Imperial Polemics and the End of the Exodus in Romans:
A Rhetorical and Intertextual Reading of Romans 1.1-17

Bryan Derek Lee

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Department of Biblical Studies

University of Sheffield

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the possible intertexts in Paul's letter to the Romans as a heuristic for creating model readers. It is argued that Paul's use of the Scriptures of Israel in the beginning of Romans functions thematically in an effort for Paul to set forth a normative means of how his letter ought to be interpreted. This thesis aims to offer a brief interpretation of the exodus event, how it came to be a motif, and its variegated (re)use and transformation in Second Temple literature. By using the exodus motif(s) as a pretext this thesis examines the beginning of Paul's letter to the Romans highlighting how the exodus theme is used in an effort to maintain continuity with the Jewish past and to offer a rational for Paul's own vocation – the inclusion of the nations into the people of God. Paul was thus not about the business of settling disputes between Judean and non-Judean Christians, but rather about securing the obedience of faith among the nations. One of the main means of securing the nation's obedience in Rome was by the proclamation of his good news over against the competing claims of Caesar and the Roman imperial order, here again we find the exodus motif to be a very helpful tool in exploring this phenomenon.

This thesis operates using aspects of literary theory, especially that of Intertextuality. Intertextuality is used as an umbrella for a variety of different and distinctive possible ways which texts can be read, and consequently understood. No specific theory of intertextuality is chosen to examine these texts, rather a broad intertextual reading is used as a means of showing the possibilities contained within a text.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Anchor Bible
AJS	Association for Jewish Studies
ANRW	Aufstieg und Niedergang der romischen Welt
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
BRev	Bible Review
Bib	Biblica
BTB	Biblical Theology Bulletin
BJRL	Bulletin of the John Ryland Library
CBQ	Catholic Biblical Quarterly
EvQ	Evangelical Quarterly
FilN	Filologia Neotestamentaria
HTR	Harvard Theological Review
HUCA	Hebrew Union College Annual
HeyJ	Heythrop Journal
Interp	Interpretation
IBS	Irish Biblical Studies
JQR	Jewish Quarterly Review
JBL	Journal of Biblical Literature
JANES	Journal for Ancient Near Eastern Studies
JSJSup	Journal for the Study of the Judaism Supplement
JSJ	Journal for the Study of the Judaism
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement
JSNT	Journal for the Study of the New Testament

JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement
JSOT	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament
JSPSup	Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha Supplement
JBL	Journal of Biblical Literature
JHS	Journal of Hebrew Scriptures
JJS	Journal of Jewish Studies
JTS	Journal of Theological Studies
MQR	Michigan Quarterly Review
NTS	New Testament Studies
NovT	Novum Testamentum
Or	Orientalia
PRS	Perspectives in Religious Studies
Rev Exp	Review and Expositor
SJT	Scottish Journal of Theology
ScrB	Scripture Bulletin
VTSup	Supplements to Vetus Testamentum
SEÅ	Svensk Exegetisk Årsbok
JTS	The Journal of Theological Studies
TS	Theological Studies
Theol Stud	Theological Studies
TynB	Tyndale Bulletin
UTPSS	University of Texas Press Slavic Series
VT	Vetus Testamentum
WTJ	Westminster Theological Journal
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
WW	Word and World

WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
ZNW	Zeitschrift für die neutestamentlich

CHAPTER ONE
METHODOLOGY: ON A THEORY INTERTEXTUAL READING

Introducing Intertextuality

There seems to be a growing consensus in Biblical Studies that the term intertextuality has become so overused and misunderstood that it no longer generates any useful meaning.[1] This claim has as its foundation the assumption that the frequent and undefined use of the term threatens to lump together a wide variety of approaches under one trendy catch phrase – intertextuality.[2] While to some extent this is true with all new methodologies, there is heightened apprehension that surrounds a term that is used frequently in multidisciplinary methodologies, because chic theories are often used as new methodological bullies, declaring what a text ought to mean by a form of unstated argument from authority, where the methodology itself represents the omnipotent and unquestionable authority. There is rightfully contempt with the notion that we can understand a text simply because we have determined to call it something.[3] Yet even the literary theoreticians understand that technical jargon can sometimes be problematic, it does not necessarily mean that we should abandon it wholesale.[4] Technical jargon often ends up in the lexical and syntactical rubbish heap, especially when a scholarly community tries to come to terms with how to appropriate a polyphonic term. Perhaps with Barthesian irony intertextuality has become lost in the labyrinth of the signified and the signifier.[5] While trying to rescue the term intertextuality for use in Biblical Studies is not the aim of this enterprise, I do hope, as a corollary, to situate how the term has been used in the past and continues to be used in the present, in hopes of not only demarcating my own discussion of intertextuality, but also to rescue myself from the charge of attempting to be trendy.

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[1] See Stanley E. Porter, "The Use of the Old Testament in the New Testament: A Brief Comment on Method and Terminology," in *Early Christian Interpretation of the Scriptures of Israel: Investigations and Proposals*, ed. Craig A. Evans and James A. Sanders (JSNTSup 148; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 79-96, where he suggests that the term intertextuality be dropped from scholarly discussion altogether. Timothy K. Beal, "Ideology and Intertextuality: Surplus of Meaning and Controlling the Means of Production," in *Reading between Texts: Intertextuality and the Hebrew Bible*, ed. Danna Nolan Fewell (Literary currents in biblical interpretation; Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992), 27, attributes the evasiveness of the term intertextuality to the fact that the term was primarily developed in poststructuralism as a theoretical rather than a methodological term. Vernon K. Robbins, *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse: Rhetoric, Society and Ideology* (London: Routledge, 1996), 33-42, perhaps more diplomatically calls for a better defining of the term intertextuality in scholarly discussions. This challenge is undertaken by Steve Moyise, "Intertextuality and the Study of the Old Testament in the New Testament," in *The Old Testament in the New Testament: Essays in Honour of J.L. North*, ed. Steve Moyise and J. L. North (JSNTSup 89: Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 14-41, who proposes intertextuality be divided into three different categories: (1) intertextual echo, (2) dialogical intertextuality, and (3) postmodern intertextuality. He furthered these categories to include (4) Narrative intertextuality and (5) Exegetical Intertextuality in Steve Moyise, "Intertextuality and Biblical Studies: A Review," *Verbum et Ecclesia* 23 (2002): 418-31.

[2] Heinrich F. Plett, "Intertextualities," in *Intertextuality*, ed. Heinrich F. Plett (New York: W. de Gruyter, 1991), 4, warns that many scholars use the term without examining its background and meaning, thus denigrating it into a mere 'vogue word'

[3] Moyise, "Intertextuality and the Study of the Old Testament," 16, notes that the same criticisms can be leveled at terms like 'midrash', 'typology' and 'exegesis', all of which have been used

Intertextuality in practice is a theory of reading that insists that a text (used in the narrower sense of a work or unit of writing) does not exist or function as a closed unit. The theory insists that the words, phrases, and sentences which make up a text do not refer to any reality outside the text, but rather only to other texts (used in its broadest sense; such as social institutions, cultural icons, and of course all other literary texts). At the root of this notion is the idea that neither a writer of texts, nor a reader of texts, ever approaches a text as a 'blank slate'. This is argued firstly, because a writer of texts is always a reader of texts before she is able to create. Thus once a writer creates a text it is inevitably filled with references, quotations, and influences of every kind, for a text that does not draw anything from its predecessors is truly inconceivable.[6] This reiteration of past or contemporary texts within the newly

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to defend 'uses' of the Old Testament which might otherwise appear arbitrary See the helpful discussion on the examples of the misuse of midrash in Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 10-14.

[4] Gérard Genette, *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*, trans. Channa Newman and Claude Doubinsky (Stages 8; Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 1-5, amusingly alerts his readers to problems posed by critical 'jargon', but suggests that his own (and others) terms can be genuinely useful as long as they are sufficiently defined by each individual critic-theorist.

[5] Here I make reference to what I think is going on in Roland Barthes, *Image - Music - Text*, trans. Stephen Health (Fontana, 1977), 142-48; Roland Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text* (New York: Noonday Press, 1975). See also the informative introductory chapter on intertextuality in Mary Orr, *Intertextuality: Debates and Contexts* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003), 6-19.

[6] See the lovely phrasings of Thomas M. Greene, *The Light in Troy: Imitation and Discovery in Renaissance Poetry* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), 16.

created text can manifest itself in a number of different of ways, ranging from texts which insist upon their intertextuality to those which seek to conceal it.[7] Within this spectrum, intertextuality can conceivably be seen from the most conscious and sophisticated elaboration of another's work,[8] to a scholarly use of sources,[9] to a quotation (with or without the use of quotation marks),[10] and to the snatches of conversation typical of a certain social milieu at a certain historical moment.[11] The theory of intertextuality also argues that since texts are only available through the process of reading (or hearing), then naturally what is produced at the moment of reading (or hearing) is due to the cross-fertilization of the pre-packaged material (i.e. all the other texts which the reader brings to it). What marks the theory of intertextuality apart from source criticism and traditional literary criticism is that the process of intertextuality is not linear. Thus while a delicate allusion to a work unknown to the reader will most likely go unnoticed, and will play little to no effect in that reading, a reader's experience of some practice or theory unknown to the author may very well lead to fresh interpretations.[12] Finally, intertextuality, with its inclinations toward post-modern criticisms, understands that none of this is happening in a socio-political vacuum. Texts entering via writers and texts entering via readers are not only emotionally and politically charged, but also ideologically charged.[13] In summation, the practice of intertextuality as a theory of reading takes into account these various intertexts (texts, in the broadest sense, found within a certain text, in the narrowest sense), not as sources per se, but rather as possible aids in signification.

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[7] Genette, *Palimpsests*, 1.

[8] See Jorge Luis Borges and Anthony Kerrigan, *Ficciones ... Edited and with an Introduction by Anthony Kerrigan*, trans. Emecé Editores (New York: Grove Press, 1962), 45-56, informative essay entitled, 'Pierre Menard, Author of Don Quixote', which Menard writes with his own resources a new version of Don Quixote, which was rigorously and literally identical with Cervantes's text. Yet because of the two intervening centuries of history the work was invested not only with a new complexity and depth but also with an entirely different meaning.

[9] Of which this dissertation is an example.

[10] The New Testament's use of the Scriptures of Israel is often an example of the use of a quotation without any introductory formula, the ancient equivalent of quotation marks.

[11] Many of Charles Dickens's novels present us with a world crammed full of individual voices, sharing, competing, and clashing over different ways of speaking; yet the novels present no overall voice, no controlling and omnipotent narrator. This is what Bakhtin refers to when he discusses the dialogical novel.

[12] John Frow, "Intertextuality and Ontology," in *Intertextuality: Theories and Practice*, ed. Michael Worton and Judith Still (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990), 45-56, defines ten theses of intertextuality, which I think are helpful in summarizing the various concepts of intertextuality. By using the concept of intertextuality we understand that: 1) the text is self-contained but differential and historical; 2) texts are traces of otherness – they are repetitions and transformations of other texts; 3) the absent texts constrain the text and are represented by/within it; 4) the representation may be implicit or explicit; 5) intertextual reference implies reference to the meanings stored in a genre; 6) the process of intertextuality in literature is governed by the structure of the literary system and the authority of the canon; 7) the text's relationship to discursive authority

With this brief introduction behind us we can now precede into a more fruitful discussion of the complexities a theory of intertextual reading entails by briefly summarizing the different theories surrounding intertextual readings and canvassing the wide variety of these distinct approaches. The discussion that follows will focus on the theories that are most helpful in demarcating a methodology that will help frame this thesis, thus major critical theorists will be avoided while perhaps other less influential theorists will be brought to the fore. This, in no way, is an attempt to introduce all the theoretical complexities of intertextuality, nor is this thesis as a whole, meant to tie up any of the loose ends left by the critic-theorist themselves, but rather the use of intertextuality, as a strategy for reading is sought to open up possibilities in interpretation that might not have been given credibility in the past. In one sense, the highlighting and utilization of certain theories over others, possibly without care to the larger implications set out in the theoretical works themselves, might seem a bit naïve and simplistic. Perhaps like Paul, the charge of being a 'σπερμολόγος', may be applied to my own methodological discourse, but at the end of the day the proof of the pudding lies in the eating.[14]

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may not reflect authorial intention; 8) identifying an intertext is an interpretive act; 9) identifying the general genre or ideology of the source-text is more important than identifying the particular source; and 10) intertextuality is distinguished from source criticism by its stress on interpretation rather than mere influence or causality.

[13] Michael Worton and Judith Still, *Intertextuality: Theories and Practice* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990), 1-2.

[14] This is not a plea for pragmatism but rather a serious wrestling with what it means to do scholarship in a postmodern world. So David J. A. Clines, "A World Established on Water (Psalm 24): Reader-Response, Deconstruction and Bespoken Interpretation," in *The New Literary Criticism and the Hebrew Bible*, ed. J. Cheryl Exum and David J. A. Clines (JSOT 143; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 87; David J. A. Clines, "The Postmodern Adventure in Biblical Studies," in *The Interpretation of the Bible: The*

In discussing the complexities of intertextuality, it is the usual practice to divide the discussion into three camps: the first being the poststructuralists, who emphasize the ambiguity of the basic sign relation (signifier – signified) and thus the infinite regression of signification; the second being structuralists, who assume that the signification of a text or corpus of texts can be contained and fully explained by the description of elementary units and their systematic or recurrent relations; and the third being the anti-intertextualists, who either deny that anything new is being done, or simply dismiss intertextuality polemically, as the work of those incomprehensible 'progressives'.[15]

The discussion that follows will loosely follow these three groups as mentioned above, highlighting certain general aspects of these theories, and the theoreticians, in order to highlight the specific aspects which make up our own method of intertextual reading.

The Poststructuralists

Julia Kristeva

Julia Kristeva, the French semiotician, is generally credited as the first to introduce the term 'intertextuality' into literary discussion in 1966 with her essay 'Word, Dialogue, and Novel'.[16] Kristeva was influenced both by Saussurean linguistics'

International Symposium in Slovenia, ed. Jože Krašovec (JSOTSup 289; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 1603-16.

[15] Thaïs E. Morgan, "Is There an Intertext in This Text?: Literary and Interdisciplinary Approaches to Intertextuality," *American Journal of Semiotics* 3, no. 4 (1985): 9. cf. Graham Allen, *Intertextuality* (London: Routledge, 2000), 1-7, who divides his book in much the same way as Morgan Plett, "Intertextualities," 3-4, also characterizes the two similarly, except in the much more polemic terms of 'progressives' and 'traditionalists'.

[16] 'Word, Dialogue and Novel' was first published in *Séméiotiké: Recherches pour une sémanalyse* (Paris: Le Sevil, 1969). It was translated in L. S. Roudiez (ed.), *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), and is now found conveniently in Julia Kristeva, *Word, Dialogue and Novel*, ed. Toril Moi, The Kristeva Reader (New York:

emphasis upon the signifier and the signified and how signs are arbitrary and derive their meaning from the structure of a text, and by Mikhail Bakhtin's work on the dialogical novel and 'heteroglossia', with its stress upon the polyphonic interplay of voices (and social speech types) implicit in the nature of discourse and the new and artistic potential this signification process creates.[17] Kristeva sought to examine what she described as a three dimensional textual space that for her included the writing subject, the addressee, and exterior texts which intersect on both horizontal and vertical planes. Horizontally the texts play between the writing subject and the addressee while vertically they are directed towards an anterior or synchronic literary corpus, so that each text is an interaction of texts, where at least one other text can be read.[18] She breaks away from the traditional notions of the author's 'influences' and a text's 'sources,' suggesting that such relationships are better understood as an 'intersection of textual surfaces rather than a point (a fixed meaning), as a dialogue among several writings: that of the writer, the addressee (or the character) and the contemporary or earlier cultural context.'[19] For Kristeva even the specific act of embedding one text inside another does not result in a single resolution, but a range

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Columbia University Press, 1986), 35-61. Contra. Orr, *Intertextuality*, 22, 25, who argues for a reassessment of Kristeva's intertextuality. Orr maintains that the translation of 'Word, Dialogue and Novel' into English from Séméiotiké has badly misrepresented Kristeva into an unwarranted marginal position.

[17] On Saussurean linguistics, see Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, ed. Charles Bally, Albert Reidlinger, and Albert Sechehaye, trans. Wade Baskin (London: Peter Owen, 1974). Kristeva was influenced by Saussure's development of language as synchronic rather than diachronic and his theory of the differential sign, which Derrida stresses that the signified is always composed of signifiers. Thus the definition of a dog, as a four legged animal that barks, is itself made up of signifiers. In this way definitions are always infinite or circular. See for further examples: Allen, *Intertextuality*, 9-14. On Bakhtin see M. M. Bakhtin and P. N. Medvedev, *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship: A Critical Introduction to Sociological Poetics*, trans. Albert J. Wehrle (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991). Kristeva was influenced by Bakhtin/Voloshinov's central insight that 'words' are active, dynamic social signs, capable of taking on different meanings and connotations for different social classes in different social and historical situations. Language had to be considered in its social context. Another important factor for Kristeva was Bakhtin's work on the dialogical novel. For further information on Bakhtin and Kristeva see Raman Selden, Peter Widdowson, and Peter Brooker, *A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory*, 4th ed. (London: Prentice Hall, 1997), 41. For a fresh interpretation of Kristeva see Orr, *Intertextuality*, 24-32.

[18] Kristeva, *Word, Dialogue and Novel*, 36-9.

[19] Kristeva, *Word, Dialogue and Novel*, 36.

of interpretative possibilities.[20] She posits that all signifying systems, from table settings to poems, are constituted by the manner which they transform earlier signifying systems. A literary work, then, is not simply the product of a single author, even if the author is the funnel, but of its relationship to other texts and to the structures of language itself. 'Any text,' she argues, 'is constructed of a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another'.[21] Kristeva concludes that a text '...is a permutation of other texts, an intertextuality: in the space of a text many utterances taken from other texts intersect with one another and neutralize one another.'[22] This neutralization is not a canceling out, or a mechanism for prioritization, but rather a leveling of prior textual materials which lose their special status by this act of permutation, so that all intertexts are of equal importance in the intertextual process.[23] To put it in cruder terms, a text is comprehensible only as a reworking of a previous text or of previous texts. Thus for Kristeva intertextuality is the relationship between a text and the entire reserve of textual patterns. This is not to be confused with traditional source criticism because the intertext is the unbounded bank of textual patterns, anonymous and general, from which all authors construe a text.[24] In source criticism the relationship between a text and its sources and influences is essentially diachronic, a comparison between a precursor text and a successor.[25] Kristeva's intertextual focus is instead on a synchronic relationship between the text and free flowing textual patterns, a comparison between the function of textual patterns external to the text and the function of the textual pattern within the text. Yet, this can not be taken as a simple glorification of tradition, because while at the same time Kristeva's intertextuality as permutation allows for a transfer of traditions, it also offers a socio-historical and ideological challenge to the status quo. It is at the point of permutation that ideological implications of a text are materialized even as the text is transformed by its contexts.[26] For Kristeva the transfer of textual patterns from outside a text to within a text is essentially ideological – a power move. And ultimately demands of us (as critics) to ask the double question of what desire drives the employment of textual matters and for what objective?[27] Kristeva's theory of intertextuality does not envisage chaos, the inchoate, or abyssal deferral as negative, but rather as an important, reconstitutive, and synergistic nature of the text.[28]

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[20] Moyise, "Intertextuality and the Study of the Old Testament," 14.

[21] Kristeva, *Word, Dialogue and Novel*, 37.

[22] Julia Kristeva, *Séméiotiké* (Paris: Points, 1969), 52, as quoted in Orr, *Intertextuality*, 27.

[23] Orr, *Intertextuality*, 28.

[24] See Jonathan Culler, *The Pursuit of Signs: Semiotics, Literature, Deconstruction* (Ithaca: Cornell, 1981), 93-94, where he explains that Kristeva's procedure of looking at source texts for analysis of intertextual space shows how the concept of intertextuality leads to a concentration on cases that question the general theory of intertextuality. While she claimed that meaning is made possible through a general intertextuality, through her examples we see that intertextuality works best when we can identify the pre-texts.

[25] Traditional notions of influence are based upon the idea that influence is based upon an x to y relationship, with x as the agent. Many of the problems inherent with such models can be easily relieved if y is seen as the agent. See Michael Baxandall, *Patterns of Intention: On the Historical Explanation of Pictures* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 58-9.

Roland Barthes

While it may have been Kristeva's gloss on Bakhtin which eventually led to the term intertextuality, it is Barthes who has played the term and developed it into a theory of post-structuralism. For Barthes the key to intertextuality is to get away from a modernist view of the text. To this end he employs the term 'work' as a replacement of 'text':

> A work is a finished object, something computable, which can occupy a physical space (take its place, for example, on the shelves of a library); the text is a methodological field. One cannot, therefore, count up texts, at least not in any regular way; all one can say is that in such and-such a work, there is, or there isn't, some text. 'The work is held in the hand, the text is held in language'.[29]

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[26] Orr, *Intertextuality*, 28.

[27] Robert L. Brawley, *Text to Text Pours Forth Speech: Voices of Scripture in Luke-Acts* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995), 4.

[28] Orr, *Intertextuality*, 51.

[29] Roland Barthes, "Theory of the Text," in *Untying the Text: A Post-Structuralist Reader*, ed. Robert Young (London: Routledge, 1981), 39.

The text, for Barthes, is a process in signification rather than a medium with which meaning is secured and stabilized, writing for Barthes opens the sign up to a Derridaian like explosion, infinite and yet always already deferred dimension of meaning.[30] Barthes' theory of the text, therefore, involves a theory of intertextuality, in that the text not only sets in motion a plurality of meanings but is also woven out of numerous discourses and spun from already existent meaning. Barthes' intertextual text is:

> ...woven entirely with citations, references, echoes, cultural languages (what language is not?) antecedent or contemporary, which cut across it through and through in a vast stereophony. The intertextual in which every text is held, it itself being the text-between of another text, is not to be confused with some origin of the text: to try to find the 'sources', the 'influences' of a work, is to fall in with the myth of filiation; the citations which go to make up a text are anonymous, untraceable, and yet *already read*: they are quotations without inverted commas.[31]

Unlike Kristeva, for whom the reader is the absent mediator-translator, Barthes reader is the body of mediation or medium for the texts effects to come into play. The reader is not a passive vehicle, not an echo chamber, but rather the regent of the text.[32] The author then is like a conductor of the always already written score, just as the text is, then, 'a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centers of culture.'[33]

It is important for Barthes that one recognize that textual meaning is not created from an author combining a signifier with the signified, the Barthesian concept of the intertextual, does not mean we can simply move to the intertextual level of the signifier and signified. To say that the text is constructed from a mosaic of quotations does not mean we can find a text's pre-texts and then view them as the signified of the texts signifiers. The inter-texts, other works of literature, other kinds of texts, are themselves intertextual constructs, and are themselves able to offer us nothing more than signifiers.[34]

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[30] Allen, *Intertextuality*, 65.

[31] Barthes, *Image - Music - Text*, 160.

[32] Orr, *Intertextuality*, 34, 35.

[33] Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author," in *Image - Music - Text* (Fontana, 1977), 146.

For Barthes the pleasure of the text is to follow the 'derive,' the drift of a ship off coarse, to see where it might take you, or where you might take it. The reader then is to chase the pleasure principle through the most deviatory routes, and play with other texts in a counter-directional manner.[35] Unlike Kristeva who ultimately sought from the dialogical nature of intertexts the ability for ideological critique, in Barthes one gets the sense that the only redeeming value of texts is how they play, or as Mary Orr has aptly put it, the brilliance in Barthes is '...the choreography of the intertext as ephemeral and sensate, the white heat of pyrotechnics.'[36]

Structuralists

Gérard Genette

Gérard Genette's intertextuality is very different from that of Kristeva and the other poststructuralists. Genette developed what could be called pragmatic structuralism or open structuralism.[37] He differs from poststructuralists in that his study focuses on what he terms a closed or at least semi-autonomous field of literature, a viable system. Genette proposes in his, *Introduction à l'architexte*,[38] that an open structuralism gives up the noble notion of a stable, ahistorical, irrefutable map or division of literary elements, and instead focuses on the fluid relationship between the text and the architext out of which meaning is produced.[39] Poetics then should not be concerned with the individual text, but with the architext, which he defines as the set of categories, such as genres, thematics, etc., which determine the nature of any individual text.[40]

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[34] Allen, *Intertextuality*, 73.

