanding of Ps. 17 (18 MT) is also reflected in 4Q381frag. 24; in Lk. 1:71 (in response to the promises to the fathers, cf. Lk. 1:72-74); by the use of the imagery of Ps. 18:7 and 18:15 to describe God's eschatological judgement in *Sib. Or.* 3:675 and 4 Ezra 16:12 respectively; and in *Midr. Ps.* 18:35, which combines Ps. 18:49 with Is. 12:4, just as Paul combines Ps. 17:50 LXX with Is. 11:10 (I owe the reference to *Mid. Ps.* 18 to G. Kish, *Paul's Use of the Old Testament in Romans 15:7-13*, unpublished Th.M. thesis, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, 1993, 24). But whereas by associating Ps. 17:50 with Is. 12:4 the midrash refers only to the messianic restoration of *Israel*, Paul's combining it with Is. 11:10 leads to the messianic redemption of the *nations* by the 'root of Jesse', thereby reflecting Paul's emphasis on the ultimate purpose of redemptive history as stated in 15:9a (see below).

⁵⁴ Contra the majority view.

question (cf. Rom. 3:3; 9:4-6), such reassurance is absolutely crucial, not only for Israel, but for the nations as well. For as Paul's next quotation reminds his readers, the eventual salvation of the nations themselves, as expressed in 15:9b, is wrapped up with the deliverance of Israel from her history of hard-heartedness.

Deuteronomy 32:43 LXX

In view of the significance of the Christ's vindication for the *future* restoration of Israel (Ps. 17:50), Deuteronomy 32:43 LXX draws out its implication for the nations: they are to rejoice with God's people.⁵⁵ Deuteronomy 32:43 is the climactic verse of Moses' prophetic song on behalf of YHWH as Israel's 'rock' (cf. Dt. 32:4 with Ps. 18:2).⁵⁶ The song issues Moses' final testimony against Israel for her faithlessness to the covenant and pronounces God's judgement of exile upon her (Dt. 32:1-25; cf. Dt. 31:29). Nevertheless, despite Israel's history of idolatry, God's last word will not be judgement against Israel, but mercy on Israel and judgement against Israel's *enemies*, lest the Gentiles conclude from their oppression of Israel that they have triumphed in their own strength over Israel and her God (Dt. 32:26-27).⁵⁷ The nations should not presume from God's present wrath against Israel that she has been rejected by God (cf. Dt. 32:20-21, 36, 39 with Rom. 11:11a, 15), nor that the nations have somehow gained God's favour despite their own pagan ways. Rather, as John Sailhamer has observed, 'The emphasis on God's judgement of Israel raises the question of God's judgement of all the nations (Dt. 32:34-38). The vengeance stored up against Israel (v. 34) is grounded in God's righteous vindication of the iniquity of all peoples (32:35-

⁵⁵ Here, as in vv. 11-12, καὶ πάλιν/[λέγει] simply introduces a series of elements, the relationship between which must be determined by their content.

⁵⁶ The relationship between Dt. 32:43 LXX, with its 8 lines, and the 4 lines of the MT is a vexed one. The LXX apparently represents 'a longer and different parent Hebrew from MT', which seems to be preserved in part in the Qumran text of Dt. 32:43, 4Q44 (= 4QDt^d), which contains six cola to the MT's four; so J.W. Wevers, *Notes on the Greek Text of Deuteronomy* (SBLSCS 39; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 533. The line Paul quotes is also found in the first line of the MT version. P. Sanders, *The Provenance of Deuteronomy 32* (OTS 37; Leiden: Brill, 1996), 249, argues that the LXX, being aware of both the MT and Qumran versions, 'decided to combine them'.

⁵⁷ This principle is explicated in *Sib. Or.* 3:265-45, where Dt. 28-32 is used as a framework for setting out the exile of Israel, her restoration, and the final judgement of the nations who oppressed her (cf. the allusion to Dt. 32:43 in *Sib. Or.* 3:310).

42).⁵⁸ The present judgement against Israel at the hands of the nations is therefore a foretaste of the coming judgement against the nations at the hand of God himself (Dt. 32:40-42). In turn, the coming judgement against the nations will be the means by which God brings about the ultimate ‘atonement’ for ‘his land and his people’ (Dt. 32:43b MT), which in the LXX becomes the Lord’s cleansing his people’s land (καὶ ἐκκαθαριεῖ κύριος τὴν γῆν τοῦ λαοῦ αὐτοῦ).

In view of this coming, eschatological judgement (cf. the ὅτι in Deuteronomy 32:43e LXX כִּי in Dt. 32:43b MT; cf. 32:26-42), the call for the nations *themselves* to ‘rejoice with God’s people’ is best seen as a call for the nations to repent of their own idolatry in order to escape the wrath to come, while they still have the opportunity.⁵⁹ For Moses’ call for the nations to rejoice implies that the post-exilic restoration of Israel will encompass those Gentiles who join the faithful remnant in praising YHWH, the true ‘rock’ of their salvation, rather than trusting in their idols (cf. Dt. 32:31, 37). Indeed, YHWH alone is the one, true God (cf. Dt. 32:31, 37-38), since the judgement and restoration of Israel, and, Paul would add, the death and vindication of the messiah in the resurrection (Ps. 17:50), make it clear that only YHWH can ‘put to death and give life’ (Dt. 32:39). In recognition of this fact, to rejoice in the Lord ‘with God’s people’ is to join God’s people.⁶⁰ For as Sailhamer again points out, ‘In the end...God’s judgement of Israel and the nations leads to a broader

⁵⁸ *The Pentateuch as Narrative: A Biblical-Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 475-76.