[35] Orr, *Intertextuality*, 37; cf. with Barthes earlier idea of anchorage, Roland Barthes, "The Rhetoric of the Image," in *Image - Music - Text* (Fontana, 1977), 32-51.

[36] Orr, *Intertextuality*, 40.

[37] Allen, *Intertextuality*, 111.

[38] Gérard Genette, *The Architext: An Introduction*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).

Three years after his *Architext*, he published *Palimpsestes,* which is both a corrective and sustained elaboration of some of his earlier theories on intertextuality. Genette here proposes the term 'transtextuality' as a more inclusive term than 'intertextuality'. He lists the five subtypes of transtextuality as being *intertextuality* (quotation, plagiarism, and allusion); *paratextuality* (the relation between a text and its 'paratext', that is the material which surrounds the main body of the text like titles, epigraphs, illustrations, notes, first drafts, etc.); *architextuality* (a tacit, perhaps even unconscious, designation of a text as part of a genre or genres; although Genette refers to designation by the text itself, it could also be applied to its framing by readers); *metatextuality* (explicit or implicit critical commentary of one text on another text); *hypertextuality* (the relation between a text and a preceding 'hypotext' - a text or genre on which it is based but which it transforms, modifies, elaborates or extends; including parody, spoof, sequel, and translation).

For our present interest we will focus on just two of the subdivisions within transtextuality, namely those of intertextuality and hypertextuality. Genette reduces intertextuality to a relationship of copresence between two texts or among several texts and the actual presence of one text within another. For Genette all texts are set in a relationship, whether obvious or concealed, with other texts.[41] Taking what poststructuralists proposed for the semiotic process of culture and textual signification, Genette reduces it to the issues of quotation, plagiarism and allusion. Genette's redescription gives us a very pragmatic and determinable intertextual relationship between specific elements of individual texts. [42]

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[39] Genette, *The Architext*, 83-4. Thus Genette's open structuralism is a corrective to the more positivistic structuralism.

[40] Genette, *The Architext*, 84; Worton and Still, *Intertextuality*, 22.

[41] Genette, *Palimpsests*, 1.

[42] Allen, *Intertextuality*, 101.

Genette's study of hypertextuality is defined as any relationship uniting text **B** (hypertext) to an earlier text **A** (hypotext), upon which it is grafted in a manner that is not commentary.[43] He goes on to say that hypertexuality has the specific merit of energetically projecting pre-texts (for Genette the latecome[44] text is the hypertext and its pre-text is the hypotext)[45] into new and different circuits of meaning and meaningfulness.[46] The meaning of a hypertextual work, though, depends upon the reader's knowledge of the hypotext, which the hypertext either satirically transforms or imitates for the purpose of pastiche.[47] But what happens when the hypotext is unrecoverable? Sometimes even the scholarly community forgets important hypotexts, long buried in forgotten traditions. In such cases the hypertext becomes merely a text, a non-relational, non-transformational work. Genette's response to this kind of indeterminate case is perhaps revealing. He states that, 'This is the most irritating palimpsest of all, which reduces me to hunches and to questionings'.[48] Genette's resolution of his own unease with regard to uncertain cases is to remind himself and his readers that ultimately every hypertext can be read for and by itself. It is important to note that indeterminacies within an individual text are unimportant, for Genette, since his task is to establish a general system of possibilities and functions.[49] While Genette's work does not sufficiently answer the questions of the missing hypotext, it does remind us that memory can be actively 'revolutionary' only so long as it is creative and at the same time commemorative.[50]

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[43] Genette, *Palimpsests*, 5.

[44] Here I borrow the term latecome, and apply it to the text, from Harold Bloom's use of latecomer as applied to the author, simply as another way to distinguish pre-texts from intertexts, but in this instance without the Freudian baggage Bloom attaches to his use of latecomer. See Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).

[45] Genette, *Palimpsests*; Allen, *Intertextuality*, 108.

[46] Genette, *Palimpsests*, 453.

[47] Allen, *Intertextuality*, 109; Worton and Still, *Intertextuality*, 1-2.

[48] Genette, *Palimpsests*, 397.

[49] Allen, *Intertextuality*, 112.

Michael Riffaterre

Riffaterre's theories, like Genette's, seek to argue for a stable and accurate account of textual meaning.[51] He situates his discussion on the process of reading, and proposes to find out how others 'ought' to read. Literature, according to Riffaterre, is an act of communication guided by three rules: 1) the act of reading is a game guided by the text; 2) the game is played according to linguistic rules; and 3) reality and the author are the text's substitutes. The text, then, is both a limiting and a prescriptive code.[52] Thus the original meaning of the text is the meaning it had for its first readers, though the meaning can change over time and with subsequent readers.[53] Literary production includes the reader and the reader's reactions as well as the text; and the literary phenomenon is not located in the relationship between the author and the text but between the text and the reader.[54] Riffaterre's structuralist emphasis on the text itself and its uniqueness suggests that the text can control its own decoding. The key to this decoding, as has become central to any notion of intertextuality, is the notion that texts do not refer to objects outside of themselves but rather to other texts. The words of a text signify not by referring to things but by presupposing texts, thus intertextuality.[55] Unlike the postmodern text reveling in black holes and gaps, Riffaterre's view of the text opens toward plentitude because it allows for subsequent and finer-meshed readings.[56] Thus in Riffaterre one is struck by the friction and even paradox between the uniqueness of the text and the notion of intertextuality. How can a text be unique when it depends on previous texts for its meaning? For Riffaterre the paradox is diminished (not eclipsed) by his theory of reading.

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[50] This aspect of Genette's work comes very close to the work of Michael Fishbane on inner-biblical exegesis. Fishbane's theory differs in that it focuses on the historical circumstances in the life of Israel that forced the formative traditions to be recast, rather than the literary phenomenon. See Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).

[51] His work must be distinguished from the work of reader-response critics, in that his work is based in and on a concern with textual elements that we are *obliged* to perceive. See Worton and Still, *Intertextuality*, 25.

[52] Michael Riffaterre, *Text Production*, trans. Terese Lyons (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 10-11. See Michael Riffaterre, *Semiotics of Poetry* (Advances in Semiotics, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978), 164.

[53] Riffaterre, *Text Production*, 89, 104-5.

[54] Riffaterre, *Text Production*, 9-89.

Riffaterre's theory of reading suggests that texts provide significance out of socially normative discourse which he terms the 'sociolect'. A text's significance depends on an 'idiolect' which transforms a recognizable element of the sociolect by means of inversion. The key to finding this inversion is to find the texts' 'matrix,' the phrase, word or sentence unit which may or may not exist in the actual text but on which the texts' semiotic system is based. Riffaterre suggests that the intertexts are revealed once the matrix of the text is found. Intertexts are revealed by 'ungrammaticalities,' or words or phrases that indicate an obscurity or difficulty in the text. These ungrammaticalities are 'signposts' which link the text and intertext and allow for a possible solution.[57] Riffaterre states that, 'Intertextuality is made manifest either by syllepsis or by a gap, or by an ungrammaticality....Each of these is immediately perceptible to readers, who need no more, to respond to the text, than the senses nature gave them.'[58] Therefore intertextuality not only grounds textuality but is the main defining characteristic of any (literary) reading. The linguistic and literary competence of readers permits such perceptions of 'breaks' in the fabric of

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[55] Michael Riffaterre, "Interpretation and Undecidability," *New Literary History* 12, no. 2 (1980): 228.

[56] Orr, *Intertextuality*, 39.

[57] Michael Riffaterre, "Compulsory Reader Response: The Intertextual Drive," in *Intertextuality: Theories and Practice*, ed. Michael Worton and Judith Still (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990), 57-58, 74. When he defines intertextuality as the conflict between the text and the intertext, it is patent that, while not unaware of the socio-historical and psychological factors that may determine an author's own (believed, willed) choice of a pre-text, he is concerned essentially with the effect on the reader of a textual presupposition which gives structural and semantic unity rather than fracturing the text under consideration.

[58] Michael Riffaterre, "Intertextuality vs Hypertextuality," *New Literary History* 25, no. 4 (1994): 782.

the text, yet readers also know (or at least presuppose) that the text is a unified whole. Consequently the ungrammaticalities are integrated into another system defined as *semiosis*, wherein the reader seeks to discover some originating pre-existent word group (the hypogram)[59] of which each segment in the work is a variant.[60]

Riffaterre, however, runs into the same problem unearthed by all structuralist understandings of intertextuality, namely what happens when the reader is unable to locate the pre-text of the intertext. Riffaterre believes that ultimately the intertext is locatable, but that it does not need to be located by the reader, who for reasons of education, time, etc., may never ultimately know it or find it. What is essential is that in each individual reading the (various) readers sense, indeed presuppose, that there is an intertext through their perceptions of the symptomatic nature of the ungrammatical articulations of the text itself. The analyst or professional critic/reader must seek and will eventually find the pre-text(s), but the success or failure of this quest is, in a sense, irrelevant to the experience of intertextual reading: as Riffaterre has himself affirmed, 'the only requisite (for reading) may be a presupposition of an intertext'. Graham Allen notes that Riffaterre's notion of presupposition and its ability to assist the reader in locating a text's meaning seems a rather inadequate response to the question of an unrecoverable pre-text. Allen reminds us that:

> Readers come from numerous backgrounds and have numerous reading experiences. They clearly do not share a single 'sociolect'. Therefore it is impossible to refer to the presupposition of readers as if it were a singular or predictable phenomenon. A greater recognition of the situatedness of the reader and the historical, social, ideological and even individual specificities of text production might appear a more alluring prospect then the apparently stable, de-situated theories.[61]

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[59] For Riffaterre a hypogram depends on the notion that certain words or word groups already possess a 'poetic' function in the sociolect. See Allen, *Intertextuality*, 122.

[60] Riffaterre, *Semiotics of Poetry*, 4. Texts presuppose intertexts, which the reader must then actualize within a semiotic reading of the text. The theory depends heavily on the belief not only that texts give us clear clues to their decoding (a belief, that is, that texts can be properly decoded in their own terms), but also that readers have the capacity, the knowledge of the sociolect and of literary traditions, which will allow them to perform such a successful decoding. See Allen, *Intertextuality*, 125.

[61] Allen, *Intertextuality*, 132.

Harold Bloom

Bloom's understanding of intertextuality does not share much in common with either Genette or Riffaterre, or any other critic theorist for that matter. Although he couches his treatment of intertextuality in both intimidating and intriguing terminology that seeks to reveal understanding he likewise seems to conceal it, his approach would best be described as an intertextual re-reading of Freud. Bloom's basic premise of intertextuality is that authors of texts are caught in an oedipal struggle with the great author(s) of the past. In framing the discussion in this way Bloom indicates that texts are not writing but a rewriting, because we cannot write or read without imitating what others have done.[62] Bloom's intertextual relationship is not one that focuses upon the relationships of pre-text(s) in a text, or even the pre-text(s) that the reader perceives, but rather the pre-text(s) which the author wishes to overcome. For him, authors attempt to overcome their predecessors and their influence by the successor text revising or distorting the precursor text(s), thus all writing is misreading or misinterpretation. Bloom expresses this in a radical way when he claims that every new literary work is a creative correction of a parent work. Thus texts are produced when one author misreads another.[63]

Bloom, however, is only concerned with 'strong' authors, who struggle with their 'strong' predecessors; 'Weaker talents idealize figures of capable imagination appropriate for themselves'.[64] According to Bloom's theory, a strong poem overcomes its precursor by a misinterpretation so powerful that it produces a creative insight that surpasses its precursor. He speaks of this overthrow as the 'anxiety of influence', that is, an attempt to break continuity by denying that creativity is built on the backs of others.[65]

Bloom's intertextual emphasis on misinterpretation and his notion that authors are engaged in an oedipal struggle with their precursors, rather than the writer writing within a discursive space of anonymous networks, distinguishes him radically from both Kristevian and Riffaterrian notions of intertextuality.[66]

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[62] Harold Bloom, *A Map of Misreading* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), 32.

[63] Bloom, *A Map of Misreading*, 3; Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence*, 30.

[64] Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence*, 5.

[65] Brawley, *Text to Text*, 12.

Yet, Bloom's theory is one that seeks to explain the authorial end of intertextuality, through the notion of the author struggling to come to terms with his predecessors. Bloom does this by stating that 'textual relations' are indeed passionate ones. Even if one does not follow Bloom in regards to the cedipal struggle of authors with their predecessors, it is still reasonable to acknowledge that often authors do struggle with their 'strong' predecessors.[67]

As stated above, Bloom's theory a strong poem overcomes its precursor by misinterpretation so powerful as to create an insight that surpasses its precursor. This misinterpretation may revise or reverse the precursor, but it can not fulfill it. Bloom here considers the New Testament as a weak poem, precisely because he reads the relationship of the New Testament to the Old Testament as one of fulfillment. In doing this he excludes the possibility that New Testament might indeed resemble a more revisionary relationship to the Old Testament. Bloom's criticism here is both right and wrong. He is wrong in that the function of scripture in the New Testament is far more profound than attempting to warrant events by previous predictions. To speak of the function of scripture in the New Testament as fulfillment is egregiously inadequate, and to claim that the New Testament lacks a revisionary stance toward scripture betrays a superficial reading of the New Testament.[68] But Bloom is also right to call the New Testament a weak poem because it does not seek to overcome its precursor, but rather absorb it.[69]

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[66] Worton and Still, *Intertextuality*, 28. Contra. Culler, *The Pursuit of Signs*, 108-9, who points out that all of this puts Bloom at odds with Kristeva, Barthes, Riffaterre and their like, accuses Bloom of doing nothing more than a search for origins in a single precursor author, but this itself may be a generously simplistic criticism of Bloom. For a more thorough critique see Orr, *Intertextuality*, 68-82.

[67] Although this would not be an appropriate observation for Bloom himself, as he sees his whole project as a means of setting up the master critic as the only viable misreader.

[68] See Michael Fishbane, "The Hebrew Bible and Exegetical Tradition," in *Intertextuality in Ugarit and Israel*, ed. Johannes C. De Moor (Leiden: Brill, 1998).

[69] Brawley, *Text to Text*, 12. It is our opinion that Paul had no reason to overthrow his precursor, because he hoped to recast Israel's tradition to show that Jesus as Messiah was indeed a fulfillment of scriptures and not an abrogation of them. Thus, the revisionary relationship requires a dynamic dialogue with scripture such that scripture cannot be set aside. The successor does not supplant the precursor, because the revisionary relationship is reciprocal.

Anti-Intertextualists

In discussing the 'anti-intertextualists' as Heinrich Plett has termed them, our aim is not to take up certain scholarly positions against intertextuality, but rather to show that there are some scholars who are opposed to intertextual readings in general. The 'anti-intertextualists' are either those that do not think anything new is going on, they claim that intertextual practitioners merely change the old terminology to what is in vogue. This group would insist that intertextuality is nothing more than source criticism and has been going on since antiquity. Another group within the 'anti-intertextualists' admits that more has changed than just mere terminology, yet simply dismiss intertextuality pejoratively as the work of a few incomprehensible 'progressives', scholars who set out to obscure meaning with lofty terminology rather than to clarify. These progressives furthermore 'try to cultivate and develop the revolutionary heritage of the originators of the new concept'; they work on intertextuality from a philosophical or semiotic perspective, their work is 'elitist' and 'esoteric,' and their publications are marked by a strangely abstract quality which impedes their understandability all the while surrounding their critical enterprise with an aura of mystery and exclusiveness. Thus for the anti-intertextualists intertextuality is either accused of being incomprehensible on the one hand, or old wine in new wine skins on the other.[70]

What Does an Intertextual Reading Offer?

The Transformation of the Text

Despite the wide spectrum of diversity which the term intertextuality can be used, what makes intertextuality an especially useful tool in the reading of texts is that it introduces a new way of reading which transcends the linearity of the text. Each intertextual reference is the occasion for an alternative: either one continues reading, taking it only as a pericope like any other, or else one searches for the source text, carrying out a sort of intellectual remembrance where the intertextual reference appears like a paradigmatic element that has been displaced, deriving from a forgotten structure. But in reality there is really no choice at all as these two processes really operate simultaneously in intertextual reading and in discourse causing texts to fork and gradually expand in semantic space.[71]

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[70] Plett, "Intertextualities," 3-4.

It might be helpful at this point to look at a contrast between a conventional view of the text and an intertextual one, as presented by Steve Moyise.[72] G.K. Beale explains the conventional view of a text to be:

> The notion that readers create meaning is likely due in part to a hermeneutical flaw confusing original 'meaning' with 'significance' ... by way of illustration, we can compare an author's original, unchanging meaning to an apple in its original context of the apple tree. When someone removes the apple and puts it in another setting (say, in a basket of various fruits in the dining room for decorative purposes), the apple does not lose its original identity as an apple, the fruit of particular kind of tree, but the apple must now be understood not in and of itself but in relation to the new context which is been placed ... The new context does not annihilate the original identity of the apple, but now the apple must be understood in its relation to its new setting.[73]

The point of this analogy is that even though the apple might now be viewed in a different way it does not become a pear. For Beale, readers can not make a text mean whatever they like. But an intertextual view of a text while agreeing that new contexts do not completely annihilate the original identity of the text (or in this case the apple), they do nevertheless play with it. Steve Moyise responding to Beale's notion of a text offers this response:

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[71] Laurent Jenny, "The Strategy of Forms," in *French Literary Theory Today: A Reader*, ed. Tzvetan Todorov (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 44-5.

[72] This example is found in Moyise, "Intertextuality and the Study of the Old Testament," 14 - 41.

[73] G. K. Beale, *John's Use of the Old Testament in Revelation* (JSNTSup 166; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998). Here the terminology of E. D. Hirsch, *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967). is clearly echoed.

> A better analogy would be that of a fruit salad, where we no longer have nice shiny apples but pieces of apple, mixed up with pieces of pear, and pieces of banana. There is a connection with the shiny apple that once hung on the tree but also dramatic differences: it is no longer round, the skin has been removed and it is been severed from its core.[74]

What Moyise is illustrating, is what happens to texts when they are re-used in other texts. Texts have a way of changing, of reconfiguring meaning, of being transfigured when placed in other texts. Moyise goes on to state:

> ...But the real problem with this type of analogy is its corporeality. Texts do not have hard surfaces that protect them from the change of context. They are more like ripples on a pond, which spread out, intersect with other ripples and form new patterns.[75]

John Hollander describes this transfiguration of texts in his work *The Figure of Echo*.[76] For Hollander transfiguration takes place when texts echo other texts. As in an 'echo chamber' any text being echoed will sound differently than it has anywhere else.[77] For Hollander there is an echo between the text and its intertext, a synchronic reverberation bouncing back and forth, producing new figurations and recasting the meaning of both the independent parts. These new figurations change the meaning of the original in order that it can be understood within a new context. The change is not merely a diachronic revision; because it consists of a tensive interplay between the precursor and the successor texts, allowing the meaning as a whole to reach a new level. What one text expresses in its own voice is altered by the voice from the other, resulting in the interaction between these voices which then recasts the meaning of the independent parts.[78] This interplay is why Paul Ricoeur views intertextuality as a species of metaphor. For Ricoeur two texts that have no literal or logical connection are nevertheless seen together, and as a result of this dynamic interaction new meaning is produced, 'resemblance' is created. Whereas a typical metaphor associates two semantic fields (e.g., 'God' and 'rock'), intertextuality associates two or more textual fields, effectively creating a new context which to read a text.[79] This new figuration can be seen as the fusion of horizons. Robert Brawley states that:

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[74] Moyise, "Intertextuality and the Study of the Old Testament," 31-2.

[75] Moyise, "Intertextuality and the Study of the Old Testament," 31-2.

[76] John Hollander, *The Figure of Echo: A Mode of Allusion in Milton and After* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981).

[77] Beal, "Ideology and Intertextuality," 21. One value of this theory is that it expresses the intertextual character of all writing while maintaining, in the metaphor at least, a sense of closure (walls) around the text's structure. There can be no echo in a wide open field.

[78] Brawley, *Text to Text*, 7; Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*, 19.

> The text and the interpreter each has a horizon that embraces everything that falls within the limits of its own point of view. But every act of interpretation transforms the horizons of both. Similarly when one text takes on the task of interpreting by appealing to a precursor, each text sings in its own voice even as its voice also sing in unisons in harmony or in discord with voices of the other. Whereas the conventional approach focuses on a diachronic relationship between the precursor and the successor, from the perspective of intertextuality the new text and the precursor hang on each other holistically in a synchronic relationship. Allusions are interdependent formulations. Moreover, there is a tensive interplay between them that recasts the meaning of the independent parts.[80]

Texts though do exist in certain contexts, therefore, in alluding to or echoing a specific text the whole world of that text is evoked.[81] Consequently, the textual world - that is, the larger textual context - also becomes part of the intertextual pattern, creating wider textual meaning than the text as an isolated fragment could evoke.[82] To recognize that a text is related to another text is both to affirm and to deny the earlier text. It is affirmed as a type of model and source, while it is denied by being made secondary to the later text, precisely by being regarded as a model and a source that has been superseded. The later text displaces its model.[83]

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[79] Paul Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor: Multi-Disciplinary Studies of the Creation of Meaning in Language* (London: Routledge, 1978), 187-91. cf. Brawley, *Text to Text*, 9-11; Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning in This Text?: The Bible, the Reader, and the Morality of Literary Knowledge* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 132; Worton and Still, *Intertextuality*, 11-12.

[80] Brawley, *Text to Text*, 6.

[81] Thus an intertextual reference may be to a ritual, a work of art, or indeed to a matrix of ideas which is informed by specific texts, but is not a text in and of itself. See Sylvia C. Keesmaat, *Paul and His Story: (Re)Interpreting the Exodus Tradition* (JSNTSup 181; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 50.

[82] Keesmaat, *Paul and His Story*, 51.

Is There an Intertext in This Text?

Despite the theoretical discussion of intertextuality the actual practice of intertextual reading must have lines of demarcation, no matter how arbitrarily they may be set, and no matter how quickly they may be transgressed. That is, no intertextual reading can choose what poststructuralists might term the 'general text' – everything, all at once, everywhere – as its object of interpretation. As Jonathan Culler puts it, 'it is difficult to make the universe as such the object of attention.'[84] So the practice of intertextual reading must find its place somewhere between the closed structure of a single text (however defined) and the uncontained surplus of language (called intertextuality). But what determines which intertextual relationships are legitimate and which are not?[85] And what determines how 'rightly' to negotiate those relationships once they are established?[86]

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[83] Peter D. Miscall, "Isaiah: New Heavens, New Earth, New Book," in *Reading between Texts: Intertextuality and the Hebrew Bible*, ed. Danna Nolan Fewell (Literary currents in biblical interpretation; Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992), 44.

[84] Jonathan Culler, "Presupposition and Intertextuality," *Modern Language Notes* 91 (1976): 1384.

[85] Moyise, "Intertextuality and the Study of the Old Testament," 40, cautiously notes that, 'since it is clearly impossible for any one individual to perfectly grasp the meaning of a text; it seems to me inescapable that poststructuralist intertextuality is true to some degree. The critical question is whether this is significant or is simply an aspect of being human (finite). For example every performance of a musical symphony is different. The conductor will never conduct in exactly the same way. Each of the violinists will differ depending on how they feel that day. The horns will differ. Sickness might mean that one or two players are making their debut, all of which means that there are literally thousands of interacting factors which determine the final performance. Nevertheless, there will be no doubt that one is hearing Beethoven's fifth symphony and not his sixth (for example). The differences are real and worthy of study since they greatly affect one's pleasure (or annoyance) at the performance. But they should not be used to suggest that we can never know or say anything about a text.'