⁵⁹ So already Rashbam, who saw it as an implicit ‘invitation to the nations to revere the Lord as Israel does and a promise that if they do so, He will treat them as He does Israel (when it is meritorious)’, J.H. Tigay, *Deuteronomy* (JPS Torah Commentary; Philadelphia: JPS, 1996), 314. Tigay points out that Dt. 32:43 is thus the fulfilment of Israel’s original mandate in Ex. 19:6.

⁶⁰ Paul follows the LXX here, which clearly distinguishes the nations from Israel, whereas the MT reads, ‘Rejoice, O nations, his people’ (הֲרַנְיֵנוּ גוֹיִם עִמּוֹ), which can be read as identifying the nations as God’s people. The rendering of the *RSV*, ‘Praise his people, O you nations’, followed by Dunn, *Romans*, 849, and Hays, *Echoes*, 72, and now the *JPS*, is unlikely, since in context the object of the praise is most likely YHWH. Cf. the translations of Aq: αἰνοποιήσατε ἔθνη λαὸς αὐτοῦ, and Theod: ἀγαλλιᾶσθε ἔθνη λαὸς αὐτοῦ (F. Field, *Origenis Hexaplorum* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1875], 323). Weavers, *Notes*, 534, suggests that the LXX is apparently based on a play on the Hebrew עִמּוֹ, which can mean either ‘with him’ or ‘his people’. 4Q44 reads ‘rejoice you heavens, with him (הֲרַנְיֵנוּ שָׂמַיִם עִמּוֹ)...’, where the MT reads ‘rejoice you nations...’. Both Sanders, *Provenance*, 250, and A. van der Kooij, ‘The Ending of the Song of Moses: On the Pre-Masoretic Version of Dt. 32:43’, *Studies in Deuteronomy: In Honour of C.J. Labuschagne on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday* (ed. F.G. Martínez, et al.; VTS 53; Leiden: Brill, 1994), 93-100, argue for the primacy of the Qumran version.

understanding of the concept of the people of God—not just Israel but the nations as well are called to praise God as “his people” (Dt. 32:43).⁶¹ And since the context for this redemption of Israel and the nations who join her in rejoicing is eschatological, the ‘rejoicing’ in Deuteronomy 32:43 is clearly a foretaste of ‘eschatological rejoicing’.⁶²

Within Paul’s argument, Deuteronomy 32:43 therefore provides the counterpart to Psalm 17:50. Paul’s first quote established that Christ’s resurrection confirmed the ongoing validity of God’s promises to Israel as a result of his covenant with David, in spite of Israel’s continuing existence as merely the physically ‘circumcised’. That Paul has in view Israel’s hardened state in 15:8 is confirmed by his earlier use of the designation ‘circumcision’ in 2:25-3:30 to refer to Israel’s mere physical descendancy, over against the ‘true Jew’ who is circumcised in the heart by the Spirit (cf. its more neutral use in 4:12). It is Israel’s history as merely ‘circumcised’ in the flesh (cf. 9:8) that calls God’s truthfulness into question (cf. 3:3-4; 9:6) and leads Paul to affirm in 15:8 and 9b that the Christ’s vindication has nevertheless validated the promises to the patriarchs. As its history-of-redemption counterpart, Deuteronomy 32:43 points to the Christ’s ‘second coming’ as that which will bring these promises, now inaugurated, to their consummation. If Psalm 17:50 points to the significance of the messiah’s first coming, Deuteronomy 32:43 points to the implications of his second. The Christ whose vindication secured God’s promises to Israel must come again to judge the nations as the final step in his redemptive work on behalf of Israel. The earlier use of Deuteronomy 32:35 in Romans 12:19 reflects Paul’s conviction that those who trust in Christ base their own actions with regard to injustice (i.e. their ethics) on the certainty of this coming judgement (i.e. their eschatology).

⁶¹ *Pentateuch*, 476, based on the MT. But the LXX can be read in this way as well. Interestingly, *Tg. Neof.* Dt. 32:43 also distinguishes the nations from Israel, but equates their praise, reading, ‘Acclaim before him, O you nations; praise him O you his people, the house of Israel’ (M. McNamara, *Targum Neofiti 1: Deuteronomy* [The Aramaic Bible 5a; Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1997], 160).

⁶² Dunn, *Romans*, 849, pointing to the parallels in Ps. 96:11; Is. 44:23; 49:13; Rev. 12:12; 18:20. Dunn, however, follows the common pattern of then arguing that Paul’s point is that these ‘final events are being fulfilled in the conversion of the Gentiles (cf. *TDNT* 2:774-75)’.

In the same way, Paul's use of Deuteronomy 32:43 in Romans 15:10 corresponds to his earlier use of Deuteronomy 32:21 in Romans 10:19. There Paul reminded the church in Rome that the present salvation of those Gentiles who do indeed 'rejoice with his people' was not intended to bolster their own pride, but to make Israel culpable and jealous in her rejection of the gospel (cf. Rom. 11:13-14). As for their own part, viewing God's present judgement against Israel should lead the Gentiles to persevere in faith because of the reality of God's coming judgement on the nations for the sake of Israel. In response, instead of becoming arrogant, they should fear God's wrath and continue to rejoice in God alone (Rom. 11:17-22).

Psalm 116:1 LXX

By linking Psalm 17:50 with Deuteronomy 32:43, Paul made clear the tie between Christ's reaffirmation of God's ongoing commitment to Israel (15:8; Ps. 17:50) and the Gentiles' call to glorify God (15:9a; Dt. 32:43). Christ's confirmation of God's promises to Israel in his advent underscores the certainty of God's final judgement of the nations at his parousia, the prospect of which should lead the Gentiles to rejoice in God alone. By turning to Psalm 116 LXX(117):1, one of the 'Hallel' psalms in praise of God for his deliverance (Pss. 111-118 MT), Paul now unpacks the specific *content* of the nations' necessary response to the confirmation (Ps. 17:50) and consummation (Dt. 32:43) of God's promises to Israel. In this regard, it is striking that Psalm 116(117 MT), as part of the canonical response to the previous 'Davidic' section of the Psalter (Pss. 108-110 MT),⁶³ is the one Hallel psalm that is explicitly directed to the nations. Paul too highlights this emphasis on the nations' response to YHWH's faithfulness to Israel because of God's commitment to the Davidic line. Stanley rightly argues that Paul's front-loading of πάντα τὰ ἔθνη over against its position in the LXX (αἰνεῖτε τὸν κύριον, πάντα τὰ ἔθνη) is not simply stylistic, but calls 'attention to what was for him the most important part of the citation, its reference to the Gentiles offering praise to the true God (τὸν κύριον)'.⁶⁴

⁶³ Following Wilson, *Editing*, 187-88, 220-21.

⁶⁴ *Paul*, 181-82. Paul's addition of καὶ within the quote corresponds with variations with the LXX textual tradition itself, but finds no certain explanation, while ἐπαινεσάτωσαν apparently follows the LXX *Vorlage* represented by S La^R A 55 bo (see Stanley, *Paul*, 182; Koch, *Script*, 111, n. 2).

In terms of its content, Psalm 116:1 specifically commands the nations to praise the Lord *because* (ὅτι) God's 'mercy' (ἔλεος) and 'truth' (ἀλήθεια) remain into the age to come (see 116:2), thus providing the explicit Scriptural support for Paul's own introduction of this covenant couplet in 15:8-9. Canonically, these references to God's mercy and truth in relationship to the glorification of God recall the theophany of Exodus 34:6, in which YHWH, 'the Lord God of compassions and mercies, who is...true' (Διποπος ὁ θεὸς οἰκρίμων καὶ ἐλεήμων ... ἀληθινός), manifests his glory to Moses.⁶⁵ By definition, this revelation of God's glory entails making his 'name' known as the one who shows *mercy* to whomever he desires (ἐλεήσω ὃν ἂν ἐλεῶ Ex. 33:19), including, from Paul's perspective, to those Gentiles who, by believing in the Christ, have now joined the remnant of the elect within Israel's history (cf. Rom. 9:15, 18-26). Thus, the allusion to Exodus 33:19 and 34:6 in 15:8-9 makes it clear that in the light of the first (Ps. 17:50) and second (Dt. 32:43) comings of Christ the nations are to learn from the faithful *remnant* within Israel, now including Paul himself (Ps. 116:1), that God remains 'true' to his promises and that God is to be glorified for his 'mercy', since election is by grace, not works (cf. 9:6-13; 11:1-6).

This point is confirmed by the canonical location of Psalm 116 LXX(117 MT).⁶⁶ On the one side, the righteous one within Israel (or perhaps the faithful within exilic Israel, here personified), like king David, has been rescued from the 'birth pains of death' in response to his cry for help (cf. Ps. 114:3-4 LXX with Ps. 17:4-5 LXX). The speaker in the psalm consequently concludes that the Lord is 'merciful' (114:5: ἐλεήμων ὁ κύριος), and commits to fulfil his corresponding vows of praise in the temple (Ps. 115 LXX = 116:10-19). On the other side, the Lord's 'mercy' (ἔλεος, Ps. 117:1 LXX) is declared to remain into the age to come, again manifest in God's faithfulness in rescuing the one who hopes in him (117:1-18). Here too, the psalmist consequently praises God in the midst of Israel (117:2-4, 19-29), especially for his own experience of the fact that 'the stone which the builders rejected, this has become the head of the

⁶⁵ For the use of Ex. 34:6 as part of the *Leitmotif* for the Hallel psalms, beginning already in Ps. 107:1 (cf. Pss. 111:4; 112:4), see M.D. Goulder, *The Psalms of the Return (Book V, Psalms 107-50): Studies in the Psalter IV* (JSOTSup 258; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 178, 181. In his view, 192, Ex. 34:6 is 'constantly in mind' throughout Pss. 107-118.