[86] Beal, "Ideology and Intertextuality," 28.

Ultimately readers are free to make whatever associations come to their minds. And certainly in some aspect the hermeneutical event occurs from the readers reading of the text, although that reading always proceeds within a community of interpretation, whose hermeneutical conventions inform that reading. Thus the criteria which we propose are those things we find helpful in determining whether an intertext is indeed valid. In setting forth criteria we are thus setting forth rather arbitrarily the rules that will govern our interpretation. And in any interpretation interpreters adopt certain positions because they believe the evidence 'compels' them to see it that way. But the fact that equally sincere scholars feel 'compelled' to see things differently suggests that this process is not ideologically neutral.[87] As Beal suggests:

> Readings of the Bible are not only (and not always) interesting, but always and necessarily interested; interested either in maintaining the presently legitimate boundaries of meaningful relationship between texts, or in transgressing them. The history of interpretation, as Marx made clear about History in general, is always a history of struggle. This is nowhere more obvious than in the history of Biblical interpretation. It is therefore of utmost importance that we recognize the basic relations between writing and ideology, and thus between interpretation and power.[88]

The relationship between ideology and writing becomes all the more real when discussing the demarcation of intertextuality, and also the criteria of interpretation. Robbins recognizes this in his attempt to describe intertextuality as an aspect of what he calls 'Socio-rhetorical Criticism'. He notes that most examples of biblical intertextuality have already made fundamental decisions, such as (1) giving priority to Jewish texts rather than Greek or Roman texts; (2) emphasizing the influence of texts over other expressions of culture; and (3) confining the study to historical and literary modes of discourse. But such choices already demonstrate that, 'the ideological nature of all interpretation manifests itself in the interplay between the choice of a mode of interpretive discourse and the choice of dimensions of the text the interpreter reinscribes.'[89]

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[87] Moyise, "Intertextuality and the Study of the Old Testament," 38.

[88] Beal, "Ideology and Intertextuality," 36.

Fredric Jameson describes this ideology as a strategy of containment which imposes meaningful structures on the totality, which is 'not available for representation, any more than it is accessible in the form of absolute truth'. In this light, the ideological nature of texts is to be understood as the 'attention to those...containment strategies which seek to endow their objects of representation with formal unity'.[90] Thus in understanding the ideological nature of interpretation certain questions must be noted, not in an effort to silence the influence of ideology (which can never be done), but rather to see where this ideology may perhaps mute other viable interpretations, and other possible intertextual relationships. The first question is: (1) How does the reader impose limits on the innumerable intertextual possibilities of a particular biblical text? Which possibilities of meaningful relationship are delegitimized in order to produce a definitive, coherent reading? The second being: (2) What ideologies–as a strategy of containment–do these particular modes of production admit? Which voices are marginalized and which are foregrounded when these critical approaches are put into practice? The third: (3) What new relationships and other voices are silenced by the established boundaries (or 'critical consensus') of intertextual relationship–and the strategies of containment which maintain them?[91]

Thus by being forthright about our ideological presuppositions we immediately let the reader know the choices we intend to make, and as a consequence the viable options we are necessarily silencing. First, by limiting our discussion of intertextuality to the intertexts that deal with the exodus story, and the latter manifestations of this story which come to include exile and restoration, and the cultural philosophy of first century Roman imperial ideology, as read in Paul's letter to the Romans, we are naturally silencing a plethora of intertextual intertexts, whether they be from Greek, Roman, or other Ancient Near Eastern texts.[92] Second, we limit our intertextual study primarily to other literary manifestations, thus eliminating from our intertextual exploration other possible cultural correspondence.[93] As for the detection of the intertexts themselves we will rely heavily upon the efforts of Richard Hays and the now standard criteria he sets forth in his work the *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*.[94] In doing this the implication is to claim that intertextual relationships are strongest when they can be credibly demonstrated to occur within the literary structure of the text, and are recoverable by a competent or 'learned' reader. As a result my intertextual reading of Romans will not attempt to focus on the vast unbound text.

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[89] Robbins, *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse*, 213.

[90] Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981), 54. It is in this way that intertextuality opens to ideological criticism. If ideology is a strategy of containment, then the interpretive rules in biblical studies, which establish closure (i.e, 'formal unity') on the general text and legitimize certain intertextual relationships, are certainly ideological. They are, so to speak, modes of production for making sense from a surplus of intertextual possibilities. See Beal, "Ideology and Intertextuality," 32.

[91] Beal, "Ideology and Intertextuality," 36.

What Might an Intertext Look Like?

In Hays' work he considers the following criteria which underlie his own judgments about the presence of an echo in a text, and here we acknowledge our debt to his work on negotiating intertextual relationships. He notes seven criteria for finding intertexts, to which we add one:

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[92] See Dennis R. McDonald, ed, *Mimesis and Intertextuality in Antiquity and Christianity* (Studies in Antiquity and Christianity; Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2001). It is important to note that these texts are not limited to the story of the exodus found in the scriptures of Israel, but rather to all the interpretations of that story that may have possibly informed Paul's subsequent use of it. This includes Evans's point that it might be more helpful to speak of echoes of interpreted Scripture, for most literature that we have that speaks of the exodus gives a (re)interpretation of it. See Craig A. Evans, "Listening for Echoes of Interpreted Scripture," in *Paul and the Scriptures of Israel*, ed. Craig A. Evans and James A. Sanders (JSNTSup 83; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 50.

[93] But it is important to note that when texts occur in relation to other texts they are also in dialogue with other aspects of the cultures which they occur. Hence an intertextual reference may be to a ritual or a work of art, or indeed to a matrix of ideas which is informed by specific texts, but may not be a text in itself. See Daniel Boyarin, *Intertextuality and the Reading of Midrash* (Indiana Studies in Biblical Literature; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 12; Keesmaat, *Paul and His Story*, 50; Hayden White, *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 58-62.

[94] Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*.

(1) *Availability*. Is the proposed source of the intertext available to the author and or original readers? Our task here is to be consciousness of the cultural, social, and political contexts to which the original readers were located, to determine whether or not it was plausible for them to catch such intertexts.

(2) *Volume*. The volume of an intertext is determined primarily by the degree of explicit repetition of words or syntactical patterns. This includes form, genre, setting and plot of the precursor text.

(3) *Recurrence*. How often does Paul elsewhere cite or allude to the same scriptural passage?

(4) *Thematic Coherence*. How well does the alleged echo fit into the line of argument that Paul is developing?

(5) *Historical Plausibility*. Could Paul have intended the alleged meaning effect? How important would it be for the reader to *recognize* the intertextuality involved? Leaving the language of intentionality aside: is the suggested meaning plausible in light of the plots which the intertext of the culture allows?[95]

(6) *History of Interpretation*. Have other readers, both critical and pre-critical, heard the same echoes?

(7) *Satisfaction*. With or without clear confirmation from the other criteria listed here, does the proposed reading make sense?

(8) *Reflexivity*: How reflexive (or self-conscious) does the use of intertextuality seem to be?[96] Here it is noted that intertextuality is not a feature of the text alone but of the contract which reading forges between the author(s) and the reader(s).

Certainly by proposing criteria for noticing the presence of an intertext within the text we are not supposing that all texts everywhere will answer to these criteria, nor do I intend to subject my reading of the exodus, Isaiah, or Romans to a strict application of these eight principles, rather these are guides to help determine the potentiality of an intertext. Here, I believe that the three most important of these criteria are availability, volume, and reflexivity.[97] The others certainly help to substantiate probable allusions on a subordinate level, but are not essential in my opinion for unearthing probable intertexts. Beyond Hays's criteria, there are other signs pointing to an intertext within the text, such as Riffaterre's notion of ungrammaticalities. Ungrammaticalities are clues found within a text that allow readers to move beyond the literal level of significance to an intertextual level. These ungrammaticalities illustrate conflicts within a reading of a text that betray obstacles to a construal of meaning as if they were grammatical anomalies or deviations from normal definitions. Such texts often cannot be understood through the help of the immediate context, grammar, lexicon, or descriptive systems and often betray clues that a transformation of the precursor text has occurred, and that this very transformation is at odds with the precursor, thus opening the door for an intertextual reading.[98]

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[95] Keesmaat, *Paul and His Story*, 52. See Boyarin, *Intertextuality and the Reading of Midrash*, 86.

[96] Taken, with an addition to the second and fifth criteria, and also an addition of the eighth criteria, from Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*, 29-31.

The Exodus Story as Paul's Intertext in Romans

What then is our impetus for selecting and limiting our examination of the intertextual nature of Paul's letter to the Romans primarily to that of the reworking of the exodus in the text of Isaiah? Firstly, as stated above, and which bears repeating, any intertextual enterprise must have limits. Culler notes that:

> When we try to work with the concept (of intertextuality) we focus it – but by that focusing, to some degree, we undermine the general concept of intertextuality in whose name we are working. But this is no reason to abandon the project. It suggests, rather, the need for multiple strategies, for different focuses and restrictions, even though one cannot

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[97] For a brief but helpful discussion of reflexivity see Daniel Chandler, *Semiotics: The Basics* (London: Routledge, 2002), 204-205.

[98] Brawley, *Text to Text*, 14.

> have any confidence that these could eventually contribute to a grand synthesis.[99]

Thus by limiting the possible intertexts to those that deal with the exodus story as reworked by the texts of the Prophets (primarily Isaiah) we are focusing in on one of the many and multiple strategies that could be undertaken.

Secondly, it is our understanding that the exodus story became one of the formative traditions of Israel and thus played an important role in the culture and the writings of subsequent generations that claimed these texts of scripture as their own. As the tradition has it, the exodus is the event which God chose out for himself a nation, and redeemed for himself a people from the slavery of the Egyptians.[100] The exodus from Egypt was experienced, by the Israelites, as an event of divine redemption, during which ancient promises were realized and divine power confirmed. For this reason it is said that the exodus became the ground or rationale for Israel's obedience, identity, and belief.[101] Yet this event was not just a thing of the past, but rather like most formative traditions it was re-actualized by subsequent generations to not only make sense out of the present, but also to forecast hope and meaning for the future.[102] It is our assumption that any movement that would claim the Scriptures of Israel as their own would seek to use this formative tradition as a rational for its own existence.

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[99] Culler, *The Pursuit of Signs*, 122.

[100] See Lev. 24.42, 55; 26.45; Deut. 7.8, 18-19; 29.1-4; Josh. 2.10; 9.9; Judges 6.8-9, 13; 1 Sam. 10.18; 12.6-8; 2 Sam. 7.23; Ps. 80.8-11; Jer. 31.32; Ezek 20.5-10; Hos. 11.1; 12.13; 13.4. Leo Baeck, *This People Israel: The Meaning of Jewish Existence*, trans. A. H. Friedlander (New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1964), 68; David Daube, *The Exodus Pattern in the Bible* (London: Faber and Faber, 1963), 11-13; Michael Fishbane, *Text and Texture: Close Readings of Selected Biblical Texts* (New York: Schocken Books, 1979), 125; Samuel E. Loewenstamm, *The Evolution of the Exodus Tradition*, trans. Baruch J. Schwartz (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1992), 11, 13; Martin Noth, *A History of Pentateuchal Traditions*, trans. B. W. Andersen (Englewood: Prentice Hall, 1971), 47-48; Carroll Stuhlmueller, *Creative Redemption in Deutero-Isaiah* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1970), 60; Y. Zakovitch, *And You Shall Tell Your Sons: The Concept of the Exodus in the Bible* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1991), 40.Cf. Erich S. Gruen, *Heritage and Hellenism: The Reinvention of Jewish Tradition* (Hellenistic Culture and Society 30; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 41-42, who reminds us that the Exodus story told by the Israelites was probably not the same story that the Egyptians told about themselves.

[101] On *obedience* see Leland Ryken et al, *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 25; James A. Sanders, *Torah and Canon* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972), 20. On *identity* see Deut. 5.15; 6.20-25; 10.19; 15.15; 16.12, 20; 23.8; 24.18, 22; Lev. 19.34; Exod. 20.2; 22.20; 23.9. Cf. Baeck, *This People Israel*, 46; José Severino Croatto, *Exodus, a Hermeneutics of Freedom*, trans. Salvator Attanasio (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1981), 28; Daube, *The Exodus Pattern in the Bible*, 13, 38; Noth, *A History of Pentateuchal Traditions*, 49; Nahum M. Sarna, *Exploring Exodus: The Heritage of Biblical Israel* (New York: Schocken Books, 1986), 3; Stuhlmueller, *Creative Redemption in Deutero-Isaiah*, 60; Michael Walzer, *Exodus and Revolution* (New York: Basic Books, 1985), 53, 101-03, 09-13. On belief and the use of the exodus as the basis for the Law see Zakovitch, *And You Shall Tell Your Sons*, 57-61; Daube, *The Exodus Pattern in the Bible*.

Thirdly, it places Paul firmly in the Jewish tradition, as a reader of the Scripture's of Israel.[103] As Hays explains:

> Paul's discourse is performed within the linguistic symphony (or cacophony, as the case may be) of his culture. As critical listeners, we can identify some of the major parts in the score, but none of us at this historical distance can hope to recover all the resonances that a competent listener contemporary with Paul would have heard. We do the best we can.[104]

And as readers of Israel's Scriptures ourselves with an ear tuned to the Second Temple traditions we seek to argue that if Paul's predecessors could speak of an estranged Israel once again restored to her God, then it is entirely possible for Paul to speak of another estranged people (such as the nations) who might experience the same or similar restoration. And furthermore since traditionally this redemption was cast within the matrix of the exodus story, God's act of redeeming the Israelites from the slavery of the Egyptians, it is possible then that Paul too would speak of this 'new' redemption for the nations by using the same matrix of ideas.[105]

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[102] See Deut. 30.4-5; Ps. 30.4; 104.11; 142.2,10; Isa. 60.21; 63.13, 14; Jer. 31.8,9; Tob. 13.4-5; Bar. 5.6; Sir. 36.10; *Jub.* 17.3; 22.14; 32.19; *1 En.* 5.7. On the exodus as the basis for future restoration in the prophets see Bernhard W. Anderson, "Exodus Typology in Second Isaiah," in *Israel's Prophetic Heritage: Essays in Honor of James Muilenburg*, ed. Bernhard W. Anderson and Walter J. Harrelson (London: SCM, 1962), 177-95 ; Joseph Blenkinsopp, "The Scope and Depth of the Exodus Tradition in Deutero- Isaiah 40-55," in *The Dynamism of Biblical Tradition*, ed. Pierre Benoit, Roland E. Murphy, and Bastiaan van Iersel (Concilium, 20; New Jersey: Paramus, 1967), 41-50; Walter Brueggemann, "The Exodus Narrative as Israel's Articulation of Faith Development," in *Hope within History* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1987), 87; Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*, 361-66, 412; Otto A. Piper, "Unchanging Promises: Exodus in the New Testament," *Interpretation* 11 (1957): 3-5; Sarna, *Exploring Exodus*, 3; Stuhlmueller, *Creative Redemption in Deutero-Isaiah*, 60-63; Walzer, *Exodus and Revolution*, 117-19; Rikki E. Watts, "Consolation or Confrontation? Isaiah 40-55 and the Delay of the New Exodus," *Tyndale Bulletin* 41.1 (1990): 15.

[103] See Bruce Chilton and Jacob Neusner, *Judaism in the New Testament: Practices and Beliefs* (London: Routledge, 1995), 4, here Neusner argues that the earliest Christians insisted that they formed 'Israel' and devoted rigorous thought to the demonstration that theirs was the Torah's sole valid meaning and their founder its unique medium of fulfillment. In due course they produced the New Testament, but for at least the first hundred years of Christianity their only revealed scripture was the same Torah the rest of Israel received as God's teaching.

[104] Richard B. Hays, "On the Rebound: A Response to Critiques of Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul," in *Paul and Scriptures of Israel*, ed. Craig A. Evans and James A. Sanders (JSNTSup 83; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 72.

The scope of our dissertation is very limited, especially when taking into account the methodology of intertextuality. Our use of a close intertextual reading of the Exodus story, the texts of Isaiah, and Paul's letter to the Romans is similar in scope to Bloom's reading of the later poets in light of Milton or Shakespeare.[106] For us the exodus story was a defining moment, perhaps *the* defining moment in ancient Israelite tradition. Our feeling is that any Second Temple Jewish movement that sought legitimacy would be mindful of it, even if it had ambitions of overcoming it.[107]

Method and Procedure

In the chapters that follow, I will be using an intertextual reading informed from the above section making use of the insights from the authors I have discussed while placing emphasis on the transformative nature of the intertext. My use of intertextuality as a methodology is not intended to be a structured set of rules that govern the text, but rather a way of reading that an ear tuned to intertextual possibilities produces. Thus in examining the exodus story as a possible intertext firstly I will look across two main bodies of literature, the first being the exodus story as found in Exodus and Joshua, the second being the new exodus as described in Isaiah 40-55 in order to investigate not only the linguistic characteristics, and rhetorical functions, but also to position the understanding of the exodus traditions and the possibilities of transformation in each of the texts studied. The goal of this section is not to define a normative use of the exodus story, but to ground two very important ways which the Scriptures of Israel speak of the exodus. Next I hope to briefly sketch a picture of how this exodus motif was a vibrant tradition in the Second Temple period, albeit a variegated one. I do this in order to establish the case that the shared cultural background that these texts assume in order to seek legitimacy. Then moving from this description I will seek a closer examination of Paul's immediate context of empire, seeking to link the use of the second exodus and the polemic found within it, thematically in order to understand why the terminology Paul uses in the proclamation of the good news can be seen as a polemic against the Roman imperial order. It is against this complex backdrop that the echoed reverberations of exodus, exile, and return will be examined as they pertain to Paul's letter to the Romans.

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[105] Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*, 14. This point becomes even more salient if we read Paul within the hermeneutics of prophetic criticism. One who carried the proclamation of God's word just as Israel's prophets and sages had always done, in a way that reactivated the past revelation under new conditions. And more importantly to read Paul in this stream of tradition as a prophetic critic who sought to confront Israel with this new story God was telling. See Sanders, *Torah and Canon*; Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel.*

[106] Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence*, 11. cf. Greene, *The Light in Troy*, 51, who comments on the long poems of the Renaissance in much the same way stating that they 'tend to reach out to a single privileged predecessor and bind themselves to that authenticating model with particularly intricate knots'. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*, 15-16, argues that the vocabulary and cadences of Scripture are imprinted deeply on Paul's mind, and the great stories of Israel continue to serve for him as a fund of symbols and metaphors that condition his perception of the world, of God's promised deliverance of his people, and of his own identity and calling. His faith, in short, is one whose articulation is inevitably intertextual in character, and Israel's Scripture is the 'determinate subtext that plays a constitutive role' in shaping his literary production.

[107] Cf. Jacob Neusner, "Exile and Return as the History of Judaism," in *Exile: Old Testament, Jewish, and Christian Conceptions*, ed. James M. Scott (JSJSup 56; Leiden: Brill, 1997), 221.

In this dissertation intertextuality will be defined as: the interrelationship of texts, including, but not limited to, the absorption, transformation, rewriting, reuse and dialogue of text within a text. The text is the work which absorbs, transforms, rewrites or reuses; the intertext is the work which is absorbed, transformed, rewritten or reused, thus the text within the text. Kristeva's notion that no text is an island and that the text not only absorbs but destroys the intertext is extremely important, for it is the first step to seeing the text and intertext in a dialogic relationship. However, rather than seeing intertextuality as a free-flowing web (like Kristeva and Barthes), for this thesis we will focus on intertextuality as a structured network connecting texts and intertexts which are already associated (like Genette and Riffaterre). Genette's concept of the transformative nature of the intertext is fundamental to our close readings of the texts to be considered. Riffaterre offers help in detecting the intertextual networks with his discussion of ungrammaticalities. Bloom reminds us of the struggle between the predecessor and the latecomer, while highlighting that the nature of textual relations are passionate ones even if they may not be oedipal. Bloom is also important in understanding the struggle for individuality in this thesis, as it seeks to define itself both within and against a tradition. Here in particular Bloom is helpful in understanding this authors own struggle to develop an interpretive space by resisting the interpretations of his own rather Hirschian tradition, which while attempting to repress, still have a tendency to rear their ugly heads throughout this text. In the end this intertextual reading is done paying special attention to the ideological nature of texts, authors and their readers alike.

The study hopes to advance two particular critical arguments. The first is that an intertextual reading often causes readers to listen more intently to the voices within the text. That is, intertexts play against a broader backdrop. The twofold task of a criticism attuned to such intertexts, then, is to call attention to them so that others might be able to hear them; and to give an account of the distortions and new figuration which they generate.[108] The second is to affirm that Paul was a committed reader of the Scriptures of Israel. How might we understand Paul's use of Israel's foundational story within the framework of his letter to the Romans? It is acknowledged that the boundaries of any intertextual reading will vary with the critic, but as Hays' points out, 'wherever there is a community of readers who hearken to earlier texts as powerful and evocative voices with a claim to be heard in the present, it is our opinion that intertextual writing and reading will take place.' [109]

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[108] Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*, 19.

[109] Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*, 28.

CHAPTER TWO
THE EXODUS STORY: THE MAKING OF A MOTIF

Any reading of the Scriptures of Israel must inevitably grapple with the plurality of voices and the multiplicity of narratives found therein. It is not as if we are dealing with a homogenous text written by a single author nor within a single generation. That being said the reconstruction of the texts, found in chapters two and three of this thesis, and that deal with the exodus and the second exodus motif are reconstructions that we think would have been understandable to the inhabitants of the Second Temple period. While we attempt a close literary study of these texts and the narratives construed within these texts, we are by in large not concerned with the history behind these texts. It is our presupposition in the reconstruction of this narrative, that those groups who preserved these texts, and the groups who read these texts as Scripture, both had a vested interest in taking this multivocality and reducing it into overarching narratives.

This process of constructing and reconstructing these stories has always been, at least in part, an effort to make faith a possibility for the next generation. Thus each version of retelling (of which there were surely many) intends to take account of the ideological situation where the particular group finds itself, in order to weave the traditions of old into new acts of imagination.[109] While there was no doubt many competing ways which to tell these stories there was some basic continuity to the world described in these stories. For instance, YHWH is always articulated as the defining character and most of these retellings contain the following plotlines: YHWH is the deity responsible for both creating and ruling the universe; who reveals himself to humankind as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and he calls their descendants to be his special people. For it was YHWH who took the Hebrew people out of the land of Egypt and called them to be his until the end of time.[110] Through this election the very self-image of an Israel is generated, as defining a people whom YHWH has promised to bless, in countless ways, but particularly by giving them a land and a progeny. These promises were established with Moses on Mount Sinai and were regarded as acts of divine grace and mercy; commandments were given so that Israel would know how to live according to YHWH's pleasure. These commandments were given to highlight the contingent nature of the promised blessings on Israel's continued obedience. Both Lev 26 and Deut 28 set out the parameters with which Israel was to proceed; if they were obedient to the commandments they would prosper, but if they were disobedient they would suffer. This contingent nature of YHWH's covenant helped frame the interpretation of Israel's subsequent history, to the point that, when various disasters fell upon Israel it could be interpreted as God's reaction to their disobedience, and any punishment that followed was meant to be restorative, so that the people might live again within the justice and righteousness prescribed within the covenant. That YHWH loves this special people was never in doubt, particularly when they are faithful and when they obey his commandments. But when they do not – and they frequently do not – God's undeserved love for the people of his election is not erased but only temporarily suspended. Often in these retellings after God's anger has passed, the original love returns, perhaps in increased measure. Like the love of a parent for an erring child, God's affection for Israel is indestructible. It is the expression of God's eternal faithfulness.[111] When calamities beset the nation, the standard explanation became the disobedience of the people. This left the traditional system intact, and held out the promise that sooner or later YHWH would act on their behalf and redeem them from their suffering in a glorious moment of restoration.[112]

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[109] The stories are acts of imagination because they are stories that elicit a response and are not simply descriptive stories of 'common sense', but rather are stories replete with artistic sensibilities and risk-taking rhetoric to insist that there is a world beyond the 'common sense'. See Walter Brueggemann, *An Introduction to the Old Testament: The Canon and Christian Imagination* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003), 9-13.