⁶⁶ Paul's awareness of this entire complex of psalms is reflected in his quote of Ps. 115:1 LXX in 2 Cor. 4:13 and the probable allusions to Ps. 115:2 LXX in Rom. 3:4; Ps. 117:6 LXX in Rom. 8:31; and 117:17-18 LXX in 2 Cor. 6:9.

corner' (Ps. 117:22).⁶⁷ For as the psalmist's experience testifies, 'it is better to hope (ἐλπίζειν) in the Lord than to hope (ἐλπίζειν) in rulers' (117:9 LXX).

The call to the nations in Psalm 116 to join the psalmist in praising God for his faithfulness to the remnant is thus the canonical response to the nations' questioning in Psalm 113:10 LXX(115:2 MT) whether God is still present and active on behalf of his covenant people. In line with Exodus 33:19 and 34:6, the psalmist's answer is that God has glorified his 'name' by demonstrating through preserving a remnant within Israel that he is a God of mercy and that he remains truthful in regard to his covenant promises (cf. the parallel between God's 'name' and his 'mercy' and 'truth' in Psalm 113:9 LXX and the emphasis on ἐλπίζειν in Psalm 113:17-19 LXX). In this respect, the Hallel Psalms reflect the same argument concerning the remnant found in Romans 9:6-29 and 11:1-6, where Paul developed it primarily from the prophets.⁶⁸ And whereas earlier Paul's focus was on the implications of the remnant for the nation of Israel (cf. 11:11-29), in 15:11 his focus is on its implications for the Gentiles.

Isaiah 11:10 LXX

Paul's chain of quotes culminates with Isaiah 11:10 LXX, a text commonly recognised within both Judaism and the early Church to be messianic.⁶⁹ Its use here is usually interpreted as setting forth the foundation of Paul's argument in 15:9-11 by pointing to Jesus as the one who in his resurrection has fulfilled the messianic hope of Israel and as a result is now bringing about the inclusion of the Gentiles. Within its original context, however, this verse provides the transition between the future coming of the Davidic king in 11:1-9 and the

⁶⁷ The messianic applications of this passage in the NT are well known; cf. Ps. 118:22-23 MT in Mt. 21:42; Mk. 12:10-11; Lk. 20:17; Acts 4:11; 1 Pet. 2:4, 7; and Ps. 118:25-26 in Mt. 11:3; 21:9, 15; 23:39; Mk. 11:9; Lk. 7:19; 13:35; 19:38; Jn. 12:13.

⁶⁸ For the role of the remnant in Paul's earlier argument, see my 'The Salvation of Israel in Romans 11:25-32, A Response to Krister Stendahl', *Ex Auditu* 4 (1988), 38-58.

⁶⁹ Cf. R. Schultz, 'The King in the Book of Isaiah', in *The Lord's Anointed: Interpretation of Old Testament Messianic Texts* (ed. P.E. Satterthwaite, R.S. Hess, and G.J. Wenham; Carlisle: Paternoster, 1995), 141-65, 142. The messianic interpretation of Is. 11 is confirmed by its use in 1Q28b 5:20-29; 4Q161frag. 8+9+10; and 4Q285frag. 5 (see M. Wise, M. Abegg, Jr., and E. Cook, *The Dead Sea Scrolls, A New Translation* [San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1999], 149, 211, 293). See too Je. 23:5; 33:15; Sir. 47:22; Rev. 5:5; 22:16.

restoration of Israel in 11:11-16. As the hinge between these two sections, the king's rising up to rule over the nations with justice (Is. 11:10), thereby rescuing the poor and afflicted by slaying the wicked (cf. Is. 11:4-5), is the instrument God uses to bring about the restoration of Israel. Like David's own deliverance in Psalm 17, this future salvation is pictured in terms of a 'second exodus', now from among the nations for a reunited Israel, who in leaving their exile despoil their former oppressors just as Israel did to Egypt.

In contrast to this salvation of the remnant left from Israel's judgement, Assyria, the false hope of Ahaz, will be destroyed for her arrogance, together with all those idolaters in Israel and Judah who trust in kings other than YHWH (cf. 10:1-23 with Is. 5:3-30; 8:12-15). Paul has already referred to this reality in 9:27-33. But rather than signalling an end to the nations, the Davidic king's judgement and rule over them becomes the 'sign for the Gentiles' (kai; ajrei' shmei'on eij" ta; e[qnh) of their own ultimate redemption (Is. 11:12).⁷⁰ Finally, this eschatological redemption of Israel and rule of David's descendant over the nations will lead to the establishment of the reign of peace on the earth, 'For the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord, As the waters cover the sea' (Is. 11:9). As its corollary, the king's victorious rest will be his 'glory' (MT: כבוד) or 'honour' (LXX timhv), so that the promises of God's presence among his people will be fulfilled in the king's reign from Zion over Israel and the nations (11:10; cf. Is. 11:9 with Is. 2:2-4; 4:2-6; 66:18-19).⁷¹

If Isaiah 11:10 is taken in accordance with its original context, its use here does not point to Christ's resurrection in the past, but to the

⁷⁰ Cf. Is. 11:11-12 LXX with the tradition of the eschatological pilgrimage of the nations to Zion that was often a part of Jewish restoration eschatology. See Is. 2:2-4; 25:6-10; 42:1-9; 49:6; 51:4-6; 56:6-8; 66:18-21 and the helpful survey of this tradition in post-biblical Judaism by T.L. Donaldson, 'Proselytes or "Righteous Gentiles"? The Status of Gentiles in Eschatological Pilgrimage Patterns of Thought', *JSP* 7 (1990), 3-27. Donaldson also emphasises that although the tendency in these texts is to anticipate the inclusion of the Gentiles *as Gentiles*, not as converts to Judaism (27), their central concern is not the precise status of the Gentiles in regard to the specific injunctions of the Torah, but 'the vindication of Israel and of Israel's view of its place in the world....Wherever the Gentiles appear in this tradition, their treatment, positive or negative, is subservient to this central theme' (26).

⁷¹ I owe this point to Kish, *Paul's Use*, 63-65, 68, who also points to the parallels between Is. 11:10b and Is. 28:12; 32:15-18, the development of the theme of 'rest' in Jos. 21:43-45; Dt. 12:9; Ps. 95:11; 1 Kgs. 8:56; 1 Ch. 22:9, and its messianic interpretation in *T. Jud.* 25-25 and *Midr. Ps.* 21:1.

future coming in glory of the ‘shoot of Jesse’⁷² as ‘the one having risen up (ὁ ἀνιστάμενος) to rule the Gentiles’, so that the nations will set their hope upon him. Thus, if Psalm 17:50 grounded the call for the nations to join Israel in praising God by establishing the ‘*das*’ of Christ’s final victory, Isaiah 11:10 does so by establishing the ‘*was*’ of that victory. As such, the references to Davidic kingship in Psalm 17:50 and Isaiah 11:10 provide the indicative bookends to the imperatives from Deuteronomy 32:43 and Psalm 116:1. The Gentiles’ hope is the doxological end to the history of redemption to be brought about by Jesus (15:8) as the ‘shoot of Jesse’ (Is. 11:10), in fulfilment of the promise that was established by David’s own vindication (Ps. 17:50). For, taken in the context of the Scriptures, Paul returns at the climax of his letter to Jesus’ role as the Davidic messiah, whose δικάζονος to the circumcision climaxes with restoring Israel in fulfilment of the promises to the fathers (Rom. 15:8) and in accordance with the gospel declared beforehand by the prophets (Rom. 1:3-4).⁷³

In closing his chain of quotes, Paul reminds his readers that their hope, already confirmed and anticipated by Christ’s resurrection, to which ὁ ἀνιστάμενος most likely alludes by way of *double entendre* (cf. 4:23-25),⁷⁴ is Christ’s universal reign of peace over the nations in accordance with his promises to Israel. At that time the nations, having joined with Israel, will glorify God for his mercy to the Gentiles as an extension of his truthfulness to Israel. Until then, the church, made up of a remnant of Jews and Gentiles who already glorify God, live under the Lordship of Christ in both life and death (cf. 14:7-9). For as

⁷² Though there is no way to confirm it, Paul probably omitted ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ found in the LXX of Is. 11:10, because the clear eschatological meaning of the text and his own introductory formula made it superfluous. Stanley, *Paul*, 183, counters that this is not sufficient explanation for Paul’s omission. Dunn, *Romans*, 850, suggests that Paul may have omitted it because he prefers to reserve its use for referring explicitly to the final day of judgement (pointing to 2:5, 16; 13:12; 1 Cor. 1:8; 3:13; 5:5 etc.). Yet in these cases Paul is referring to ‘the day’ of judgement without quoting a text from Scripture, whereas his quotation of Is. 11:10 in 15:12 makes an additional reference to ‘the day’ superfluous.

⁷³ Cf. this future orientation of 15:7-13 with Wright’s conclusion, *Climax*, 264-65, that ‘The resurrection of Jesus was, for Paul, the sure and certain sign, unmistakable if unexpected, that Israel’s consolation had been given to her, that the Age to Come had therefore arrived....’ In contrast, Paul’s point seems to be that the resurrection, as the inauguration of the end of the ages, confirms God’s promises concerning Israel’s consolation still to come.

⁷⁴ Cf. Dunn, *Romans*, 850, who points to the use of ἀνίστημι in the Gospels, Acts 3:22, 26; 7:37; 17:3; 1 Thes. 4:14.

Deuteronomy 32:43 and Psalm 116:1 make clear, this hope for the future expresses itself in the present through the Gentiles' joining Israel in living lives of praise to the one true 'God of hope' (15:13). In anticipation of the judgement and restoration to come, those who hope in God's promises glorify God by their faith and are thereby already reckoned as righteous (cf. 15:13 with 4:18-22).