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[110] Michael Wyschogrod, "Israel, Church, and Election," in *Abraham's Promise: Judaism and Jewish-Christian Relations*, ed. Michael Wyschogrod and R. Kendall Soulen (Radical Traditions; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 180.

[111] Michael Wyschogrod, "A Jewish View of Christianity," in *Abraham's Promise: Judaism and Jewish-Christian Relations*, ed. Michael Wyschogrod and R. Kendall Soulen (Radical Traditions; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 151.

[112] Wyschogrod, "A Jewish View of Christianity," 152. For the various retellings of this narrative see Deut 6.20-24; Josh 24.2-13; Neh. 9.6-37; Ps 78; 105; 106; 136; Ezek 16.3-63; 20.5-44.

The story of the exodus, albeit only a part of this overall narrative, plays a formative part in the larger story. Like all the individual parts that make up this larger narrative, the story of the exodus is a densely layered narrative in the Pentateuch that intertwines a number of different episodes in an effort to move towards YHWH's preeminent liberation, moving from a group of slaves into a people, and ultimately the formation of a nation.[113] It is our aim in this examination of the exodus narrative to pay special attention to the aspects of the drama that play YHWH off against the god's of the Egyptians, focusing on how this narrative became not only a schema of sorts for all subsequent liberations, but also how it spawned the polemics in much of the later biblical and sectarian texts. We intend to examine it in such a way as to treat it as a pre-text, as it were, which is (re)used a number ways in other texts for many different reasons.

The Basic Narrative Essentials of the Exodus Story

The narrative of the exodus begins with a deliberate attempt to establish continuity with what has gone on before in the book of Genesis, informing the reader that the events that are about to take place are to be foregrounded specifically in the proceedings of Joseph and his family. The text begins by mentioning Joseph, and thus alluding to his particular struggle to prominence, focusing the reader on Joseph's perseverance and trust in YHWH that ultimately results in the blessing of his rather undeserving family. The narrative thus sets the context of the exodus in the ongoing drama of the fulfilling of the patriarchal/creational promise of offspring (Gen. 17). The text glosses over the intervening centuries setting up enough distance in order to describe a very different situation from the Egypt that their forefather Joseph resided in. In contrasting the times in this way the text highlights the dire circumstances of the present, and uses this as a technique to heighten the reader's awareness of the benevolence of YHWH. Through out this narrative the covenant faithfulness of YHWH is contrasted with the main antagonist of the story, the oppressive pharaoh. The story itself depicts the pharaoh harboring fears that the Hebrew's are multiplying too rapidly and that he must take swift action. In this vein he seeks to contain the Hebrews by telling the midwives to participate in infanticide. When the midwives refuse to participate in the pharaohs subversive policies of killing all the male newborns, he escalates his policy to that of state sponsored death.[114] It is under this cloud that the text introduces the birth of Moses, a Hebrew boy destined to be killed. Moses' mother however was unwilling to resign her son to the fate of Egyptian law. So she hides him until it is no longer possible to conceal him, then in an act of desperation covers a basket in pitch and puts him in the Nile. Ironically, it is the daughter of the pharaoh, moved by compassion, who saves Moses from the river, thus foreshadowing what YHWH will do for the Hebrew slaves. The narrative fast forwards to a grown up Moses who, being brought up in the comfort and security of the Egyptian court, is oblivious to the plight of his true kinsmen. Moses eventually visits the Hebrew districts and is finally confronted with the horrible oppression that his kinsmen are experiencing. Enraged by the injustice Moses slays an Egyptian taskmaster who is abusing a Hebrew slave. As word spreads of his misdeed, Moses fears the consequences and flees, taking refuge with a Midianite family where he subsequently takes a wife and rears a family. It is seemingly during this time that YHWH hears for himself the cry of the Hebrews, identifies with the oppressed, and pledges to bring the Hebrews to freedom through his chosen mediator, Moses, who is to become the voice of divine protest to the pharaoh.

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[113] For a more detailed reading of the story of the exodus see the helpful introductory article by Rita Burns, "The Book of Exodus," in *Exodus: A Lasting Paradigm*, ed. Bas van Iersel, Marcus Lefbure, and Weiler Gerardus Antonius (Concilium 189; Edinburgh: T and T Clark, 1987).

Moses in his new role is sent back to Egypt to confront the pharaoh. The recalcitrant pharaoh refuses to let the Hebrews go, balking at Moses' divine encounter. The text depicts a long struggle between pharaoh and YHWH, where YHWH is shown to strike at the very heart of the gods of Egypt, and the god-like pharaoh himself. YHWH with signs and wonders eventually delivers the Hebrews out of the hands of the oppressor through the Re(e)d Sea. These signs and wonders shown at the Re(e)d Sea are meant to establish YHWH as the incomparable god, by redeeming a people for himself, in an act of new creation. YHWH then formalizes a covenant with this people at Mount Sinai and leads his new people through the unknowns of the wilderness towards the Promised Land. The narrative of liberation is completed when the Hebrew's finally enter into the Land of promise. 'The exodus,' as Watts succinctly states, 'from start to finish is the movement which YHWH begins a new creation, albeit in microcosm, whereby YHWH establishes a new humanity through liberation, provides them with a new 'edenic' land, and dwells among them.'[115]

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[114] Rikki E. Watts, "Exodus," in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander and Brian S. Rosner (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000).

The story of the exodus, however, does not end with this narrative in and of itself. The exodus receives repetitive mention in the Scriptures of Israel, Jewish literature of the Second Temple period, and in the Christian writings of the same period. It is not only that these texts are replete with references to the exodus but also the significant way which these texts (re)use it that make it difficult to exaggerate the importance of the exodus. Indeed, the exodus story is foundational to Israel's self-perception – it is the event which God chose out for himself a nation – it is recalled in liturgies, prayers, and prophecies alike.[116] As the preeminent saving event in Israel's 'history', the exodus from Egypt was 'experienced' as an event of divine redemption, during which ancient promises were realized and divine power confirmed.[117] For this reason the exodus became the ground or rationale for Israel's social structures, calendars, rituals, 'history,' and for future restorations.[118] As with any formative traditions, the exodus is used in various ways to make sense of the present and to give hope for the future.[119] This tradition was (re)used as a literary motif time and time again until it began to form the lenses of historical perception and anticipation for future generations.[120] As such, it became a heuristic to not only make sense out of the world, which they lived, but to facilitate purposeful action in all of life in order to allow for meaningful existence in that world.

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[115] Watts, "Exodus," 89 See, e.g., Ex. 1.1–20; Gen. 1.28; 15.5; 46.8–20.

[116] See, e.g., Deut. 6.20–25; Ex. 1.9; Ps. 78, 105; Ex. 12.26–27; 2 Sam. 7.23; Jer. 32.16–21; Dan 9.4–19; Josh. 24; Judges 2.11–13; 1 Sam. 12.6–8; 1 Kgs. 8; Deut. 4.32–40.

[117] See Daube, *The Exodus Pattern in the Bible*, 11-13; Baeck, *This People Israel*, 28; Fishbane, *Text and Texture*, 125; Loewenstamm, *The Evolution of the Exodus Tradition*, 11,13; Stuhlmueller, *Creative Redemption in Deutero-Isaiah*, 60; Noth, *A History of Pentateuchal Traditions*, 47-48; Zakovitch, *And You Shall Tell Your Sons*, 40; Watts, "Exodus."; Croatto, *Exodus, a Hermeneutics of Freedom*, 12-13; Walter J. Harrelson, "Life, Faith and the Emergence of Tradition," in *Tradition and Theology in the Old Testament*, ed. Douglas A. Knight (London: SPCK, 1977), 18-22; Brueggemann, "The Exodus Narrative," 10; David Tracy, "Exodus: Theological Reflection," in *Exodus: A Lasting Paradigm*, ed. Bas van Iersel, Marcus Lefbure, and Weiler Gerardus Antonius (Concilium 189; Edinburgh: T and T Clark, 1987), 118.

It is not surprising then that the (re)use of the exodus tradition has been studied in depth by various writers for various purposes. Indeed, several studies have traced the exodus motif in the patriarchal narratives of Genesis,[121] the conquest stories under Joshua,[122] the account of the Philistine capture of the Ark in the book of Samuel,[123] the Elijah narratives in the book of Kings,[124] a number of psalms in the Psalter,[125] in the prophets,[126] in wisdom literature,[127] in the literature found at Qumran,[128] in the Gospels,[129] in Acts,[130] in the Pauline epistles,[131] and in the

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[118] Rikki E. Watts, *Isaiah's New Exodus in Mark* (BSL; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 36; Fishbane, *Text and Texture*, 64,121-22. In no way do I suppose that the use of the exodus story contributed to the realization of a normative Jewish worldview, but rather that the exodus story was used in various ways to give expressions of various worldviews. This is of course only relevant to those Jews who viewed the exodus as a formative tradition.

[119] On the use of tradition in societies see George Allan, *The Importance of the Past: A Meditation on the Authority of Tradition* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986), 112, 22; Barry Barnes, *The Elements of Social Theory* (London: University College of London Press, 1995), 105, 11-18; Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 46, 49, 140; Karl R. Popper, "Towards a Rational Theory of Tradition," in *Conjectures and Refutations: The Growth of Scientific Knowledge* (London: Routledge, 1963), 130 ; Edward Shils, *Tradition* (London: Faber & Faber, 1981), 327.

[120] Fishbane, *Text and Texture*, 121.

[121] See, e.g., Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, trans. Israel Abrahams, 2 vols, vol. 2 (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1964), II. 334-37; T. B. Dozeman, "The Wilderness and Salvation History in the Hagar Stories," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 117 (1998): 23-43; Zakovitch, *And You Shall Tell Your Sons*, 15-48.

[122] See, e.g., T. B. Dozeman, *God at War: Power in the Exodus Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 51-54; Fishbane, *Text and Texture*, 122-24; Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*, 358-60; Zakovitch, *And You Shall Tell Your Sons*, 61-67.

[123] See, e.g., Daube, *The Exodus Pattern in the Bible*, 73-88; A. F. Campbell, *The Ark Narrative (1 Sam 4-6; 2 Sam 6): A Form-Critical and Traditio-Historical Study* (SBLDS 16; Missoula: Scholars Press, 1975), 203-05; M. Garsiel, *The First Book of Samuel: A Literary Study of Comparative Structures, Analogies and Parallels* (Ramat-Gan: Revivim, 1985), 45-54.

[124] See, e.g., Amos Frisch, "The Exodus Motif in 1 Kings 1-14," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 87 (2000): 3-21; Russell Gregory, "Irony and Unmasking of Elijah," in *From Carmel to Horeb: Elijah in Crisis*, ed. Russell Gregory and Alan J. Hauser (JSOTSup 85; Sheffield: Sheffield

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Academic Press, 1990), 144-46; G. Savran, "1 and 2 Kings," in *The Literary Guide to the Bible*, ed. Robert Alter and Frank Kermode (Glasgow: William Collins Sons, 1987), 62-63; U. Simon, *Reading Prophetic Narratives*, trans. L. J. Schramm (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 155-226.

[125] See, e.g., Robert P. Carroll, "Psalm 128: Vestiges of Tribal Polemic," *Vetus Testamentum* 21 (1971): 132-50; David Noel Freedman, "The Twenty-Third Psalm," in *Michigan Oriental Studies: In Honor of George G. Cameron*, ed. Louis L. Orlin (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1976), 359; Michael D. Goulder, *The Psalms of Asaph and the Pentateuch: Studies in the Psalter, 3* (JSOTSup 233; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 253-311; Knut M. Heim, "The (God-) Forsaken King of Psalm 89: A Historical and Intertextual Enquiry," in *King and Messiah in Israel and the Ancient near East: Proceedings of the Oxford Old Testament Seminar*, ed. John Day (JSOTSup 270; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 296-322; Niels Peter Lemche, *Early Israel: Anthropological and Historical Studies on the Israelite Society before the Monarchy* (Leiden: Brill 1985), 329-57.

[126] See, e.g., Anderson, "Israel's Prophetic Heritage," 177-95; Blenkinsopp, "Scope and Depth," 41-50; Walter Brueggemann, *A Commentary on Jeremiah: Exile and Homecoming* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 154-55; Anthony R. Ceresko, "The Rhetorical Strategy of the Fourth Servant Song (Isaiah 52:13-53:13): Poetry and the Exodus-New Exodus," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 56 (1994): 42-55; Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), 108; John I. Durham, "Isaiah 40-55: A New Creation, a New Exodus, a New Messiah," in *The Yahweh/Baal Confrontation and Other Studies in Biblical Literature and Archaeology: Essays in Honour of Emmett Willard Hamrick*, ed. Julia M. O'Brien and Fred L. Horton (SBEC 35; Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1995), 47-56; Fishbane, *Text and Texture*, 121-32; Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*, 358-68; Klaus Kiesow, *Exodustexte im Jesajabuch: Literarkritische und Motivgeshichtliche Analysen* (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979), 157-246; Lemche, *Early Israel*, 308-28; M. C. Love, *The Evasive Text: Zechariah 1-8 and the Frustrated Reader* (JSOTSup 296; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 177; Friedbert Ninow, *Indicators of Typology within the Old Testament: The Exodus Motif* (FST 4; New York: Peter Lang, 2001), 157-246; Stuhlmueller, *Creative Redemption in Deutero-Isaiah*, 60-63; Watts, "Consolation or Confrontation," 15; Erich Zenger, "The God of Exodus in the Message of the Prophets as Seen in Isaiah," in *Exodus: A Lasting Paradigm*, ed. Bas van Iersel, Marcus Lefbure, and Weiler Gerardus Antonius (Concilium 189; Edinburgh: T and T Clark, 1987), 189. *Contra*. Hans M. Barstad, *A Way in the Wilderness: The 'Second Exodus' in the Message of Second Isaiah* (JSS 12; Manchester: University of Manchester, 1989), 21-36, who argues, I believe unconvincingly, that the texts in second Isaiah which deal with the 'so called' exodus motif are better explained as themes of comfort See also Hans M. Barstad, "Isaiah 40, 1-11: Another Reading," in *Congress Volume Basel 2001*, ed. André Lemaire (Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 92; Leiden Brill, 2002), 237-40.

[127] See, e.g., Samuel Cheon, *The Exodus Story in the Wisdom of Solomon* (JSPSup 23; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997); Peter Enns, *Exodus Retold: Ancient Exegesis of the Departure from Egypt in Wis 10: 15-21 and 19: 1-9* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 141-47.

[128] See, e.g., Frank Moore Cross, *The Ancient Library of Qumran* (New York: Doubleday, 1961), 56 n. 36a ; Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, 110 n. 57, 333; W. D. Davies, *The Territorial Dimension of Judaism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 60; Michael Fishbane, "Use, Authority and Interpretation of Mikra at Qumran," *Mikra* (1988): 346, 56; Lawrence H. Schiffman, *The Eschatological Community of the Dead Sea Scrolls: A Study of the Rule of Congregation* (SBLDS, 38; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 70; Klyne R. Snodgrass, "Streams of Tradition Emerging from Isaiah 40.1-5 and Their Adaptation in the New Testament," *Journal for the Study of the Judaism* 8 (1980): 29; N. Wieder, "The 'Law-Interpreter' of the Sect of the Dead Sea Scrolls: The Second Moses," *Journal of*

book of Revelation.[132] Each of these studies has been conducted within various disciplines to explain either the theological importance of such traditions,[133] the

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Jewish Studies 4 (1953): 171-75; Yiquel Yadin, *The Scroll of the War of the Sons of Light against the Sons of Darkness*, trans. B. Rabin and C. Rabin (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 38.

[129] See, e.g., Dale L. Allison, "The Son of God as Israel: A Note on Matthean Christology," *Irish Biblical Studies* 9 (1987): 74-81; George L. Balentine, "Death of Jesus as a New Exodus," *Review and Expositor* 59 (1962): 27-41; Andrew C. Brunson, *Psalm 118 in the Gospel of John: An Intertextual Study on the New Exodus Pattern in the Theology of John* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003); Jean Daniélou, *From Shadows to Reality: Studies in the Biblical Typology of the Fathers*, trans. Dom Wulstan Hibberd (London: Burns & Oates, 1960), 157-60; W. D. Davies, *The Setting of the Sermon on the Mount* (BJS 186; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 25-92; Leonhard Goppelt, *Typos: The Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament*, trans. D. H. Madvig (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 67; Ulrich Mauser, *Christ in the Wilderness* (SBT, 39; London: SCM Press, 1963), 79-83; Watts, *Isaiah's New Exodus in Mark*; N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 79-83.

[130] See, e.g., Susan R. Garrett, "Exodus from Bondage: Luke 9.31 and Acts 12.1-24," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 52 (1990): 656-80; David W. Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus* (BSL; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002); Mark L. Strauss, *The Davidic Messiah in Luke-Acts: The Promise and Its Fulfillment in Lukan Christology*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament. Supplement Series ; (JSNTSup 110; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 285-97; David L. Tiede, "The Exaltation of Jesus and the Restoration of Israel in Acts 1," in *Christians among Jews and Gentiles: Essays in Honor of Krister Stendahl on His Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. George W. E. Nicklesburg and George W. MacRae (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 276-86; Max Turner, *Power from on High: The Spirit in Israel's Restoration and Witness in Luke-Acts* (JPTSup 9; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 244-50.

[131] See, e.g., W. D. Davies, "Paul and the New Exodus," in *The Quest for Context and Meaning*, ed. C. A. Evans and S. Talmon (New York: Brill, 1997), 443-63; Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*, 78-79, 101-03; Sylvia C. Keesmaat, "Exodus and the Intertextual Transformation of Tradition in Romans 8.14-30," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 54 (1994): 29-56; Keesmaat, *Paul and His Story*; R. E. Nixon, *The Exodus in the New Testament* (London: Tyndale Press, 1963); B.J. Oropeza, "Echoes of Isaiah in the Rhetoric of Paul: New Exodus, Wisdom, and the Humility of the Cross in Utopian-Apocalyptic Expectations," in *The Intertexture of Apocalyptic Discourse in the New Testament*, ed. Duane Frederick Watson (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002), 87-112; James M. Scott, *Adoption as Sons of God: An Exegetical Investigation into the Background of YIOΘEΣIA in the Pauline Corpus* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992), 151-55; William J. Webb, *Returning Home: New Covenant and Second Exodus as the Context for 2 Corinthians 6.14-7.1* (JSNTSup 85; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993); N. T. Wright, "Romans and the Theology of Paul," in *Pauline Theology, Volume III: Romans*, ed. David M. Hay and E. Elizabeth Johnson (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 30-67.

[132] See, e.g., Richard Bauckham, *The Theology of the Book of Revelation* (New Testament Theology; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 70-72 ; Jay Casey, "Exodus in the Book of Revelation," in *Exodus: A Lasting Paradigm*, ed. Bas van Iersel, Marcus Lefbure, and Weiler Gerardus Antonius (Concilium 189; Edinburgh: T and T Clark, 1987), 34-43; Jan Fekkes, *Isaiah and Prophetic Traditions in the Book of Revelation* (JSNTSup 93; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 78-104; David Mathewson, "Isaiah in Revelation," in *Isaiah in the New Testament*, ed. Steve Moyise and M. J. J. Menken (London T&T Clark, 2005), 201-04; Scott Sanborn, "New Exodus in the Risen Lamb: Revelation 1:4-8," *Kerux* 14, no. 1 (1999): 18-25.

[133] See, e.g., Brueggemann, "The Exodus Narrative," 7-26; Richard J. Clifford, "The Exodus in the Christian Bible," *Theologocal Studies* 63, no. 2 (2002): 345-61; John J. Collins, "The Exodus and Biblical Theology," in *Jews, Christians, and the Theology of the Hebrew Scriptures*, ed. Alice Ogden Bellis and Joel S. Kaminsky (SBLSS 8; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000), 247-61; Graham

sociological purposes in the re-actualization of formative traditions,[134] the understanding of Christian typology,[135] the possibilities of new literary avenues,[136] or hermeneutical theory in general; [137] and in many cases a combination of any number of these.[138] For our purposes we are primarily interested in the reception of the exodus motif in the later Second Temple period and more precisely in how it may have been (re)used in Paul's letter to the Romans. Within these limits we are looking primarily at how first century readers (especially Paul[139]) may have understood the exodus story not in and of it self but rather how the narratival elements and motifs that make up the exodus event were transformed and reused in an effort to not only make sense of the world around them but also to give legitimacy to their claims to being the people of God, and their claims to being an

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Davies, "The Theology of Exodus," in *In Search of True Wisdom: Essays and Old Testament Interpretation in Honor of Ronald E. Clements*, ed. Edward Ball (JSOTSup 300; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 137-52; Christine Downing, "How Can We Hope and Not Dream? Exodus as Metaphor: A Study of the Biblical Imagination," *The Journal of Religion* 48, no. 1 (1968): 35-53; Donald E. Gowan, *Theology and Exodus: Biblical Theology in the Form of Commentary* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1994); Charles David Isbell, *The Function of Exodus Motifs in Biblical Narratives: Theological Didactic Drama* (Studies in the Bible and Early Christianity 52; Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, 2002).

[134] See, e.g., Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*; Fishbane, *Text and Texture*; Loewenstamm, *The Evolution of the Exodus Tradition*.

[135] See, e.g., Ninow, *The Exodus Motif*.

[136] See, e.g., Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*; Keesmaat, "Exodus and Intertextual Transformation," 29-56; Moyise, "Intertextuality and the Study of the Old Testament," 418-31; Wright, "Romans and the Theology of Paul," 30-67.

[137] See, e.g., Anthony R. Ceresko, *Introduction to the Old Testament: A Liberation Perspective* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1992); Croatto, *Exodus, a Hermeneutics of Freedom*; Jon D. Levenson, "Liberation Theology and the Exodus," in *Jews, Christians, and the Theology of the Hebrew Scriptures*, ed. Alice Ogden Bellis and Joel S. Kaminsky (SBLSS 8; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000), 215-30; Jorge V. Pixley, *On Exodus: A Liberation Perspective*, trans. Robert R. Barr (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1987).

[138] See, e.g., José Severino Croatto, "The Socio-Historical and Hermeneutical Relevance of the Exodus," in *Exodus: A Lasting Paradigm*, ed. Bas van Iersel, Marcus Lefbure, and Weiler Gerardus Antonius (Concilium 189; Edinburgh: T and T Clark, 1987), 125-33; Clifford, "The Exodus in the Christian Bible," 345-61.

[139] I am aware that the first century readers and for that matter the first century Paul are at least partial constructs created by the interpreter. The only safeguard, as I see it, against solipsism in this regard is to compare these creations continually against the texts we have and to submit our readings to the judgment of other interpreters.

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Israel. Therefore I am not concerned in this study with the 'historical' nature of the exodus event itself, nor the possible ideological nature which may lie behind the inception of these texts, but rather the exodus as a pre-text.[140] In this vein I feel that in order to understand the various ways which the exodus story has been (re)used it is important to understand the story itself, as best we can as a literary event. It is my contention that in order to see the allusions of proposed intertexts one must first be familiar with the various pre-texts and how they were used in their original contexts. The problem with this sort of inquiry is the tendency to read into the text what we want to find in the intertexts. But for those who have ears to hear such allusions the burden of judgment is theirs to adjudicate. Our aim in examining the exodus tradition as a literary motif is to grapple with its diversity in hopes of coming to a better understanding of how it is (re)used not only in the Scriptures of Israel but also in the texts of the Second Temple, of which Paul's letter to the Romans, at least for our study, is tantamount.