Conclusion

As we have seen, there is a logical and chronological progression in the pattern of Paul's quotes in Romans 15:9b-13. Together they create a chiasm in which the two outer indicatives having to do with David's seed, past and future, support the two inner imperatives to the Gentiles in the present, all of which support Christ's ongoing ministry to Israel for the sake of the Gentiles:⁷⁵

- because* David's past vindication establishes God's promise to *David's seed* (v. 9b),
 - *therefore* the *Gentiles* should not give up hope, but learn from the experience of disobedient Israel to rejoice in God alone (in the midst of the false security that comes from the nations' current reign in the world) (v. 10);
 - *specifically*, the *Gentiles* should not give up hope, but learn from the experience of the faithful remnant to praise God for his truthfulness and mercy (in the midst of the adversity that comes from being part of God's elect in the world) (v. 11),
- because* the future vindication of *David's seed* in fulfilment of God's promise is the hope of the nations (v. 12).

This argument takes on all the more force in light of Christ's having confirmed these promises and undergirded these commands by his own vindication as the seed of David who is now enthroned as the

⁷⁵ Though often overlooked by commentators, Keck, 'Christology', 88, rightly observes that only the 2nd and 3rd quotes actually summon the Gentiles to praise God. But his conclusion, 91, that the catch-word ἔθνη 'poorly conceals the lack of a coherent rationale governing either the sequence or the substance of all four quotations' cannot be maintained. Surprisingly, Keck suggests an internal coherence to the first three quotes, albeit in only a general sense based on the surface affirmations of the text. Problematic for him is the integration of the emphasis on the Gentiles' hope in the Davidic messiah in Is. 11:10 with the emphasis of first 3 citations on the Gentiles' praise of God.

Son of God (Rom. 1:3-4).⁷⁶ The argument from Scripture in 15:9b-12, with its doxological climax, unpacks the doxological significance of Christ's ministry in 15:8-9a, which in turn supports the doxological purpose of Christ's having accepted both Jew and Gentile (15:7b). In turn, Christ's acceptance of Jew and Gentile supports the admonition to the Romans to do likewise for the same purpose (15:5-7). Hence, the Romans are to accept one another (15:7a), since in doing so they live out *proleptically* Christ's eschatological acceptance of Jew and Gentile *to the glory of God* (15:7b).

In conclusion, the implications of this study are at least fourfold. First, far from being merely a catch-word compilation of texts loosely tied together *ad hoc*, the careful combination of these texts in this order lends support to Stanley's thesis that Paul had 'compiled his own anthology of potentially useful verses in the course of his own personal study of Scripture'.⁷⁷ But in view of the content of the quotes themselves, the thesis of Stanley and Koch may be extended to suggest that this carefully studied compilation was at times organised according to a history of redemption scheme which reached its climax in the return of Christ. As the Davidic messiah, the Christ must return to justify the remnant of Jews and Gentiles, to restore Israel, to judge the nations, and to establish the glory of God as the sovereign ruler of the world.

⁷⁶ Contra the common view represented by Koch, *Schrift*, 286: 'Themen, die in einen spezifisch (hellenistisch-)judenchristlichen Raum weisen, wie Davidssohnschaft (Jes 11:10), Erfüllung der Zionsverheißungen (Jes 28:16; 59:20f.), aber auch Bund (Jes 59:20ff; in christologischem Zusammenhang in 1 Kor 11:23-25), spielen bei Paulus entweder keine Rolle mehr (Davidssohnschaft, Zionsverheißungen) oder erscheinen in transformierter Gestalt (Bund; vgl. 2 Kor 3!).' For a contrasting treatment of the key text of 2 Cor. 3, see my *Paul, Moses*.

⁷⁷ *Paul*, 257. For this same conclusion, see too Koch, *Schrift*, 98-99, 101, 183-84, 253. Since the programmatic work of E. Earle Ellis, *Paul's Use of the Old Testament* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1957), 49-50, this text has been viewed as an example of the 'chain' or 'string' (חַרְזֵי) method of citing Scripture associated with synagogue preaching. But Ellis' own caution, 50, has not always been heeded: 'Although a number of Pauline citations appear to be united under a *Stichwort*, the significance is far deeper than a verbal congruence... Certainly it is the sense element that is basic for Paul.' Technically speaking, though 15:9b-12 may be such a 'chain', it functions like a 'combined citation' in which 'several verses are adduced in support of a single proposition, but the individual verses have been melded together into a tightly knit, coherent unit with its own internal logic and carefully balanced rhetorical structure' (Stanley, *Paul*, 258). As examples of this procedure, Stanley adduces Rom. 3:10-18; 9:25-26; 1 Cor. 15:54-55; 2 Cor. 6:16-18. However, Stanley, 258, rejects Rom. 15:9-12 as such an example, viewing it simply as a string of quotations with 'a measure of physical coherence'.