The Themes Imbedded in the Narrative of Exodus: The Movements toward Liberation

The story of the exodus at its most basic is a story of liberation. The liberation of a group of slaves from the Egyptians is highlighted by certain themes that create the intricate web of ideas that form the exodus event in the memory of later generations; namely the themes of life and death, (new)creation and anti-creation, remembrance, redemption, YHWH as the incomparable god, YHWH as divine warrior, the pilgrimage pattern, and the wilderness.[141] While space does not allow us to look at each of these themes systematically, it would profit us to highlight at least some of these basic themes embedded in the narrative of the exodus, themes common and yet malleable enough that they are (re)used by the communities that revered these ancient texts.

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[140] Here I allude to the debate on when and why the Scriptures of Israel were written and for what ideological purpose(s). See, e.g., Niels Peter Lemche, *The Israelites in History and Tradition* (Library of Ancient Israel; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998); Niels Peter Lemche, *Prelude to Israel's Past: Background and Beginnings of Israelite History and Identity* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1998); Thomas L. Thompson, *The Bible in History: How Writers Create a Past* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1999); Thomas L. Thompson, *The Mythic Past: Biblical Archaeology and the Myth of Israel* (New York: Basic Books, 1999); Thomas L. Thompson, *Early History of the Israelite People: From the Written and Archaeological Sources* (Leiden: Brill, 2000); Thomas L. Thompson, *The Historicity of the Patriarchal Narratives: The Quest for the Historical Abraham* (Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 2002); Keith W. Whitelam, *The Invention of Ancient Israel: The Silencing of Palestinian History* (New York: Routledge, 1995). Sometimes referred to as the minimalist school, it is noted that the differences of interpretations between these authors makes it difficult to maintain that they make up a unified school of interpretation and for that matter I find such references are unhelpful for discussion.

Life and Death: The High Stakes of Liberation

As we have already seen in the brief outline of the exodus, the oppression of the Hebrews in Egypt is presented with various subtexts concerning life and death. What begins with an unnamed pharaoh, and his perceived threat that the rampant population explosion (life) of his Hebrew slaves might end in revolt or rebellion, causes the pharaoh to increase the burden of their work in an attempt to control his subjects. Apparently the assumption is that the harder the Hebrews worked the less time they would to have to procreate. Ironically, his plan has the opposite effect and life among the oppressed continues to increase (1.8-12). The pharaoh still gripped by fear turns his thoughts to death. He begins stealthily by commanding the midwives, Shiphrah and Puah, to kill the Hebrews' sons but to let their daughters live.[142] Interestingly the narrative foregrounds the final liberation (life) at the Re(e)d Sea with these two women's refusal to participate in the pharaoh's plan at limiting the population of the Hebrews (death). The midwives are said to fear God, not the pharaoh. So what began as a story about death is transformed into a story about life, as further emphasized by the midwives themselves being blessed with families (1.15-21).[143]

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[141] On the themes not elaborated on see the following citations. On the importance of remembrance see, Isbell, *Theological Didactic Drama*, 43; Davies, "The Theology of Exodus," 145. On the divine warrior motif see: Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, 93-142; John Day, "Yahweh's Appropriation of Baal Imagery," in *Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan* (JSOTSup 265; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 91-127; Dozeman, *God at War*, 156; Sa-Moon Kang, *Divine Warrior in the Old Testament and the Ancient near East* (BZAW 177; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1989); Carla Kloos, *YHWH's Combat with the Sea: A Canaanite in the Religion of Ancient Israel* (Leiden: Brill, 1986), 152; Tremper III Longman and Daniel G. Reid, *God Is a Warrior* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1995), 83-88; Patrick D. Miller, *The Divine Warrior in Early Israel* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), 64; Thomas R. Neufeld, *'Put on the Armor of God': The Divine Warrior from Isaiah to Ephesians* (JSNTSup 140; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997). Also see the below on the 'ode to triumph'.

[142] On the role of females to subvert the death policy see J. Cheryl Exum, "You Shall Let Every Daughter Live: A Study of Ex. 1.8-2.10," *Semeia* 28 (1983): 63-82.

The pharaoh's first attempt at limiting the population growth was utterly unsuccessful, resulting in a complete reversal of his stated goals. This failure results in the pharaoh upping the stakes, unveiling his new state policy of full-fledged infanticide (1.22-2.10). The Egyptians now are encouraged everywhere to cast the Hebrew boys into the Nile (death). In the face of this state-sponsored death the text highlights the courageous response of three women; a Hebrew woman, her daughter, and the daughter of the pharaoh. These women ignore the state policy and save a Hebrew child named Moses, the baby who will eventually 'draw out' Israel from Egypt (see 2.10).[144] The text highlights the role of the pharaoh's own daughter, who by adopting Moses (life), fully aware of the baby's Hebrew origin and of her father's death policy, ironically ultimately foils her father's attempt at state-sponsored oppression (death). Once again the narrative describes the seeming inevitability of death being thwarted by life, this time due to the compassion of the pharaoh's own daughter.[145]

The theme of life and death escalates when after many years Moses and Aaron return to Egypt to confront the pharaoh, ultimately culminating in the account of the Passover (12.1-28). Here in a display of power YHWH enacts punishment by killing the male first born of all the Egyptians.[146] Here the image of life and death consists of a complex web where the death of a lamb ensures the life of the Hebrew child, all the while bringing to the fore the pharaoh's previous death-dealings (Ex. 1-2). In a measure for measure response death now descends upon the pharaoh and his empire, resulting in the pharaoh's final albeit reluctant release of the Israelites (12:31-33).[147]

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[143] Burns, "Exodus," 14.

[144] This is similar to the outline of a legend which once described the remarkable beginnings of Sargon, an ancient Mesopotamian ruler. According to the legend, the baby who would grow up to be leader was placed in a protective basket in a river from which he was rescued. Note also the importance of the water in the narrative where these women rescue Moses from the dangers of the Nile (death), foreshadowing YHWH's rescue of the Israelites from the certain death of the Re(e)d Sea.

[145] Burns, "Exodus," 15. Again the narrative is foreshadowing YHWH's own compassion in liberating the Israelites.

[146] On the measure for measure allusion to the death of the male Hebrew children see, Zakovitch, *And You Shall Tell Your Sons*, 17-26, who traces this slavery as a result of the sins that extend back to Abraham

The definitive picture of life and death takes place at the Re(e)d Sea. In this section the narrative again shows that both life and death are a result of YHWH's action (13.17-14.31). Here the life of the liberated Hebrews is celebrated by dancing and singing on one side of the sea (15.20), and is heavily contrasted by the bodies of the Egyptians strewn dead on the other side of the sea (14.30). It is here that YHWH at last acts upon his earlier compassion for the Hebrew slaves and liberates them.[148]

Although the theme of life and death reaches its climax in the crossing of the Re(e)d Sea the theme persists throughout the rest of the narrative. After the decisive battle which won the Hebrews their freedom the text goes on to teach about the requirements of a life sustained by YHWH's gift as opposed to a life dependent on the slave wages of the Egyptians.[149] The lesson the Hebrews needed to learn was that the new life YHWH had won for them was to be a life founded on gift and trust. They are to remember the gift of YHWH's manna, not the wages earned in slavery; just as they are to trust the precariousness of freedom, not the security of bondage.[150] Israel's liberation (life) from Egyptian slavery (death) is really a function of their subjugation to YHWH their God (which leads to life). As Levenson succinctly remarks, 'the Exodus is not only a road out of Egypt; it is also a road to Mount Sinai.'[151]

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[147] Burns, "Exodus," 16.

[148] Burns, "Exodus," 16.

[149] In this light, YHWH's gift of food serves as an opportunity for Israel to learn a responsible lifestyle. The daily provisions satisfied each person's need where the Sabbath allowed for a time of rest. Some failed in the discipline of living one day at a time (16.20). Others could not let themselves rest when the time came (16.27). Both excesses were counterproductive to life.

[150] Burns, "Exodus," 17-18.

[151] Levenson, "Liberation Theology and the Exodus," 227.

New Creation and Anti-Creation: The Liberation for All of Creation

It has long been noted that the narrative of the book of Exodus cannot be properly understood apart from the text of Genesis. Exodus naturally seeks to continue the narrative of Genesis (cf. Exod. 1.1–20; Gen. 1.28; 15.5; 46.8–20), by fulfilling the patriarchal promises of progeny and land (Gen. 12:7; 13:14–17; 15:18). But not only is the book of Exodus a continuation of Genesis, but more specifically the theme of creation is also echoed throughout the book.[152] The language of Exodus 1.7, 'The Israelites were fruitful and multiplied greatly and became exceedingly numerous, so that the land was filled with them' echoes that of Genesis 1.28, 'be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth'. While in Egypt the Israelites fulfill the mandate of creation to increase. It is precisely this numerical expansion that strikes fear into the pharaoh's heart (Exod. 1.8) and motivates him to attempt various ways to curtail their growth. The pharaoh's sin can be viewed in this light as an attempt to reverse the creation mandate (Gen.1.28), or in the culture of the ancient near east, the quintessential forces of chaos verses the creational powers of YHWH. In this vein Rikki E. Watts notes:

> In this respect the significance of both the plagues and the crossing of the sea come into sharper focus. The plagues are in effect a reversal of God's created order. They are the punishment and eventual destruction of the enemies of God by unleashing the chaotic forces of creation: water is affected (first plague); darkness returns where there had once been light (ninth plague; esp. 10:21); animals and other creatures suffer (e.g., fifth plague); even humans die (tenth plague). In the end the Egyptians are destroyed by water as the waters that God had once tamed at creation are unleashed. The Israelites, however, are immune from this creation reversal. They are, in fact, 'created' by being brought through the parted waters (as were the waters in Gen 1:6–10) and are formed into a holy nation.[153]

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[152] It is noted that in other portions of scripture the same cosmic power manifest in the exodus event is the very power that was manifested in the creation. So Collins, "Exodus and Biblical Theology," 259. Cf. Isa. 51.9-11; Wis. 10.1-21, where the same impetus for creation is the divine wisdom that delivered Israel from the Egyptians.

[153] Watts, "Exodus," 89, goes on to say, 'To carry the creation imagery further, some have argued that the tabernacle itself is an earthly representation of Edenic glory, where God's presence dwells in its fullness as it once had in the Garden. In this sense the tabernacle is another act of creation where once again God and his people dwell together'.

It is God's work in creation that gives the framework for the redemption of the exodus. It is the creator God who redeems Israel from Egypt. Just as God's work in creation has been shown to be life-giving, life preserving, and life blessing (1.7, 12, 20), so the redemption from Egypt is the preservation of those divine goals which were endangered by the activity of the pharaoh. That is why the hymnic celebration of that redemptive act in Exodus 15 is permeated with creation talk, in terms of vocabulary, structure, and in theme.[154]

Thus the creation account in Genesis provides the backdrop for God's redemptive activity on Israel's behalf. While the liberation of Israel is the focus of God's activity, it is not the ultimate purpose. The deliverance of Israel is ultimately for the sake of all creation (Exod. 9.16). The issue of deliverance is finally, not that God's name might be made known to Israel, but that it is declared to the entire earth. This was the case even before Israel as a nation understood what the divine activity was all about.[155] That is precisely why God's redemptive activity is set in terms of a new creation. The fulfillment of God's creational purposes in the growth of Israel is being thwarted by the anti-creational maneuver attempted by the pharaoh. If the pharaoh is allowed to succeed in his anti-creational purposes then God's purposes will not be able to be realized. Hence God's work in redemption, climaxing in Israel's crossing of the sea on 'dry land,' constitutes God's efforts at re-creation, returning creation to a point where God's mission can once again be taken up.[156] And in this sense it is cosmic in its effects. The climax of redemption at the Re(e)d Sea shows YHWH's defeat of the powers of chaos, not simply as a means of Israel's liberation, but so that in the proclamation, a sharp polemic that YHWH reigns over the entire cosmos can be heard (15.18). That is why the liberation from the Egyptians can be viewed as a new creation, because it is the renewed ability for the Hebrews as Israel to continue YHWH's mission to the entire world (19.4-6). YHWH divinely intervenes so that the Hebrews, as Israel, can become a kingdom of priests and a holy nation, on behalf of the entire earth. Israel is to function among the nations as a priest functions in a religious community. Israel's witness to God's redemptive activity and its obedience to the Law are finally for the sake of YHWH's universal mission, so that YHWH's name might be declared throughout the entire earth, to all the nations (9.16).[157]

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[154] Terence E. Fretheim, *Exodus* (Interpretation; Louisville: John Knox Press, 1991), 13.

[155] Fretheim, *Exodus*, 13; Terence E. Fretheim, "The Reclamation of Creation: Redemption and the Law in Exodus," *Interpretation* 45 (1991): 356-57.

[156] Fretheim, *Exodus*, 13.

Redemption: YHWH as Liberator

As we have seen the theme of redemption ties closely into that of new creation. When YHWH hears the Hebrew slaves bemoaning their oppression, out of compassion he comes to their aid.[158] YHWH chooses Moses to be his spokesperson to go before the pharaoh and negotiate the Hebrew's deliverance.[159] After a long series of interchanges between the pharaoh and Moses, the pharaoh is 'persuaded' to let the Hebrews go. Suddenly in a fit of panic the pharaoh realizes that he has just released valuable labor and quickly rallies his army to bring back the precious Hebrew slaves. The text casts the showdown at the Re(e)d Sea as the final and definitive act of deliverance, where YHWH redeems and creates for himself a people. This redemption is viewed as the defining moment in Israel's history, and as such it is formative.[160] It was the event which brought Israel into special and peculiar relationship with this redeemer. YHWH in this act of divine redemption purchased Israel out of all the nations of the world and commissioned her to be a light to those nations.[161] It is out of this tradition that redemption comes to signify the many things that YHWH does to secure the safety and well-being of his people that is why the exodus becomes a paradigm for all future acts of redemption.[162] In fact what we see in this initial picture of redemption from the text of Exodus is the beginning of a dialectic playing itself out between redemption as hope and redemption as memory. This interplay between the now and the then is picked up and maintained in a new dialectic between the past and the future. Israel is seen as a people who have been redeemed, but also a people who still await redemption.[163] The exodus from Egypt thus becomes a paradigm for all future redemptions allowing for generation after generation celebrating it as a sign of hope.[164] Redemption thus not only becomes synonymous with the exodus, but becomes somewhat of a 'signature of YHWH'–the great liberator: 'I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery' (Ex 20.2).[165]

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[157] Fretheim, *Exodus*, 14; Fretheim, "The Reclamation of Creation."

[158] The narrative signals this by the literary constructions: 'God heard ... God remembered ... God saw ... God knew ...' (2.23-25).

[159] The description is the form of a prophetic call narrative to show that the Exodus was not simply the result of a great social activist's zeal. Call narratives typically contain these elements: (a) divine confrontation; (b) introductory word by the Divinity; (c) divine commission; (d) objection by the person called; (e) reassurance by the Divinity; and (f) sign given by the Divinity. See the structure of 3:1-12.

[160] On redemption see: Burns, "Exodus," 14-18.

Incomparable God: Learning Anew Who This Liberator Is

Another theme that permeates throughout the narrative is the knowledge of YHWH, and more importantly the knowledge that YHWH is the incomparable God.[166] Ironically, it is the pharaoh who first poses the question: 'Who is YHWH?'

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[161] Henry Englander, "The Exodus in the Bible," in *Studies in Jewish Literature: Issued in Honor of Professor Kaufmann Kohler*, ed. David Philipson, David Neumark, Julian Morgenstern, and Kaufmann Kohler (Jewish Philosophy, Mysticism, and the History of Ideas; New York: Arno Press, 1979), 109.

[162] Alister E. McGrath, *Redemption* (Truth and the Christian Imagination Series; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006), 2.

[163] Brevard S. Childs, *The Book of Exodus: A Critical, Theological Commentary* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974), 205.

[164] See Robert Louis Wilken, *The Land Called Holy: Palestine in Christian History and Thought* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 3.

[165] Goran Larsson, *Bound for Freedom: The Book of Exodus in Jewish and Christian Traditions* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1999), 1. See also Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *The Drama of Doctrine: A Canonical-Linguistic Approach to Christian Theology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 40-41.

[166] On YHWH as the incomparable god see: Sheldon Blank, *Prophetic Faith in Isaiah* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1967), 67-73, 117-37; Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of*

(5.2). The narrative leaves the pursuit of this question primarily to YHWH himself: 'that you may know that I am YHWH.'[167]

YHWH is introduced to us in the narrative when Moses asks 'If I come to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?' The reply god gives is 'YHWH,' which connotes the idea of 'being,' not in the sense of existence, but rather in the sense of the reality of god's active and dynamic presence.[168] Whether it be 'I am that I am,' or 'I am who I am,' or 'I will be what I will be'–and it can mean any of these–god's pronouncement of his own name indicates that the divine personality can be known only to the extent to which god chooses to reveal it.[169]

So when the pharaoh asks the question of 'Who is YHWH?', the narrative slowly discloses who this YHWH is. From the start of the programmatic statement that 'they shall know that I (YHWH, the speaker, the God of Israel) am God (the one God, unrivaled)', the narrative seeks to answer this question, not just for the pharaoh's sake, or even for all the Egyptians, but also for the Hebrews themselves.[170] That is why in the first section of the book the elementary and powerful line 'I am YHWH ' is proclaimed five times to Egypt (7.5, 17; 8.22; 14.4, 18) and five times to Israel (6.2, 6, 7, 8, 29).[171] The narrative makes clear that its goal is for all to know who this YHWH is; ultimately, of course, such knowledge only has value if it results in 'belief,' and this seems to be the problem the narrative seeks to resolve.[172]

Exodus, trans. Israel Abrahams (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1997), 178; J. P. Fokkelman, "Exodus," in *The Literary Guide to the Bible*, ed. Robert Alter and Frank Kermode (Glasgow: William Collins Sons, 1987), 56; Fretheim, *Exodus*, 166-67; Gowan, *Theology and Exodus*, 134-5, 38-9; Isbell, *Theological Didactic Drama*, 42.

[167] Fretheim, *Exodus*, 14.

[168] On the divine name see: Childs, *The Book of Exodus*, 60-80.

[169] Sarna, *Exploring Exodus*, 52.

[170] Blank, *Prophetic Faith in Isaiah*, 67-73, 117-37.

[171] Fokkelman, "Exodus," 64.

[172] Isbell, *Theological Didactic Drama*, 44.

In this light the plagues are the action of YHWH and the Exodus proper is the result of that action.[173] The pharaoh must learn that there is no god like YHWH (8.6; 9.14) and that YHWH has the power to protect his people even when they seemingly appear to be under the pharaoh's control (8.18).[174] The plagues (Ex 7-10) in their Ancient Near Eastern context would have been presumably understood by pharaoh and the Egyptians as a direct assault on the king, because it was the king who 'was responsible to maintain the cosmic order (*ma'at*) on earth that had been established by Re at creation.'[175] And it is because of this that YHWH's reputation is established as the plagueer of Egypt, conqueror of the pharaoh, deliverer of slaves.[176] But this is not enough; the Hebrews themselves need to know the truth about their delivering God, hence in YHWH's activity at Egypt his reputation has been defined for all time. This and all future generations of Israelites will be instructed to tell their children and grandchildren how YHWH 'toyed with the Egyptians' (10.2).[177] Thus one of the main objectives of the narrative is that Israel, and the nations, together might know YHWH.[178]

Theme of Wandering in the Wilderness: The Transformation of the Liberated

The theme of the wilderness also plays an important part in the exodus story.[179] Because of the peoples' infidelity they were punished to wander in the wilderness. The wilderness is depicted as a wild territory where survival requires that the travelers have a sense of direction.[180] It is an appropriate setting for the biblical writers to set out their convictions about Israel's source of life as a free people and about what maintaining that life of freedom would require of them, namely: trust, simplicity, and justice. As Burns notes:

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[173] Isbell, *Theological Didactic Drama*, 21.

[174] Isbell, *Theological Didactic Drama*, 42.

[175] J. K. Hoffmeier, "Exodus," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 2.377; Sarna, *Exploring Exodus*, 79-80.

[176] Isbell, *Theological Didactic Drama*, 43.

[177] Isbell, *Theological Didactic Drama*, 43.

[178] Isbell, *Theological Didactic Drama*, 44-45.

[179] On the wilderness motif see: Paula M. McNutt, "Egypt as An "Iron Furnace": A Metaphor of Transformation - a Writer's Perspective" (paper presented at the Society of Biblical Literature, 1988); George W. Coats, *Rebellion in the Wilderness: The Murmuring Motif in the Wilderness Traditions of the Old Testament* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1968); Barstad, *A Way in the Wilderness*. The wilderness motif, a sub-motif of the exodus, is an essential element in the prophetic theology of hope. The prophets, as well as other writers, understood events of history to be capable of

> Where does life come from if not from pharaoh (16:3; 17:3)? In the desert, security in bondage seems preferable to the precariousness of freedom and Israel directs its hostile regrets at Moses who interprets them as complaints against Yahweh (16:8; 17:2). The need for water and food becomes a test of divine reliability: 'Is the Lord among us or not?' (17:7). The Divinity graciously provides for Israel's needs through Moses' intercession. Yahweh not only delivers from oppression but also sustains life in freedom.[181]

Once they pass out of the furnace, symbolized by the crossing of the Re(e)d Sea, they must be forged into a people with a common identity, sharing in further trials to cement their solidarity. These final steps toward transformation are to take place in the wilderness. The wilderness itself is a place of chaos, of hunger and thirst, but it is also a place of Divine revelation.[182] The wilderness is envisioned as a journey of choice, Israel can choose to stray from YHWH's leading and return to the chaos that she has just been delivered from; or she can choose to follow YHWH out of the wilderness, out of chaos, and into the Promised Land.[183]

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repetition, in a far more glorious way (cf. Jer. 2.2; 31.2; Ezek. 20.10-38), Thomas Edward McComiskey, *The Minor Prophets: An Exegetical and Expository Commentary*, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992), 42.

[180] The wilderness is used in the later prophets as the precondition for YHWH's demonstration of his unique, special power and faithfulness – as once in the first Exodus from Egypt. The contrast is to the traditional themes of ultimate danger, annihilation of life that are usually associated with the wilderness and the desert as a place of divine revelation, creation theology the mingling of these two tropes becomes the condition for the new and authentic revelation of YHWH, so Zenger, "The God of Exodus ", 23.

[181] Burns, "Exodus," 17-18.

[182] McNutt, "Egypt as an Iron Furnace", 296. Cf. 1 Kings 19.12

[183] Edmund Leach, "Fishing for Men on the Edge of the Wilderness," in *The Literary Guide to the Bible*, ed. Robert Alter and Frank Kermode (Glasgow: William Collins Sons, 1987), 586-87.

It is this pilgrimage through the wilderness that makes the text of Joshua 3-5 such an interesting example of the exodus material. Here the narrative frames the exodus event from the beginning to the end with similar events. The echoes of the original exodus from Egypt ring clearly throughout these passages, so much so that the reader is made to anticipate this move between the two events both by Joshua 3.5 where Joshua predicts that God is on the verge of doing 'wonders',[184] and by Joshua 3.7 where prior to the crossing of the Jordan River, YHWH tells Joshua that 'I will be with you as I was with Moses.'

The parallels continue with the informing of the priests that when they enter the Jordan its waters will split and stand upright in a single heap (cf. Ex. 3.13; 15.8)[185]; and this is exactly what takes place. With the priests carrying the ark in front and the rest of Israel following behind, they entered the flooded waters and passed through on dry land (cf. Ex. 14.21). Thus, God's promise (3.7) was fulfilled when all Israel stood in awe of Joshua, just as they had of Moses (4.14).[186] To commemorate this memorable event the Israelites erected stone memorials, so that future generations might see the stones and remember (Jos. 4.22-4).[187]

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[184] On God performing wonders and the exodus see, Ex. 3.20; 4.21; 7.3; 11.9-10; 15.11.