Moreover, the structure of this compilation likely reflects early synagogue, ‘proem’ sermons, in which some other portion of Scripture not from the *seder* or the *haftarah* of the day (i.e. the proem or introductory text, in our case Ps. 17:50) was chosen as a bridge between the two, based on a linguistic link to the *haftarah* (ἔθνη). The sermon then proceeded by explaining the proem text by means of a chain of thematically related passages that aimed at and climaxed with a final, concluding text (here Dt. 32, Ps. 117, and Is. 11).⁷⁸

If this sermonic framework is indeed in place here, it supplies an additional, structural focus on the eschatological consummation in Isaiah 11:10 as the climax of Paul’s argument. In doing so, it further supports adding a history-of-salvation framework to Koch’s helpful observation that the *Schwerpunkt* of Paul’s explicit appeals to Scripture is found in the interrelated themes of the righteousness of God, the Law, and the calling of the Gentiles in relationship to the election of Israel.⁷⁹ It would also fortify the conclusion that Paul’s framework for understanding the significance of Jesus as the Christ in the light of Scripture was not ‘doctrinal’ as such, whether that be Christology, ecclesiology, or even a realised apocalyptic eschatology. Instead, Paul’s framework was an ongoing history of salvation that will consummate in the final redemption of Israel and the nations as an essential aspect of the final redemption of the created order, to the glory of God.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ I am indebted for this suggestion to D. Instone-Brewer and for reference to the work of J.W. Bowker, ‘Speeches in Acts: A Study in Proem and Yelammedenu Form’, *NTS* 14 (1967/68), 96-111, who details this structure (cf. esp. p. 100). If it is indeed in view here (cf. Lk. 4:16-21; Acts 13:14-15; *m. Meg.* 4:2-6; *t. Meg.* 3[4]:1-4, 17-19), it is difficult to posit whether Is. 11:10 is merely the climax of the sermon or also part of the *haftarah* reading itself, since the *haftarah* was often quoted in the course of the sermon. If it is not, other possibilities include Is. 49:18, Je. 22:24; or Ezk. 5:11, or esp. Is. 45:23, with its use of ἐξομολογήσεται (cf. Rom. 14:12). The *seder* from the Law was most likely Gn. 12, 15, or 17 (cf. Rom. 4).

⁷⁹ *Schrift*, 288. There Koch points out that the three large Scripture chains of Rom. 9:25-29; 10:18-21; 15:9b-12 all revolve around the question of Israel and the nations. But contra Koch (and Stanley, *Paul*, 257, n. 22, who follows him at this point), Paul’s answer need not be seen to be in conflict with Jewish exegetical tradition (Koch, 289: Paul’s view leads ‘zu einer fundamentalen Umwertung jüdischer Grundpositionen’), apart, of course, from Paul’s conviction that Jesus is the Messiah.

⁸⁰ Cf. Oegema, *Für Israel*, 205, who, on the basis of Rom. 5:1-5, argues that Paul’s ‘heilsgeschichtlich bestimmende “Perioden”’ are Adam to Moses, Moses to Christ, and Christ to the Parousia, with Adam standing at the beginning of history (Rom. 5:14) and Christ, the second Adam, standing at the end of history (Rom. 5:12-21). For the opposite reading of Rom. 15:7-12 to that proposed here, in which the salvation of the Gentiles is distanced from the promises to Abraham, the dev in

Second, Paul's purpose in adducing this Scriptural summary is, as he himself says in 15:4, to foster 'hope'. And in the light of this Scriptural summary, 'hope' for Paul has a concrete, historical object. Those within the church, both Jew and Gentile, must not give up hope in the future consummation of God's promises to Israel for the sake of the nations, promises that have now been confirmed once again in Christ (15:4, 13). As a believer in Jesus as the messiah and apostle to the Gentiles, Paul does not have a realised eschatology in which either Jesus' first coming (Wright's 'climax of the covenant'), or the church (Hay's 'ecclesiocentric' hermeneutic), become the fulfilment of Scripture's great expectation for Israel.⁸¹

In contrast to such evaluations of Paul's reading of Scripture, our passage gives no grounds for seeing Israel's identity and eschatological hopes reconfigured into Christ and/or the church, having been transformed for him into exclusively present realities. Redemptive history does not become abstracted into the 'Christ-event' or personalised into an eschatological 'community', but continues on after Christ's coming and establishment of the Church just as concretely and historically as it did before. The 'not yet' of his

15:9a is taken to be a strong contrast, the dependence of the Gentiles on the salvation of Israel is reduced to the fact that Jesus was a Jew, and the inclusion of the Gentiles into Israel is denied, see Dieter Zeller, *Juden und Heiden in der Mission des Paulus: Studien zum Römerbrief* (FB 1; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1973), 218-23.

⁸¹ J.C. Beker, 'Echoes and Intertextuality: On the Roles of Scripture in Paul's Theology', in *Paul and the Scriptures of Israel* (ed. C.A. Evans and J.A. Sanders; JSNTSup 83; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 64-69, 69. Though Hays answers well the force of Beker's other criticisms of his work in his, 'On the Rebound: A Response to Critiques of *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*', in *Paul and the Scriptures of Israel*, 70-96, 94, Hays acknowledges that this response 'precisely skewers my work....By identifying the apocalyptic context of Paul's ecclesiocentric hermeneutic, I intended to locate his interpretative activity within the 'already/not yet' dialectic that pervades his thought, but in fact my discussion fails to do justice to the 'not yet' pole'. This imbalance has now been corrected in part in Hays' recent study, 'The Conversion of the Imagination', 401, though not yet carried through to the key question of the relationship between Israel and the church or to the nature of Paul's hermeneutic. Although Wright, *Climax*, 264, finds Hays' ecclesiological perspective 'leaving Paul looking more arbitrary in his handling of the Jewish Bible than...exegesis actually suggests', Wright's own collapse of Israel's future into Christ and the Spirit raises the same concern. The 'not yet' of Paul's eschatology is apparently reduced, for Wright, to the new creation. With Hays and Wright, this reinterpretation of Israel's future in terms of the present experience of the church is also part of the program of G.K. Beale, 'The Eschatological Conception of New Testament Theology', in *The Reader Must Understand: Eschatology in Bible and Theology* (ed. K.E. Broder and M.W. Elliot; Leicester: IVP, 1997), 11-52, 16-17.