[185] The use of the term גל 'heap' shows that the text has definitely been influenced by the Song of the Sea (Ex.15.8), so Robert G. Boling, *Joshua: A New Translation with Notes and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 1982), 168.

[186] The logic of 'just as' not only correlates the miracle of the Jordan with that of the Red Sea, but by extension the leadership of Joshua with that of Moses (cf. 1.5, 4.14). This correlation between the Jordan and the Sea is not only typological, but mythic in that it is a way of saying that crossing the Jordan was a prototypical, foundational event for Israel (cf. Ex 15.14-17) Richard D. Nelson, *Joshua: A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1997), 71; Marten H. Woudstra, *Joshua* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 82.

[187] Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*, 358-59; Fishbane, *Text and Texture*, 124. Still other indicators further reinforce the narratives framing of events. (1) The time of the passage is similar in both instances. Both events are said to take place during the Passover season (cf. Ex. 12.6). (2) Joshua is likened to Moses in that he too was addressed by a divine messenger who tells him to 'remove the sandals from your feet, for the place where you stand is holy' (5.13-15; cf. Ex 3.5). And (3) the results of the wonders both are wrought with double intention. On the one hand, they reveal to the Canaanites the incomparable power of the God of Israel (cf. Ex. 14.4,18, with Josh. 6.6); on the other hand, they serve as an impetus for the Israelites to fear the Lord their God always (see Ex. 14.31). The combining of these two events are picked up in the Psalter as a form of poetical expression where the exodus from Egypt is again merged with the crossing of the Jordan: 'When Israel went out from Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange language, Judah became God's sanctuary, Israel his dominion. The sea looked and fled; Jordan turned back. The mountains

No mere recalling of the miracle at the Sea is envisaged. The narrative wishes to frame both the beginning of YHWH's liberation with the end, the entering into the Promised Land. This highlights not only YHWH's covenant faithfulness, but also expresses that the journey in the wilderness has ended, the pilgrimage is complete; the time of wandering is over.[188]

The Poetic (Re) formation of Exodus: The Making of a Motif

In Exodus 15, otherwise known as the ode to triumph, the narrative of the exodus is reconfigured in poetical form to function as the fulcrum to the entire book of Exodus. It achieves this by looking both backward to the preceding victory from the slavery in Egypt and forward to the journey to Mount Sinai.[189] It is the first refashioning of the narrative of the exodus, and as such, many of the previously mentioned themes are picked up and reworked in succinct fashion while altogether new elements are also introduced.[190] The power of this reworking becomes so influential that it is used in almost all of the latter recapitulations of the story of the exodus, having the ability to paradigmatically draw together Israel's past and future in one poetic moment.[191]

The poem itself celebrates the defeat of the Egyptian army by YHWH at the Re(e)d Sea, and thus chronicles YHWH's eliminating the threat of Egyptian slavery altogether by actively securing the redemption of the Hebrew peoples. But the story of the exodus is not simply one of mere liberation from bondage, it is also a

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skipped like rams, the hills like lambs. Why is it, O Sea, that you flee? O Jordan, that you turn back (Ps. 114.1-4)?'

[188] Woudstra, *Joshua*, 91-92.

[189] Mark S. Smith, *The Pilgrimage Pattern in Exodus* (JSOTSup 239; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 207.

[190] On the genre of Exodus 15 see: Martin L. Brenner, *The Song of the Sea: Ex 15.1-21* (BZAW 195; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1991), 36; Cassuto, *Exodus*, 173-74; R. E. Clements, *Exodus* (Cambridge Bible Commentary; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 91; John I. Durham, *Exodus* (WBC 3; Waco: Word, 1987), 205; Fokkelman, "Exodus," 56; John D. W. Watts, "The Song of the Sea -- Ex. 15," *Vetus Testamentum* 7 (1957): 371.

[191] Smith, *Pilgrimage Pattern*, 218.

movement towards freedom which the Hebrew people are called to worship the incomparable YHWH.[192] It is no wonder then that the poem is modeled after the ancient near eastern odes of triumph which were used to greet the returning victorious kings in the ancient near east.[193]

In the ode to triumphs found in the ancient near eastern literature the cycles of the Baal kingship mythology give us the essential clue into how the framers of this text intended it to be understood. They recount the story of Baal winning and keeping his kingship over the two main threats to order in the universe – chaos, represented by the god Yam,[194] and death, represented by the god Mot. [195] Thus in an effort to better understand the poem of Exodus 15, it is essential to unpack the two cycles of the Baal kingship mythology.

In the first cycle Baal finds himself about to be handed over to Yam (the sun god) by the supreme god El. In an effort to change this course of events, Baal challenges Yam to a battle. Yam accepts the challenge and is subsequently defeated in battle by Baal. Baal demands that El show him the glory that was to be awarded to Yam, namely that a house be built to declare his glory. [196] El agrees, and a house is built for Baal. After Baal's house is built, he continues his campaign for glory by engaging in a victory tour, capturing 'sixty-six cities' and 'seventyseven towns' of his enemies. Baal's expression of power frightens his enemies and declares to all that Baal is to be glorified.[197]

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[192] Davies, "The Theology of Exodus," 145; Fokkelman, "Exodus," 56.

[193] In ANE literature this cycle consists of a discernable pattern of conflict, victory, kingship, and house-building. See, Gowan, *Theology and Exodus*, 134-5. Cf. the Babylonian creation story *Enuma Elish* and the myth of Horus at Edfu. Also see Cassuto, *Exodus*, 178; Fretheim, *Exodus*, 166-67. It is important to note that while in the pagan odes of triumph, the glory of the victory is ascribed to the conquering king, here there is no single word of praise or glory given to Moses; these are rendered to YHWH alone, so Cassuto, *Exodus*, 174.

[194] Yam (sea), also called 'Judge Nahar (river)', is seen as the god of the seas and rivers, representing 'the unruly powers of the universe who threatened Chaos' in Ugaritic mythology. Sea was also portrayed as a seven headed dragon, a dragon to be slain in order to establish the rule of the warrior-king of the gods. See Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, 116, 20.

[195] Mot is the god of the underworld, including death and is seen as the god who brings drought and famine through causing the heavens to burn up, scorching the earth's produce. See J. C. L. Gibson, "The Theology of the Ugaritic Baal Cycle," *Orientalia* 53 (1984): 217.

[196] It is precisely Yam's defeat at the hands of Baal that results in the confinement of Yam to the seas (III AB B 29-30). All citations are from H. L. Ginsburg, "Ugaritic Myths, Epics, and Legends," in *Ancient near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, ed. James B. Prichard (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969).

In the second cycle we find the tables turned with Mot (the god of death) threatening Baal's kingship. Again a battle is waged to determine the winner, and after an initial setback by Baal, fierce fighting ignites between Mot and Baal which both gods are seriously wounded. There seems to be no real winner until El intervenes in the fight and procures the victory for Baal. This intervention by El forces Mot into submission and Baal resumes his seat of dominion and kingship.[198]

Only when we compare the allusions to these mythological battles for supremacy among the gods with the poem of Exodus 15 can we understand the rhetoric of the exodus narrative. In the story of the exodus we are introduced to a personal contest between YHWH and the pharaoh, the pharaoh is seen questioning YHWH's sovereignty.[199] Like the ANE cycles, a battle ensues and although it is an extended battle, the pharaoh loses every engagement, thus showing YHWH will be satisfied with nothing less than being acknowledged as the sole power.[200] Although the fact that the pharaoh was considered to be a god by the Egyptians is substantiated only outside of the text, this should not in any way diminish the fact that this is indeed a text describing the conflict between the divine.[201]

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[197] (III AB C 7-15; II AB B 3-38; II AB ii–vii). Smith, *Pilgrimage Pattern*, 220 n. 58.

[198] (II AB viii; I AB v-vi).

[199] As the pharaoh indicates by his scornful question, 'who is YHWH, that I should heed his voice and let Israel go?' Ex 5.2.

[200] This is why YHWH needs to 'get glory' over the pharaoh by destroying his army. YHWH 's people were already free, but the contest among the 'gods' was not yet over. Indeed this could be why the plagues are never explicitly stated as punishment, rather in Ex 9.14-16 the narrative expresses the purpose as being threefold: (1) 'that you may know that there is none like me in all the Earth,' (2) 'to show you my power,' and (3) 'so that my name may be declared throughout all the Earth.' Cf. also, Ex 10.1f; 14.4,17. See Gowan, *Theology and Exodus*, 133, 38-9.

[201] In ancient Egypt the pharaoh not only had the duty to maintain *ma'at*, moreover the pharaoh himself was the very personification of *ma'at* so Margaret Bunson, *Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt* (New York: Facts on File, 2002), 161. See for the concept of *ma'at* as universal order and inherent structure of creation: Bunson, *Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt*, 152; Georges Posener, *Dictionary of Egyptian Civilization* (London: Methuen, 1962), 151; John Albert Wilson, *The Burden of Egypt: An Interpretation of Ancient Egyptian Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), 48. For a contrasting view see M. V. Fox, "World Order and Ma'at: A Crooked Parallel," *Journal for Ancient Near Eastern Studies* 23 (1995): 37-48. Although no where in the text of exodus is the pharaoh

Put more concretely the conflict is between the divine pharaoh and his anti-creational acts and YHWH and his re-affirmation of creation, to the point of new creation.[202] YHWH the warrior in this conflict uses no human instrument of warfare to oppose the weapons of the pharaoh (vv. 1-10). By YHWH's arm (v. 6) alone is the defeat of the pharaoh and his officers secured. [203] Although in the ANE myths of divine combat the battle of subduing the Sea are often done by shooting arrows into it, here the exodus tradition has YHWH subduing Egypt by shooting Egypt itself into the Sea.[204] The polemic is vivid, showing not only that the divine pharaoh is defeated by YHWH but also that the chaos monster itself is a tool in the hands of the almighty YHWH.[205] It has further been suggested that YHWH's activity in creation itself was intended to be seen as overturning the forces of chaos.[206] If this is in fact true, then YHWH's control over the waters shows that the destruction and defeat of the anti-creational monster Yam is to be understood as a re-affirmation of the creation itself.

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identified as a god. This is in and of it self is a good example of the polemical us of ANE traditions against Egyptian tradition. See Ex 9.15. Cf. Ezek 29.1-9 and 362.1-16, where the divinity of the pharaoh is denied with sarcasm. Although it is important to note that the conflict is between YHWH and the pharaoh (including his army) and not between YHWH and Yam as in the Ugaritic literature (See Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, 131-32; Kloos, *YHWH's Combat with the Sea*, 151; Al Wolters, "Not Rescue but Destruction: Rereading Exodus 15.8," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 52 (1990): 239.), this does not however dissuade later tradition to see the mythological motifs as central. See Kang, *Divine Warrior*, 123-4. For the development of the tradition in the Psalms, see also Susan Gillingham, "The Exodus Tradition and Israelite Psalmody," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 52, no. 1 (1999): 19-46; Peter C. Craigie, "Psalm 29 in the Hebrew Poetic Tradition," *Vetus Testamentum* 22 (1972): 143-51.

[202] The language used here to speak of Israel's liberation from Egypt and the ANE myths that provide the anchor for such language presuppose an already existing creation. On the basis of this an intertextual reading of this imagery can be viewed to suggest that this liberation is none other than a new creation. Cf. Fretheim, *Exodus*, 167; Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, 120.

[203] Fretheim, *Exodus*, 169.

[204] William H. C. Propp, *Exodus 1-18: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 511.

[205] Cassuto, *Exodus*, 178. Cf. Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, 131-32. If Yam represented the unruly powers of the universe who threatened chaos, until restricted and tamed by Baal, then Mot, El's dead son, represents the dark chthonic powers which bring sterility, disease, and death. The drama is framed as the victory of the god of life. See Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, 116.

[206] Fretheim, *Exodus*, 169.

No matter how one sees the details of the polemics in this text, one thing is clear, the victory is irrevocably YHWH's and absolute supremacy is ascribed to YHWH. There can be no sharing in the glory which the incomparable YHWH demands. This is expressed by the unexpected and jarring imagery of the chariot and its driver being cast into the sea (v. 1). The picture is as if the Egyptians were thrown from barges: the imagery is that of sailors, not charioteers (one expects chariot drivers to be cast down to the ground, not drown in the sea). The unusual imagery used here points poetically to the total and fantastic victory over the Egyptian army.[207] Moreover, the imagery throughout the song (vv. 1, 7, 17) contrasts the loftiness of YHWH with the utter humiliation of the Egyptians. Egypt is viewed progressing downward, from the shore, to the sea, to the underworld, moving from great military might to crushing death.[208] In contrast the Hebrew's ascend from being slaves in Egypt, to the sea, to the safe habitation of YHWH's mountain.[209] The victory itself rests upon YHWH's arm and his arm only.[210]

But the victory should not be seen as merely a defeat of the Egyptians, but also as an act of YHWH in redeeming the Hebrews. The poem itself is meant to be performed under the rubric of redemption, and it is under this rubric that the poem is allowed to have a life outside of this 'historical' event. According to Propp this is seen most clearly in the logical connection of 'this is my god (v. 2)' to what proceeds and follows, 'inasmuch as YHWH has saved me, he has proved himself my personal god, worthy of my praise, just as he earned my ancestors' adoration.'[211] YHWH the god of the exodus is still the Hebrew people's god.

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[207] Propp, *Exodus 1-18*, 511.

[208] Note the irony of the Egyptian's confidence in the imminent destruction of the Hebrews in Ex 15.9.

[209] Propp, *Exodus 1-18*, 510, notes that this very up and down imagery may be meant to be read as the up and down motion of the sea's waves

[210] According to Gowan, *Theology and Exodus*, 138-9, the intent of the plague narratives can be viewed as a, 'demonstration that Yahweh alone is supreme, and that he would require unconditional surrender by the Pharaoh. There could be no negotiating, no compromises, no easy way so that Egypt's King could save face. 'Let my people go' was a nonnegotiable demand. It was not even something to take seriously at first, for Pharaoh, this absolute monarch, god incarnate, and for that reason it is said that he hardened his own heart (8.15, 32; 9.34) or simply that his heart was hard (7.13, 14, 22; 8.19; 9.7, 35). But the exercise of awesome force finally begins to have some effect on him when the plight of hail comes, and he tries some apparently serious negotiating (10.8-11; again after the darkness, 10.24-27) ... The king of Egypt, after pretending to bend a little, will not do so. The reason must be that God will accept no negotiated settlement, nothing less than Pharaoh humbling himself before Yahweh will do (10.3). And so, Israel claimed, God did not permit him to enter into an honest bargaining, for compromise would in fact defeat god's purpose'.

The result of both this redemption and victory is that YHWH is praised (vv. 1, 6, 7) and proclaimed as king. The song celebrates the fact that YHWH is highly exalted.[212] It is also noted that v. 11 echo's the *Enuma Elish* and Baal Myths, by asking, 'who is like you among the gods, O YHWH?' The song concludes with the explicit declaration that YHWH's kingship will last 'forever and ever'. The kingship of YHWH is seen to have two results in the poem. The first result is that the very arm of YHWH which procured the victory is the same arm that will lead and protect those in whom he has ransomed (vv. 13, 16, 17).[213] The second result is that it will cause terrible fear among all the nations (vv. 14-16),[214] as in the victory tour recorded in the Baal cycle.[215]

The last element of the poem is the building of a house to commemorate the victory and to proclaim the victor to the world at large. Because YHWH is king it is only fitting that a temple be constructed in his commemoration. In v. 17 three parallel phrases are used to denote the building of such a temple. It is called 'a mountain of your inheritance', a place 'for your dwelling', and 'the sanctuary'.[216]

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[211] Propp, *Exodus 1-18*, 514. In this sense the victory is also meant to answer the question posed by the pharaoh (5.2), 'Who is Yahweh, that I should heed his voice and let Israel go? I do not know Yahweh, and moreover I will not let Israel go.' See Gowan, *Theology and Exodus*, 134.

[212] A term often used in passages that allude to YHWH's kingship, especially when that kingship is vindicated through mighty acts of deliverance and salvation.

[213] Propp, *Exodus 1-18*, 531.

[214] Fretheim, *Exodus*, 165, sees this fear in terms of a the, 'worldwide purposes of a creator God who is about the business of setting a chaotic, oppressive world straight, then all perpetrators of injustice might well melt away'. This interpretation would seem to rest on a symbolic interpretation of the nations mentioned in vv. 14-16 as perpetrators of injustice. Or it could be seen as another celebration of the great power of YHWH's arm as he is capable of seeing the Hebrews through a dangerous passage. Cf. Durham, *Exodus*, 208.

[215] Smith, *Pilgrimage Pattern*, 220 n. 58.

[216] However, the comparison is not identical, for in the Baal cycle, the victory over Yam is not complete until the establishment of Baal's house and his holy abode on Mount Sapan, where in Exodus 15, the victory cannot be separated easily from the house building. See Smith, *Pilgrimage Pattern*, 220.

Scholars are often in disagreement on what these terms actually refer to specifically, but like the ancient near eastern parallels, it is certainly meant to give glory to the victor and to commemorate the mighty victory.[217]

The Formative Nature of the Exodus Event: The Beginning of a Pattern for Liberation

The narrative of the exodus culminates in a poem which celebrates YHWH's defeat of the Egyptians, the victory over chaos, a new creation, and the redemption of a people, all in a way that confirms YHWH's presence with his people. As such, it is a summary not only of the whole of the book of Exodus, but also for much of the subsequent theology developed by the Hebrew's.[218] The story of the exodus is told again and again in many different contexts throughout the life of Israel's corporate worship. And as Durham notes:

> ....in all likelihood this poem was used on a regular basis, throughout the cultic year, not just at the Passover or at some other holy occasion. For the deliverance that the poem celebrates is far too basic to Israel's faith and far too pervasive in Old Testament theology for such a splendid account to have had such restricted usage.'[219]

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[216] Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, 120.

[217] On whether these phrases refer to the land of Canaan, see, e.g., Cassuto, *Exodus*, 177; Martin Noth, *Exodus: A Commentary* (London: SCM, 1962), 126; Nahum M. Sarna, *Exodus* (The JPS Torah Commentary; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1991), 80. On Jerusalem, see, e.g., Smith, *Pilgrimage Pattern*, 215; John Day, *God's Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea: Echoes of a Canaanite Myth in the Old Testament* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 98-100. More specifically that they refer to the Jerusalem Temple, see, e.g., Clements, *Exodus*, 92. Or on whether the terms are meant to be used in a narrowing sense referring respectively to Canaan, Jerusalem, and the Temple, see, e.g., James Muilenburg, "A Liturgy on the Triumphs of Yahweh," in *Studia Biblica Et Semitica*, ed. W.C. van Unnik and A.S. van der Wonde (Wageningen: H. Veenman & Zonen, 1966), 249; Gwynne Henton Davies, *Exodus: Introduction and Commentary* (London: SCM, 1967), 130.

[218] Durham, *Exodus*, 210.

[219] Durham, *Exodus*, 204.

The battle and triumph at the Re(e)d Sea came to be identified as the battle which YHWH redeemed Israel. Israel began to draw upon all the available symbols and language which seemed to retain power and meaning even when the old mythic patterns which gave birth to them had been forgotten or broken by Israel's austere historical consciousness.[220] The mythic configuration of divine combat in victory provided 'the symbolic prism for disclosing the primordial dynamics latent in certain historical events (like the exodus)', and according to Fishbane began to, 'generate the hope for their imminent reoccurrence.'[221] The traditions of Israel, like most traditions in the ANE, very well could have turned into a closed and lifeless inheritance, but instead the material was passed down from generation to generation, and because it spoke to the needs of the people and was adaptable enough to address the changing situations, it lived.[222] This explains why the exodus can be seen as a formative event of the nation. It spoke of what YHWH had done in the past, precisely that he was a god who had acted, and it gave assurance in the present that the same YHWH would act again in the future.

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[220] Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, 137-8.

[221] Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*, 357; Fishbane, *Text and Texture*, 121.

[222] Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*, 18; Collins, "Exodus and Biblical Theology," 255.

CHAPTER THREE
THE EXODUS 'MOTIF' AND THE PROBLEM OF THE EXILE: LIBERATION RETOLD

The most imaginative (re)use of the exodus tradition within the biblical corpus occurs in the exilic literature, where the motifs of the exodus are incorporated to deal with the specific problems that resulted in the exile. While the exodus motif as a narrative of past deliverance may have enabled Israel to cope with numerous crises and calamities in its pre-exilic history, the exile seemed to call all this into question.[223] As exiles the Israelites were not only cut off from their roots, their land, and their past, they were also cut of from the traditions of their community.

The problem of exile for Israel was no small problem. To the exiles it must have seemed that Israel's defeat by Babylon was due to the defeat of YHWH by the Babylonian gods. A litany of questions must have begun to seep into the national conciseness: Was YHWH, whom Israel had regarded as its invincible protector, unable to withstand the attack of the Babylonians? Did YHWH show himself to be powerless before the gods of the nations? Was YHWH too ignorant of Israel's condition to have anticipated her plight? Was YHWH too disinterested to fulfill his covenant oath? Was he unwilling to once again take action on her behalf? Had YHWH, in fact, been discredited, and could nothing more be gained from serving him?[224] Was the exodus only an episode after all? And was it a mere illusion to interpret it as a revelation of the abiding favor of YHWH to Israel? Is his relationship with Israel at an end, and will he even create a different people for himself?[225] To say that the exile may have caused a crisis of faith is an understatement. The crisis, so far as the texts reveal, was not about whether YHWH was good or fair, but rather could, or moreover would, YHWH again act.

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[223] Zenger, "The God of Exodus ", 22.

[224] B. Gemser, "The Rîb- or Controversy-Pattern in Hebrew Mentality," in *Wisdom in Israel and the Ancient near East: A Festschrift in Honour of H.H. Rowley*, ed. M. Noth and D.W. Thomas (VTSup 3;Lieden: Brill, 1955), 131; Isbell, *Theological Didactic Drama*, 7; Robert H. O'Connell, *Concentricity and Continuity: The Literary Structure of Isaiah* (JSOTSup 188; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 149; R. N. Whybray, *Isaiah 40-66* (NCB; London: Oliphants, 1975), 32-34.

[225] Zenger, "The God of Exodus ", 22.

Due to the exile, is it still reasonable for the Israelites to believe that YHWH could once more accomplish their deliverance?[226]

It is these conundrums with which Israel wrestled that led to a rethinking of her traditions and a questioning of the previous interpretation of the past. Israel ultimately had to deal with the notion that the proper understanding of YHWH could no longer be gained from a simple retelling of his victorious deeds. A simple recital of the past would cause YHWH to be a captive and defeated deity. No longer was it acceptable to view the core YHWH stories as the stories of a victorious god. If 'history' taught anything, it taught that YHWH had just lost the last battle. Indeed, to a people displaced and taken captive in Babylon, dispossessed of all that they had once held dear, 'history' could be heard to argue that the time had come for them to join the religion of the Babylonians.[227] In fact the Neo-Babylonian texts assert Nebuchadnezzar's claim to authority over these conquered peoples. Langdon's early translation of one of these texts effectively illustrates this:

> I called into me the far dwelling peoples over whom Marduk my lord had appointed me and whose care was given unto me by Šamaš the hero, from all lands and of every inhabited place from the upper sea to the lower sea from distant lands the people of far away habitations kings of distant mountains and remote regions who dwell at the upper and the nether seas with whose strength Marduk the lord has filled my hands that they should bear his yoke and also the subjects of Šamaš and Marduk I summoned to build E-tem-in-anki.'[228]

As Israel attempted to reconstitute their broken lives in narrative form, they began to grope for a way to see themselves as a restored people. Such a story, as Edward Said notes, 'is designed to reassemble an exile's broken history into a new whole?'[229]

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[226] Paul D. Hanson, *Isaiah 40-66* (Interpretation; Louisville: John Knox Press, 1995), 26-27.

[227] Isbell, *Theological Didactic Drama*, 6-7.

[228] Stephan Langdon, *Building inscriptions of the Neo-Babylonian Empire*, Part 1: *Nabopolassar and Nebuchadnezzar* (Paris: Leroux, 1905), 149, as cited in, Daniel L. Smith-Christopher, *A Biblical Theology of Exile* (Overtures to Biblical Theology, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), 67.

[229] Edward W. Said, "The Mind of Winter: Reflections on Life in Exile " *Harpers*, no. September (1983): 51.

While it was the exile that forced the Israelite interpreters to re-evaluate the stories about the actions of YHWH in Israel's prior history, it was the power of the exodus that formed the basis for moving from a simple retelling, to the creation of an imaginative paradigm for the future. While biblical stories before the exile appeared to be self-explanatory because of their outcome (i.e. YHWH had won), after the exile the interpretation from what Isbell has termed 'power-of- YHWH' stories to the priority of the oneness of YHWH; became manifest. In other words, the concept of the sovereignty of YHWH moved from the arena of history into the broader arena of faith, the kind of faith that allowed people to believe in their God even when current events were stacked against them and their political interests.[230] What is more, in the light of the situation of exile, YHWH would need to be viewed not merely as the 'one' God for Israel, but indeed as the 'one' God over the entire world (moving from monolatry to monotheism).[231] For only then could YHWH be seen as Lord over Assyria, Babylon, and Persia, as well as over Israel; and only then could faith in YHWH during the exile retain meaning.[232]

The question of exile thus became whether Israel could believe that YHWH had willed the defeat of his own people, and actually created the exile for his own sovereign purposes.[233] For only if Israel could learn to believe that YHWH had stood 'history' on its head would it make sense to hope that YHWH alone possessed the power and authority to make history right once again by ending the shame of the exile which he had imposed.[234] But if it could be argued on the basis of the old stories that the outcome of all previous situations had been pre-determined by YHWH long before the results had become clear in history, then it might be possible to argue that this God who had manipulated the pharaoh in Egypt could also manipulate the mighty kings of Assyria, in Babylon, and Persia for his own creative and restorative purposes.[235] But in order to make such a radical shift of faith, the dramatic stories of Israel's history could not simply be repeated once again in Babylon, they would have to be retold so as to function in this new way. Otherwise, the future would be totally devoid of hope.[236]

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[230] Cf. Hab. 3.17

[231] On the move from monolatry to monotheism in ancient Israelite religion see, e.g., Gary A. Rendsburg, "An Essay on Israelite Religion," in *Approaches to Ancient Judaism: New Series*, ed. Jacob Neusner (South Florida Studies in the History of Judaism 116; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 1-27.

[232] Isbell, *Theological Didactic Drama*, 7-8.

[233] H. Eberhard von Waldow, "The Message of Deutero-Isaiah," *Interpretation* 22 (1968): 281, that this proclamation of defeat is what set YHWH apart from the gods of the nations.

[234] Whybray, *Isaiah 40-66*, 33.

The Exodus 'Motif' in Isaiah 40-55: Liberation as Return from Exile

The text of Isaiah 40-55 is, in part, an attempt to answer the questions raised by the crisis of exile by giving new life to the old stories that Israel had once told. The text seeks to do this in at least three ways: (1) by exonerating YHWH from any blame and explaining that the responsibility for the exile itself was due to Israel's disobedience; (2) by the pronouncement of the comforting message of restoration, or liberation; and (3) by a display of YHWH's incomparable power to act again on behalf of his covenant people. Although the answers the text offers concerning the exile are comforting to Israel, the text of Isaiah 40-55 as a whole is far from being a simple text of comfort. The text is equally filled with polemics and disputations, concerning the gods of the nations and the disobedience of Israel and her recalcitrant heart concerning YHWH's plan.[237] In this respect comfort and consolation are reserved for those who were willing to listen to this new message of future hope, while polemics and disputations are meted out to confront those who were not convinced that YHWH was indeed working anew. The message was clear: Israel as a whole found herself in the bonds of slavery and was in need of a new liberation, a purifying judgment, in order for her to enter the transformed eschatological Zion.[238] Israel was encouraged to realize that her deliverance should not be conceived of in any alliance with surrounding nations, but rather she was to embrace the fact that Zion was secure in YHWH and in the mysterious ways which he seeks to work.[239] The text makes clear that Israel is still coming to grips with that problem.

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[235] Isbell, *Theological Didactic Drama*, 9.

[236] Isbell, *Theological Didactic Drama*, 9-10.

[237] Cf. Walter Brueggemann, *Hopeful Imagination* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1986), 111.

[238] Barry G. Webb, "Zion in Transformation: A Literary Approach to Isaiah," in *The Bible in Three Dimensions: Essays in Celebration of Forty Years of Biblical Studies in the University of Sheffield*, ed. David J. A. Clines, Stephen E. Fowl, and Stanley E. Porter (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990), 71.

In this section we will see how the motif of the exodus and the themes found within undergo the necessary changes to instill in Israel the necessary hope, not only maintaining continuity with the stories of old, but also using imagination to rework the traditions just enough that they remained authoritative for this new 'historical' context.

The Message of Comfort for Israel: The Assurance of a New Liberation

Comfort as a predominant theme in the text of Isaiah 40-55 is clear from the very beginning.[240] The message of comfort opens with the divine council fashioning a new proclamation (40.1-8). This is immediately followed by the rhetorical act of enthronement (40.9) which YHWH who had seemed weak (because of the exile) is placed at the head of the triumphal procession.[241] The message of comfort has at its base the restoration of Israel, restoration both from the Babylonian exile and from the very cause of the exile itself, Israel's disobedience. This message of hope and comfort is framed in the exodus traditions of old.[242] The framing of the message of comfort with exodus terminology serves the strategic function of stressing continuity to the traditional faith, namely the faithfulness of God to his chosen people and his redemptive and forgiving nature; while at the same time suggesting that the retelling of the old exodus story was somehow no longer sufficient.[243] By reminding the audience how YHWH had in the past revealed himself as the God who created Israel, who called them to be his own, who guided them, who rescued them from their enemies, who had given them their own land, and who made them into a powerful nation, the text attempts to breathe new life into all these old claims and at the same time calls for something completely new. Implicitly, the present plight of Israel is similar to that of her ancestors in Egypt, and so there needed to be a new exodus, this time from Babylon.[244] The exodus tradition cannot support the claims of a new exodus by simply retelling the same old stories because the circumstances had indeed changed. The old events needed to be recast into the new situation so that they could speak anew about how YHWH would once again bring about his salvation.

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[239] Webb, "Zion in Transformation," 72.

[240] Isa. 40.1-2. Cf. 43.1-4; 44.1-5,23-28; 46.3-4; 51.3-6,12-16; 54.1-8

[241] Brueggemann, *Hopeful Imagination*, 96.

[242] Gemser, "The Rîb- or Controversy-Pattern in Hebrew Mentality," 150-51. Durham, "Isaiah 40-55," 52, maintains that the narrative of the book of Exodus lies just beneath the surface of Isaiah 40-55, to such an extent that with a little effort, a parallel or supplementary narrative can be constructed to yield a sequence that might be called the first exodus continued, supplemented, even restored by the new exodus.

[243] Philip B. Harner, "Creation Faith in Deutero-Isaiah," *Vetus Testamentum* 17, no. 3 (1967): 300.

This message of the new exodus is designed to bring comfort and hope to a despondent people. The importance of the motif should not be diminished since it occurs not only in the beginning (40.3-5) but also at the end (55.12f.) of this large section, effectively framing the text.[245] The image of the new exodus was deliberately chosen to focus Israel's attention on YHWH's activity precisely at the point which the exiles questioned whether this activity had either stopped or had been reversed. In essence the text is reminding Israel of the rescue that took place in Moses' day, and emphasizing that it was not irrelevant. YHWH is, at this very moment, in the process of demonstrating that by continuing the exodus, this time from the captivity of the Babylonians, it will surpass even the exodus from the Egyptians.[246] The text seeks to accomplish this in three ways: by employing the same terminology, by contrasting the old with the new, and by invoking the mythological nature that formed the foundation of the redemption from the Re(e)d Sea.

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[244] Whybray, *Isaiah 40-66*, 35.

[245] John Day, "Inner-Biblical Interpretation in the Prophets," in *'the Place Is Too Small for Us': The Israelite Prophets in Recent Scholarship*, ed. R. P. Gordon (SBTS 5; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1995), 237.

[246] Durham, "Isaiah 40-55," 53.

The Use of Exodus Terminology

Isaiah 40-55 continues to liken Israel's situation in the exile to that of the exodus by using the same terminology to describe this new situation. In the initial exodus the Israelites are described as being afflicted, wretched and poor, and it is this very condition that causes YHWH to have compassion on the Hebrews and to act on their behalf. [247] In this new exodus the text describes the 'poverty' of Israel in exile metaphorically, conflating it with the wilderness wanderings, as the new impetus for YHWH's action, 'When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue is parched with thirst, I the LORD will answer them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them (Isaiah 41.17).' The text takes up the scene in exodus 17.2 but expands a particular situation of calamity into a general situation of calamity, bringing with it not only recollections of the wanderings in the wilderness but also echoes of the narrative of the exodus event as a whole.

Furthermore, this new act of liberation will come about when YHWH himself comes:

> A voice cries out: 'In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken (Isaiah 40.3-5).'

Here YHWH is depicted as turning to the afflicted, wretched, and poor, who are threatened with extinction in the wilderness of exile, and promises them that transformation is near.[248] The text proceeds to describe YHWH's intervention as a transformation of the wilderness where he will miraculously provide the returning exiles with water and shade, and that wherever they go springs will gush forth and trees will suddenly sprout.[249] The narrative of the exodus is conflated and recast to contextualize the actions of YHWH into this new message of comfort and liberation.

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[247] Ex. 3.7, cf. Deut 26.6

[248] Cf. Isa. 41.17-18

The Contrasting of the Old with the New

Another way which the Isaiah text connects itself with the exodus tradition of old is by way of contrast. Here references to 'new things' reoccur throughout the text and are contrasted to 'former things' in a deliberate attempt to show that YHWH is able to bring about things of which the idols are incapable. The text taunts the Babylonian deities, asking them if they can, 'Tell us the former things, what they are, so that we may consider them, and that we may know their outcome; or declare to us the things to come (Isaiah 41:22).' In contrast YHWH is able to say, 'See, the former things have come to pass, and new things I now declare; before they spring forth, I tell you of them (Isaiah 42:9).' Here the 'new things' apparently refer to the prophecies of hope which had accompanied the former (pre-exilic) oracles of doom. [250] Since these latter oracles came to pass, the text suggests, the prophecies of consolation would also be realized. The issue of 'former' and 'later' things seems, in these two texts, to relate to YHWH's fulfillment of his historical promises.[251] But, in an unforeseen twist, the text also envisions the exodus event as one of these 'former things,' to which the restoration as a 'new exodus' will correspond:

> Thus says the LORD, who makes a way in the sea, a path in the mighty waters, who brings out chariot and horse, army and warrior; they lie

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[249] Zenger, "The God of Exodus ", 24. See also, Richard J. Clifford, "The Hebrew Scriptures and the Theology of Creation," *Theological Studies* 46 (1985): 46; Dale Patrick, "Epiphanic Imagery in Second Isaiah's Portrayal of a New Exodus," *Hebrew Annual Review* 8 (1984): 125-41; Claus Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66: A Commentary*, trans. David M. G. Stalker (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969), 36-39; Whybray, *Isaiah 40-66*, 50.

[250] Scholars have occasionally interpreted this polarity in terms of the liberating decree of Cyrus for release from exile. But there may, perhaps, be a more nuanced range to these terms.

[251] Fishbane, *Text and Texture*, 132, who notes that in 65:16-18, by contrast, the prophecy is that 'former' earthly woes will be transformed only when the dawn of salvation breaks over a 'new heaven and new earth.' The renewal of life will be permanent (66:22). Cf. Bernhard W. Anderson, *From Creation to New Creation* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994), 37; Carroll Stuhlmueller, ""First and Last" And "Yahweh-Creator" In Deutero-Isaiah," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 29 (1967): 495-511.

> down, they cannot rise, they are extinguished, quenched like a wick: Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old. I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. The wild animals will honor me, the jackals and the ostriches; for I give water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert, to give drink to my chosen people, the people whom I formed for myself so that they might declare my praise (Isa. 43.16-21).

The above text pivots on v.18: 'Do not remember the former things', which when put in the context of the consolation and comfort which precedes it; must in fact be referring to the exodus.[252] This rhetorical enclosure, descriptive of former things and olden times, sets off and stands in direct contrast to the new event which is to come–the deliverance from Babylonian exile. In the past 'YHWH ...made a path in the sea'; in the future He 'shall make a path in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert.' Even though YHWH declares a new thing for his people, this does not mean that it replaces that what has gone before, nor does it imply that which is about to happen has never happened before. The new thing which YHWH is about to perform is not something uncharacteristic of YHWH, but rather the term 'new' in this context of the transformation of the wilderness might imply 'young and sprouting' like vegetation after the winter rain (see Isaiah 42.9; 43.19). The 'new' coming of YHWH to his people 'in the wilderness' is not qualitatively different than the liberation from the Egyptians the Hebrew people had experienced earlier in the exodus. But it is new in that it puts an end to the 'desert' stage of the catastrophe which YHWH had hidden his face (Isaiah 43.16-21).[253] But in trying to maintain a sense of continuity to the former things, this new exodus is described as outshining the old. Thus in 52:11-12 the people are given exact instructions: 'You will not leave in haste, nor go in flight.' This certainly recalls the precise language of the paschal sacrifice and ritual in Exodus 12:11, 'this is how you shall eat it: your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it hurriedly. It is the Passover of the LORD.' The new teaching of Isaiah juxtaposes the calm departure of the new exodus with the disquietude of the first.[254] In this context we can see how the text reuses the exodus tradition to surpass the old narrative by incorporating it and by heightening its effects, to reassure those in exile that YHWH had certainly not become impotent.

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[252] A pointed allusion to the designation of Israel in the post-exodus Song of the Sea (Ex. 15.13,16)

[253] Zenger, "The God of Exodus ", 25.

The Mythological and Cosmic Allusions

Perhaps the most striking passage of hope and comfort comes out of reflecting upon the dark despair of exile. By meditating on the sense of enslavement and loss of hope, the text seizes upon images of redemption whereby Israel's ancient and mysterious God would be surely recognized. Nowhere is this more strongly felt than in 51:9-11, where the creation, exodus, and new exodus are fused into one event.

> Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the LORD! Awake, as in days of old, the generations of long ago! Was it not you who cut Rahab in pieces, who pierced the dragon? Was it not you who dried up the sea, the waters of the great deep; who made the depths of the sea a way for the redeemed to cross over? So the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away (51.9-11).

This text integrates three dimensions into one interlocking web focusing attention on the power of creation, the power of national origins, and the longed-for restoration in the future new creation. By highlighting the primal past, where the 'arm of YHWH' had destroyed Rahab and Tanin, Yam and Tehom, the ancient forces of chaos made manifest in the sea monsters of old; the text is drawing the readers' focus on the fact that, this same 'arm' which cleaved Yam at the time of the exodus, is once again at work.[255] Taking hope in these ancient manifestations of divine power, the text invokes this same 'arm of YHWH' to 'put on strength' for those yet in exile, in order restore them to Zion and Zion to them.[256] The text continues in this vein by describing YHWH as the Divine Warrior who rescued Israel in the past and putting it in juxtaposition with this yet future time, when the chaos of this new historical disorder will be ended. The past is here portrayed in mythic images which serve to dramatize the former struggle with the present expectation. Just as God has before destroyed the enemies of cosmic disorder, so soon, even now, he will destroy the perpetrators of the exile.[257]

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[254] Fishbane, *Text and Texture*, 133-4.

[255] Here the Chaos motif is used as is common in the Ugaritic texts to denote renewal rather than creation *ex nihilo*. In Ugaritic the Chaos motif is associated with Baal, the restorer, and not El, the creator-god Stuhlmueller, *Creative Redemption in Deutero-Isaiah*, 87 n. 300.

This hope that YHWH will act again in a new exodus, one that transforms the present exile into a place where once again the incomparable YHWH will reign unfettered, and his people will be led back to their land free once again to worship YHWH in freedom, is at the heart of the reworking of the exodus material in the text of Isaiah 40-55.

The Transformation of the Wilderness as a New Creation: The New Scope of Liberation

The wilderness wanderings as an event remembered in ancient Israel, more often than not described that space which was unknown and unfamiliar, a period of time filled with negative experiences. In its ancient near eastern context the wilderness was a place of desolation, an area vast and void, parched, riverless, a place unfit for habitation, remote, and was often associated with refuge for outlaws and fugitives, a place to live in order to avoid the law, and as such a place where evil resided. It often was conjured up as a barren place, which came to take on mythical connotations. It is no coincidence then that Mot is said to reside in a sun-scorched desert, and that the wildernesses of the world are thought to most resemble the dark regions of the netherworld.[258]

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[256] Fishbane, *Text and Texture*, 134-5; Kiesow, *Exodustexte Im Jesajabuch*, 100.

[257] Fishbane, *Text and Texture*, 136, notes that the recurrence of cosmogonic combat imagery in connection with historical redemption, or the projected end of historical disorder, discloses a profound inner-biblical dialectic between the mythicization of history and the historicization of myth

[258] Shemaryahu Talmon, "Har and Midbar: An Antithetical Pair of Biblical Motifs," in *Figurative Language in the Ancient near East*, ed. Murray Mindlin, Markham J. Geller, and J. E. Wansbrough (London: University of London, 1987), 124-25.

But after the exodus event there began to be a competing view of the wilderness, one that still had all the echoes of the negative, but was infused with a vision of YHWH. The wilderness becomes the place where the original relationship between the nation and YHWH was fostered; it is both a time of purest devotion and a time replete with the failings of Israel.[259]

It is not surprising that the text of Isaiah 40-55 incorporates this rich view of the wilderness into a message of comfort. The text does this in order to emphasis that the exile is not the end of YHWH's history with his people, but merely a crucial stage of this history; and it is precisely in the use of the wilderness motif that YHWH can once again prove himself as the God of the exodus by showing favor to the poor and oppressed. Just as in the exodus the mighty YHWH defeats the forces of chaos, claims for himself a people, and guides them to the Promised Land, here the ante is upped. The text of Isaiah 40-55 describes YHWH's actions as creating a world which has lost its threatening character. Where in the past there were wildernesses and deserts now there are rivers, pools of water, pastures, and gardens with trees (41.19f; 43.19; 49.9). This re-creation of the world begins with a highway (43.16; 49.11) on which the exiles are led home by their god in a theophony.[260] By rooting the text in the exodus experience the text insist that this vision cannot be dissolved in the world of mere ideas or dreams. By using the exodus as a metaphor the text is able to give this vision the necessary openness and plasticity which will leave room and freedom for God to create something 'new' here in dessert. While the new exodus shares continuity with what went before, it also represent the renewal and re-establishment of what had lost its power and vitality.[261] By merging creation themes with the exodus motif the text is likening this new exodus as bringing about a new-creation of sorts. The text combines these creation themes inherent in the exodus to proclaim a new message of comfort.[262] Durham notes that in Genesis the summary of YHWH'S creation activity clearly has a universalistic impulse with the beginning of the one people with whom the Bible is almost wholly preoccupied with must simply be assumed into the myth of the beginning of all people, in all places, and all times. It is here, which Durham notes, that the text of Isaiah introduces a particular dimension that is missing in most of the other creation accounts. Emphasizing that if the old creation is about to be supplemented and completed by a wonderful act of new creation, then the single creation of Genesis 1 becomes a double creation, the first necessitating the second creation, the second creation continuing the first. And the universal theme with which the story of Israel is begun becomes here a particular theme: namely that, the revision of the much corrupted old creation will take place in a new creation, a people being remade so that all people can be remade.[263]

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[259] Richtsje. Abma, *Bonds of Love: Methodic Studies of Prophetic Texts with Marriage Imagery (Isaiah 50:1-3 and 54:1-10, Hosea 1-3, Jeremiah 2-3)* (Studia Semitica Neerlandica 40; Assen: Van Gorcum, 1999), 188; Talmon, "Har and Midbar," 128.

[260] Waldow, "The Message of Deutero-Isaiah," 277.

[261] Zenger, "The God of Exodus ", 24.

While this imagery could be used to propagate the propaganda of a re-establishment of Israel in Palestine, it seems rather unlikely due to the overall imagery used in this section. Paradise motifs appear (43.20) which would indicate a transformation of the wilderness, such that ordinarily wild and fierce animals are now pictured as giving honor to YHWH. [264] The prohibition not to think upon the old exodus indicates that in some sense the new exodus is more than just a return to the land (43.18).[265] And this is followed by the unusual phrase, 'and now it springs forth (43.19a)', a phrase that in the context of the wilderness denotes the sudden germination and sprouting of plants.[266] This terminology suggests that the new exodus is a surprise beyond all human calculation and imagination. The terminology suggests a new creative act.[267]

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[262] See Terence E. Fretheim, *Exodus* (Interpretation; Louisville: John Knox Press, 1991), 354-65; "The Plagues as Ecological Signs of Historical Disaster," *JBL* 110 (1991): 385-96; "The Reclamation of Creation: Redemption and the Law in Exodus," *Interp* 45 (1991): 112, where Fretheim argues that the exodus itself was a new creation.

[263] John I. Durham, "Isaiah 40-55: A New Creation, a New Exodus, a New Messiah," in *The Yahweh/Baal Confrontation and Other Studies in Biblical Literature and Archaeology: Essays in Honour of Emmett Willard Hamrick*, ed. Julia M. O'Brien and Fred L. Horton (SBEC 35; Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1995), 49. Cf. Stuhlmueller, *Creative Redemption in Deutero-Isaiah*, 69.

[264] Cf. Gen 1.24-26; 2.19-20. Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 106; Stuhlmueller, *Creative Redemption in Deutero-Isaiah*, 69.

[265] This could also be due to Israel's reflection on tradition which stifled their ability to see any new work that YHWH was now doing. See, Hanson, *Isaiah 40-66*, 7.

Elsewhere in Isaiah the new exodus is equated with a new creation, nature will be altered for the benefit of the poor and needy (41.17-19).[268] The darkness and uneven ground that threaten the blind will be made light and level (42.15-16), harmful shrubs will be changed into helpful trees (55.13).[269] The former creation of the natural world is pictured as being renewed in a sort of new rescue from chaos in its latest manifestation, and Israel is to be rescued from her exilic oppression.[270] This new creative work of YHWH in transforming the suffering of the wilderness into a new paradise is used to infuse hope into the beleaguered nation, hope that the same YHWH who rescued the Hebrew slaves from the Egyptians would with the same power rescue them not only from the Babylonians, but from all manifestations of chaos that sought to keep them in bondage.

The Idea of the Servant in the New Exodus: A New Kind of Liberator

As the multiple layers of the message of comfort continue to unfold it is clear that the message is not simply a message of an ideal future, but a message of responsibility in the here and now. One of the unique ways which the text seeks to bring about this responsibility is by introducing the notion of the servant. In fact one of the obvious purposes in the text of Isaiah 40-55 is to attempt to come to terms with what it means for Israel to be YHWH's servant. Central to this theme is the paradox of Israel and her ever disobedient ways as contrasted to YHWH's forever faithful words, and how this dissonance is to be remedied. The text conveys a struggle between what Israel as YHWH's servant is called to be, and what Israel is in reality. The text repeatedly calls Israel to be a light to the nations (42.6; 49.6), but describes her as being deaf and blind *par excellence* (42.19). What is YHWH to do if those called to be the 'light to the nations' turn out to be 'blind and deaf' themselves? While the exile itself was envisioned to correct Israel's problem, and although the text states that Israel has paid double for her sins, and that her time of calamity is nearly over, she is still pictured as not having the ability to see or hear. Causing one to wonder not only who the servant is, but more importantly, what the role of the servant has left to offer in the larger context of the text?