eschatology includes Israel too. The ‘climax of the covenant’ remains Israel’s future restoration for the sake of the nations.

Moreover, it is precisely this climax to the covenant that secures the believer’s salvific hope in the return of Christ, since in light of the promises of God to the Fathers (15:8) the messiah must come again to judge the nations in order to restore Israel and save the Gentiles (15:12; cf. 11:29). To undergird the believer’s hope in order to bring about their ‘obedience of faith’ (1:5; 15:18; 16:25-26), Paul fulfils his apostolic mandate by ending where he began, with the ‘evocation of Davidic messianic themes’.⁸² By doing so, he creates ‘an effective *inclusio* with the epistle’s opening christological confession (1:2-4)’,⁸³ including the historical *and eschatological* sequence of the gospel: to the Jew first and then to the Gentile (1:16).

Third, the force of Paul’s argument in 15:7-13, which climaxes in v. 13 with Paul’s prayer-wish that the Romans would abound in hope, is itself dependent on this same focus on the *future* as an essential part of Paul’s history-of-redemption understanding of the Scriptures. Structurally, Paul’s argument from Scripture in 15:8-12, as a bilateral hinge, serves to support both 15:8-9a, which in turn support 15:7, *and* the concluding benediction in v. 13, which is itself the *inclusio* to the benediction of 15:5-6. Thus, Paul’s argument from Scripture is not only the ultimate ground for Paul’s imperative in 15:7, but also the means by which God will fulfil Paul’s prayers for the Romans. In view of the structural and conceptual parallels between the two benedictions, the latter benediction, with its focus on hope as the result of learning from the Scriptures (15:13 based on 15:9b-12), decodes and fulfils the former, with its emphasis on the encouragement and endurance that likewise come from the hope contained in the Scriptures (cf. 15:4). And all of this is so that believers, by their trust-induced hope, might glorify ‘the God of endurance and comfort’ who is ‘the God of hope’.⁸⁴

Finally, Paul’s argument reflects his conviction that eschatology and ethics are inextricably linked. In the chronology of praise established in our passage, Paul finds himself somewhere between the

⁸² Hays, ‘Christ Prays the Psalms’, 135.

⁸³ Hays, ‘Christ Prays the Psalms’, 135. Hays rightly comments that ‘the Davidic messiahship of Jesus is the crucial hermeneutical emphasis of the rhetorical climax of Paul’s *peroratio*’ (135, n. 43).

⁸⁴ These parallels become transparent when the two benedictions are presented according to their parallel structure by J.A.D. Weima, *Neglected Endings: The Significance of the Pauline Letter Closings* (JSNTSup 101; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 102.

first and last stages of that *Heilsgeschichte*: the Christ has come and a remnant of Jews and Gentiles is being saved to the glory of God (15:7b; Ps. 17:50, Ps. 116:1, Dt. 32:43), but the final redemption of all Israel and the nations, as the consummation of this glory, is still to come (Is. 11:10). And Paul's own ministry to the Gentiles occupies the key transition between these two stages.

This eschatological hope is the basis of Paul's admonitions to unity and mutual acceptance in the Church among Jews and Gentiles. The reason is clear. It is their hope-driven life of mutual acceptance to the praise of God, as the anticipatory fulfilment of God's purpose in creation, that witnesses to the final redemption and doxology still to come. Paul's concern, in the end, is theological, not sociological. At the same time, this same hope in the promises of God, confirmed by Christ (15:8) and secured by the Spirit as their downpayment (15:13), enables the strong in faith to bear the proclivities of the weak, and vice versa (cf. 15:1-2, 7 with 14:4, 10-12). Hope for the eschatological consummation of redemptive history, based on God's salvific acts in the past, is the engine that drives the obedience of faith in the present. Hence, the inextricable expression of praising God is 'pleasing one's neighbour' through extending to others one's own experience of the acceptance of Christ.

Conversely, it is persevering praise for God in the present, fuelled by faith and expressed in love for others in fulfilment of the Law that testifies to the reality of redemption and authenticates hope for the future. Not to praise God in unity and to accept others in love would expose the Romans' hope for salvation to be wishful thinking. It is therefore not simply a religious reflex that the imperatives of verses 1-2 and 5-7 are both grounded in Scripture (vv. 3-4, 8-12). As the double use of γάρ in vv. 3 and 8 indicates, the Scriptures support the commands by nourishing the Spirit-induced hope in Christ that glorifies God for his truth and mercy and expresses itself in love.