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[266] Christopher R. North, *The Second Isaiah: Introduction, Translation and Commentary to Chapters 40-55* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964), 125.

[267] Stuhlmueller, *Creative Redemption in Deutero-Isaiah*, 70. See also Isa. 41.17-20. Zenger, "The God of Exodus ", 26, goes so far as to contrast the way which the Warrior God brought about the first exodus with the peaceful way which YHWH brings about the new exodus.

[268] Klaus Baltzer, *A Commentary on Isaiah 40-55*, trans. Margaret Kohl (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), 108-09. Cf. Ex. 15.22-26; 17.1-7; Num. 20.1-13; Ps. 78.15-16; 114.

[269] Durham, "Isaiah 40-55," 52. Cf. Isaiah 48.7. Baltzer, *Isaiah 40-55*, 485, sees נַעֲצוּץ and various other terms in the Hebrew Scriptures as being used to describe different peoples. The implication is that the text is insinuating that not only will nature become a paradise again, but that also the enemies will be transformed.

[270] Durham, "Isaiah 40-55," 53; Zenger, "The God of Exodus ", 26. See, e.g., Isaiah 51.9-16, which also attaches ancient myths and a song of creation to the redemption and rescue of Israel at the sea. Also cf. 43.1-7 and 44.21-23.

There is no doubt that the text betrays a sense of fluidity when describing the servant. Thus in addressing this question, we must be ever mindful of the inherent problems in viewing this text as a mere problem to be solved, especially when the questions we ask, the text itself might be more than a little reluctant to answer. We are here mindful of the words of David Clines when he cautions that:

> Historical-critical scholarship is bound to mistreat a cryptic poetic text when it regards it as a puzzle to be solved, a code to be cracked. What if the force of the poem – to say nothing of the poetry of the poem – lies in its very unforthcomingness, its refusal to be precise and to give information, its stubborn concealment of the kind of data that critical scholarship yearns to get its hands on as the building-blocks for the construction of its hypotheses?[271]

The power of these texts of Isaiah 40-55 over the centuries is no doubt due to their cryptic nature, and the plurality of possibilities which undergird the poetry itself. And while the texts are not forthcoming as to the identity of the servant, we must be content that the figure in the Servant Poems might intentionally be a fluid mix of the corporate, the individual, and the ideal all at once.[272] But this fluidity should not stop us from inquiring as to the role the servant plays with in the text.

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[271] David J. A. Clines, *I, He, We, and They: A Literary Approach to Isaiah 53* (JSOTSup 1; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1976), 25.

What we do know, from the text, is that the servant is commissioned for a new task involving the old but unfulfilled vocation to bring justice to the nations.[273] In this sense the servant will bring to fruition YHWH's destiny for Israel and for the nations. We learn that the fulfillment of this vocation also has the intention of transforming Israel herself.[274] It is clear that the servant is to play an important role, but not much more can be said because the vision described is in process. It is presented in the four servant poems, and speculation about it is diverse and the literature devoted to them nearly endless.[275] It is apparent from these passages that the texts' real focus is not on the identity of the servant but rather on the servant's role.

In the text the commission of the servant is conveyed in the context of the exile, and all of the trauma that accompanied it. The political power of Israel as a monarchy was now dissolved; Israel's quest to rule the world through the nation as a political entity was, by all intents and purposes, a failure. The writers of this text replaced the political task of Israel with this new task of the servant: the move from monolatry to monotheism opened up the possibility for the nations to come under the yoke of YHWH, and as YHWH's servant Israel was to bring this justice to the nations

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[272] See Clines, *Literary Approach to Isaiah 53*, 65; Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 264, who admits that the identity of the servant, 'remains a secret and where the report is silent we must defer to it'

[273] Rainer Albertz, "Religion in Israel during and after the Exile," in *The Biblical World*, ed. John Barton (London: Routledge, 2002), 107.

[274] Christopher R. Seitz, "How Is the Prophet Isaiah Present in the Latter Half of the Book? The Logic of Chapters 40-66 within the Book of Isaiah," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 115 (1996): 237.

[275] See also on the Servant Poems, e.g., Ulrich Berges, "Who Were the Servants? A Comparative Inquiry in the Book of Isaiah and the Psalms," in *Past, Present, Future: The Deuteronomistic History and the Prophets*, ed. Johannes C. De Moor and Harry F. Van Rooy (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 1-18; Ceresko, "Fourth Servant Song," 42-55; R. E. Clements, "Isaiah 53 and the Restoration of Israel," in *Jesus and the Suffering Servant: Isaiah 53 and Christian Origins*, ed. W. H. Bellinger and William Reuben Farmer (Harrisburg: Trinity Press, 1998), 39-54; Clines, *Literary Approach to Isaiah 53*; Lisbeth S. Fried, "Cyrus the Messiah? The Historical Background to Isaiah 45:1," *Harvard Theological Review* 95, no. 4 (2002): 373-93; Hyun Chul Paul Kim, *Ambiguity, Tension, and Multiplicity in Deutero-Isaiah* (SBLSup 52; New York Peter Lang, 2003); George A. F. Knight, *Servant Theology: A Commentary on the Book of Isaiah 40-55* (ITC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984); Tryggve N. D. Mettinger, *A Farewell to the Servant Songs: A Critical Examination of an Exegetical Axiom* (Lund: CWK Gleerup, 1983); Webb, "Zion in Transformation," 65-84.

(42.1-4). Israel was to bring this justice by being a witness to YHWH's salvation, as 'a light to the nations' (49.6).

This commission was made possible by YHWH's life-giving power, amid the context of hopelessness and defeat. The text sets out to define this new power, and to bring assurance to Israel that it was indeed a viable power. The servant in order to fulfill her function must be reassured that she is commissioned by YHWH with the necessary power to complete her task. The text takes great aims in assuring Israel that, despite the exile, YHWH is still the all powerful and incomparable God. YHWH does this by calling forth both Israel and the nations to be witnesses in the divine courtroom. We see this in 41.1-10 where YHWH, in an effort to reproach those who doubt his power, compares himself to the idols of the nations, the supposed winners of the last battle. YHWH reaffirms his power by being the only deity who is able to forecast the future, while the nations on the other hand can only take courage in the construction of their own gods. After establishing to Israel that YHWH is the only deity with any real power, YHWH shows that he has favored Israel, alone among the nations, and has chosen her as locus of his divine justice.[276]

> But you, Israel, my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, the offspring of Abraham, my friend; you whom I took from the ends of the earth, and called from its farthest corners, saying to you, 'You are my servant, I have chosen you and not cast you off'; do not fear, for I am with you, do not be afraid, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my victorious right hand. Yes, all who are incensed against you shall be ashamed and disgraced; those who strive against you shall be as nothing and shall perish. You shall seek those who contend with you, but you shall not find them; those who war against you shall be as nothing at all. For I, the LORD your God, hold your right hand; it is I who say to you, 'Do not fear, I will help you (Isaiah 41:8-13).'

Not only does YHWH assure Israel that the he is with her, but sensing the weight of the reality of the exile upon his people, he continues in another courtroom scene to commission Israel to be witnesses of this divine power. Again the nation's idol makers and Israel are summoned to be questioned about which deity controls human history:

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[276] Richard J. Clifford, "The Function of Idol Passages in Second Isaiah," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 42 (1980): 454.

> Who is like me? Let them proclaim it, let them declare and set it forth before me. Who has announced from of old the things to come? Let them tell us what is yet to be. Do not fear, or be afraid; have I not told you from of old and declared it? You are my witnesses! Is there any god besides me? There is no other rock; I know not one (Isaiah 44:7-8).

The nations and Israel are summoned together and Israel is declared to be YHWH's witness, and the nations are likewise challenged to produce a witness of their god's activity (43.8-12). Israel is encouraged to remember that, as the witness of an imageless and uniquely powerful deity, she is to take comfort that it was YHWH who had fashioned her, rather than YHWH having been fashioned by them. This claim is heightened in that not only has YHWH created Israel, but he has also forgiven her, and thus enabled her to fulfill this task as witness.

Israel's experience as servant has as its goal the power to show the nations just who this incomparable YHWH is. While in ages past the nations where given a glimpse of YHWH as the victorious deity of the exodus, and heard of his might and trembled, now the kings and nations are to be confronted by this new power, the paradoxical power of the 'humiliated servant of YHWH'. Israel was to suffer on behalf of the nations, as a universal scapegoat so to speak, so that all could come and worship YHWH (52.13-53.12).[277] The poem itself describes a 'topsy-turvy world', a world that turns conventional wisdom on its head.[278] It is a world where YHWH's servant is described in anti-heroic terms, an object of loathing, disfigured, and subhuman in appearance (52.14).[279] A world where YHWH's servant by practicing non-violence finds himself condemned to the cell (53.9b), a world where the suffering of the righteous is deemed the will of YHWH (53.10a). A world where the social order, the strength of numbers, good taste, ordinary human decency, and the justice of YHWH are all called into question.[280] The poem is nothing short of apocalyptic, opening the possibility of a world other than the one known, and the power to make that world a reality.

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[277] Albertz, "Religion in Israel," 107.

[278] Clines, *Literary Approach to Isaiah 53*, 61.

[279] Compare to Krt, 'the beautiful one, servant of El'

The commission however is not simply about the past and the power needed to bring about this commission in the present, but it is also about the future. The servant as Israel seems to blend the concepts of a new messiah with the promise found in the David and Zion traditions.[281] We can presume that the text of Isaiah 40-55 had taken the promises given to David very seriously, but it appears the text envisions it as a promise YHWH had set aside. Perhaps this was because the Davidic kings had become corrupt themselves. As in 55.1-5 the text is a clear signal of the transition that is taking place concerning David:

> Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you that have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. Incline your ear, and come to me; listen, so that you may live. I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David. See, I made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples. See, you shall call nations that you do not know, and nations that do not know you shall run to you, because of the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has glorified you.

The Davidic monarchy has seemingly failed to fulfill its overall calling by YHWH; the monarchy from the view of the exiles has been left in shambles. The text is thus attempting to answer the pointed question of Psalms 89.49 (50 MT), 'Lord, where is your steadfast love of old, which by your faithfulness you swore to David?' The text answers this question by making it clear that what YHWH has in mind is the end of the

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[280] Clines, *Literary Approach to Isaiah 53*, 62.

[281] Roy F. Melugin, *The Formation of Isaiah 40-55* (Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 141; New York: W. de Gruyter, 1976), 68. Cf. the discussion in, William M. Schniedewind, *Society and the Promise to David: The Reception History of 2 Samuel 7:1-17* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 106.

Davidic dynasty, but not the end of YHWH's purpose in and promise to Israel.[282] The text is attempting to lay to rest the continuance and re-establishment of the house of David, and it does so in the most arresting manner. Once YHWH had made David a witness to his divine power by granting him victory over the nations, now, the promise made to David (Everlasting Covenant) will be democratized, that is it will be given to the people, in a new creation.[283] The nations will come running to Israel just as they came running to David.[284]

> The fulfillment of the promise to David lies not in the coming descendent of David who will once again sit upon the throne in Jerusalem and, as the highest of earthly kings (Ps 89.28), rule over a kingdom stretching from the Mediterranean to Mesopotamia (Ps 89.26). It means rather the people who now languish in exile will achieve high honor, in that they will find friendly reception and grateful recognition among people hitherto unknown.[285]

The ambiguity of the use of the servant in the Servant Poems and in Isaiah 40-55, between individual and corporate becomes an important tool in the later interpretations of these texts, allowing for the redefinition and redirection of YHWH's promises, not only giving comfort to the exiles and Babylon, but also creating a new theological avenue pointing out what YHWH has intended from the start is what he had planned to do all along. The function of the servant is the proclamation of right judgment over the nations even to the distant islands. The authority and power of the servant to fulfill this function is stressed as coming from YHWH himself. The motive of the servant's authority particularly against the context of criticism and unjust punishment is the ultimate development of what, or who, the servant is to be. One wonders, indeed, whether even the great poet genius of the exile understood fully the meaning and implications of all that he presented in Isaiah 40-55.[286]

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[282] Durham, "Isaiah 40-55," 54. Additional evidence of this transition in the text is Isa. 45.1-7, the one passage in Isaiah 40-55 where the term messiah is actually used. And more specifically it is used for a non-Israelite, who is designated as YHWH's messiah.

[283] See Schniedewind, *Society and the Promise to David*, 117-18, who understands the monarchical promise to be radically democratized because of the circumstances of exile. According to Schniedewind the crisis brought on by the end of the Davidic monarchy and the destruction of the Jerusalem temple necessitated a creative, innovative (re)reading of the promise to David. No longer could it be understood to give divine sanction to a Davidic monarchy, and the promise to David receives a radical new understanding as applying to all Israel.

[284] Isa. 55.3-5. Cf. Ps. 18.43-44. Albertz, "Religion in Israel," 107; Ralph W. Klein, *Israel in Exile: A Theological Interpretation* (OBT; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), 166. Cf. this text to that of 2 Sam 7.1-17; 2 Kings 21.7-8; and 1 Kings 8.25.

[285] Otto Eissfeldt, "The Promise of Grace to David in Isaiah 55.1-5," in *Israel's Prophetic Heritage: Essays in Honor of James Muilenburg*, ed. Bernhard W. Anderson, James Muilenberg, and Walter J. Harrelson (New York: Harper, 1962), 202.

The Disputations and the Use of Polemics in Isaiah 40-55: Who Shall Be Liberated?

The message of Isaiah 40-55 is not simply a message of comfort though, for there is a strong element of dissonance between the author and his audience.[287] This discord becomes evident through a pervading polemic, commingling a polemic against the nations and their gods with the more profound and surprising disputations with Israel.

The Polemics against the Nations and Their Gods

Throughout the text of Isaiah 40-55 the description of the nations making and worshiping idols is meant to portray a vivid contrast not only between Israel and the nations, but also between YHWH and the god's of the nations. In doing so it sets the present circumstances of exile in the context of the same topsy-turvy world described in Isaiah 52-53. The Babylonian defeat of Israel naturally gave rise to doubts concerning the power and authority of YHWH. It was through these disputations with the nations and their god's that the text set out to answer these doubts, by suggesting that YHWH is the controller of the whole of history (41.4; 44.6; cf.44.8; 45.21). Thus Israel's present state of slavery was to be reinterpreted, not as the defeat of YHWH, but rather as testimony to the lordship and incomparability of YHWH; for no other deity had ever caused the defeat of his own people.[288]

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[286] Durham, "Isaiah 40-55," 54-55.

[287] Cf. Isa. 40.27 which screams of cynicism; 42.18 speaks of a blind and deaf messenger (Israel); 45.9 decries, 'woe to you who strive with his maker' (cf. 40.1; 46.8, 12); 48.1 Israel is declared to be Israel in name only which seems tantamount to divesting Israel of her servant office.

The contrast between the nations and Israel is set before us as early as Isaiah 40.12-31. Here YHWH is contrasted to the nation's gods through a series of rhetorical questions. These questions are designed to demonstrate that YHWH has acted alone in the creation of the cosmos and that he did not receive any help from the god's of the nations. This proposition insinuates that the nations and their god's must be inferior to YHWH.[289] The text further deprecates the nation's idols, as being made by human hands, indicating that the human rulers who serve these god's and who lay claim to autonomous power are in fact given power to rule only by the all powerful YHWH. Israel must understand that it is YHWH who is control, and the military might of the nations is a mere parody the unique power of which only the incomparable YHWH can summon.[290]

The point here is to depict YHWH as a god of enormous strength and power, before which the world ought to dread, so that if Israel would simply see and trust (40.31) she might know the comfort which YHWH has promised is secure (40.1-8). The rhetorical questions further serve the double purpose of polemic against the nations, by insinuating that it was YHWH who defeated his own people, thus trumping the perceived victory of the Babylonian gods; while at the same time comforting Israel with the expectant confidence that it was YHWH who not only had the power to dethrone all the powers that had come to hold Israel in dominion, whether they be the nations, their cults, their kings, their patron gods, or their civic and religious institutions, but that YHWH had also promised to do so.[291]

To reinforce this, the text sets out a contrast between the fate of the nations and the fate of Israel in 46.1-13. The nations are depicted as acquiring safety through expenditures of much gold and silver. The resources are sent to the craftsman, fashioned into an idol, and laboriously carried home and set up so that it cannot be moved, and although it is dumb and can never answer the pleas of its owners, this is what the nations seek as their solace. YHWH, in contrast, simply summons by a word his 'bird of prey' from the east according to his plan to save Israel. And it is because of the power of YHWH that the text depicts a great reversal that will take place. While it is Israel at present who bemoans her exile, in the future Israel will return to her home in Zion, while the nations are depicted as the ones going into exile (46.1-2; 47.1).[292] In essence the text offers an alternative reading to the reality of the Babylonian Empire, a fresh opportunity for the exiles to think differently, for despite the fact that the Babylonian Empire shows no signs of weakness the text depicts a humiliated and failed Empire, one that should no longer be feared or trusted.[293]

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[288] Watts, "Consolation or Confrontation," 38; Seitz, "How Is the Prophet Isaiah Present in the Latter Half of the Book?," 231.

[289] This would have been a very polemical statement in the ANE world where cosmologies were a very important display of the power of the gods.

[290] Clifford, "Idol Passages," 459.

[291] Clifford, "Idol Passages," 459-60; Stuhlmueller, *Creative Redemption in Deutero-Isaiah*, 90.

The experience of exile is such that one can easily lose contact with one's ability to imagine such a situation; exile is such that it naturally calls into question one's confidence in YHWH's power. Like the Israelites of ancient Egypt, they had trouble hearing the new words of hope because of 'a stifled spirit' (Exodus 6:9). Amazed and offended, YHWH refers to his past acts, and asks:

> Why was no one there when I came? Why did no one answer when I called? Is my hand shortened, that it cannot redeem? Or have I no power to deliver? By my rebuke I dry up the sea, I make the rivers a desert; their fish stink for lack of water, and die of thirst. I clothe the heavens with blackness, and make sackcloth their covering (Isaiah 50.2-3).

In this compressed outburst of rage, YHWH roars at the people and asks whether His 'arm' is 'too weak' or withered 'to save' - an oblique but ironically comprehensible allusion to his almighty 'arm' and his destructive power during the exodus from Egypt (Exodus 14:81; cf. 15:6, 12).[294] This query gives way, in turn, to a depiction of

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[292] Clifford, "Idol Passages," 456-57.

[293] Brueggemann, *Hopeful Imagination*, 95.

[294] Stuhlmueller, *Creative Redemption in Deutero-Isaiah*, 92, notes that the rotting fish are symbolic of the plagues of Egypt thus showing YHWH's power to force the Egyptians to let the Israelites go free.

YHWH's triumphant power over Yam, the Sea god. But whether the language actually refers to the past tradition of a primordial combat between YHWH and the sea monster (cf. Isaiah 51:9), to the splitting of the sea at the exodus (cf. Isaiah 51:10), or to a future battle that will display the same power, cannot be fully determined. Not only are the allusions here indeterminate, but the very depictions are here teetering on a verbal ambiguity. Thus while the verbs denoting divine actions have been translated above neutrally, in the present tense, it must be noted that they are constructed with the prefix form, which commonly expresses future and present future actions in biblical Hebrew (e.g., Exodus 15:1; Numbers 23:7; Psalms 93:3).[295]

The Idol passages, with their vivid narratives, accentuate the infinite series of purposeless acts imposed by the nations. However, Israel is commissioned to fulfill her role as witness by recalling that YHWH is the first and the last, bound to her by creation and redemption, and must simply wait for YHWH to act (Isaiah 40).[296] The polemics accentuate the relationship between the nations and their idols, using it as a foil for the relationship YHWH has with Israel.[297] Indeed these polemics serve to demonstrate YHWH's superiority in that the redemptive exercise of his unilateral control of history will result in the idol's, and the powers which they represent, total dethronement.[298] The presence of these trials and the polemics which they are conveyed are intended to reassure Israel of YHWH's compassion. Yet one cannot help but notice the subtle suspicion that the people themselves were judging YHWH on the basis of idolatrous categories, and are reminded that they no longer ought to interpret YHWH merely through the events of history which can be deceiving, but through YHWH's declaration to be faithful to the covenant that he made with them.[299]

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[295] Fishbane, *Text and Texture*, 137, notes that if the verbs denote past or present actions, they would presumably both be statements of proof made in response to the opening rhetorical question about His power; the difference between the two being that in the one case God lists His formal accomplishments, whereas in the other He attests to a present capacity or activity. One might even detect in this differentiation a shift from a more aloof to a more confidential tone, that is to a more direct attempt to confront the present perplexity and needs of the audience. In any event, in contrast to these two possibilities, an entirely different effect is generated if one construes the verbs as expressive of future actions. For then one would be inclined to perceive in the violent verbal images projected expressions of a divine fury fused by the despairing presentiment that the Israelites in exile harvested no hope from earlier acts of power, and were needful of a new display of might to make the oracles of redemption believable.

[296] Clifford, "Idol Passages," 463.

[297] Clifford, "Idol Passages," 464.

[298] Watts, "Consolation or Confrontation," 38.

The Polemics against Israel

While the trials were intended to establish both the supremacy of YHWH over the idols and the nations, they were also meant to affirm YHWH's faithfulness to Israel.[300] As the text continues, the subtle polemic against Israel and her lack of confidence in her god found in the disputations with the nations is now heightened, as the people claim that YHWH is unwilling to even help Israel. While it is YHWH's intention to use this display of creative power and wisdom to assure Israel of her deliverance in a new exodus (51.9-10; 44.27 and 50.2), it is Israel's unwillingness to see YHWH's hand at work that requires a stern rebuke.

This is evident in 42.18-25, where the people question why YHWH has forgotten them and wonder if YHWH can even see the torment they suffer while in exile. The text responds with a rebuke, declaring that it is not YHWH who is blind, but rather his people are the ones who are blind, and despite YHWH's continual attempts at correction Israel is still recalcitrant.[301] Furthermore, the text declares that it is because of this recalcitrance that YHWH had given them up to exile in the first place. It is Israel's failure to believe the prophetic word that hinders her recognition of YHWH's activity. Here, Israel's problem is her crippling fixation on the catastrophe of the exile and its consequences, their tendency to look back, longing for the liberation of old, turning their faith into a fatalistic apathy that views the status quo as an unalterable reality, thus turning the great saving deeds of the past into an ideology that merely distracts them from the painful present. The text confronts these attitudes and fears with the vision that YHWH is doing a 'new thing', for the 'former things', the very situation of judgment found in the exile, is at an end for Israel. All Israel must do is open her eyes to the seemingly impossible, to a way leading out of the desert of desolation, and to the streams of water which YHWH has provided to satisfy her thirst and for her to draw strength from.[302] However, Israel, proceeds to call YHWH's character into question, wondering if her service to YHWH was all for naught. YHWH turns the tables on Israel, wondering if she would really like to compare their individual cases before a court, thus reminding her of her unfaithfulness:

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[299] Watts, "Consolation or Confrontation," 38.

[300] Watts, "Consolation or Confrontation," 41. The text is not chronological in setting out these themes, I have chosen to set out the themes in this way purely for heuristic purposes.

[301] Although see the reversal in Isa. 43.8 Seitz, "How Is the Prophet Isaiah Present in the Latter Half of the Book?," 232.

> You have not brought me your sheep for burnt offerings, or honored me with your sacrifices. I have not burdened you with offerings, or wearied you with frankincense. You have not bought me sweet cane with money, or satisfied me with the fat of your sacrifices. But you have burdened me with your sins; you have wearied me with your iniquities. I, I am He who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins. Accuse me, let us go to trial; set forth your case, so that you may be proved right. Your first ancestor sinned, and your interpreters transgressed against me. Therefore I profaned the princes of the sanctuary, I delivered Jacob to utter destruction, and Israel to reviling (Isaiah 43.23-28).

The text describes Israel's rebellion as longstanding. Israel is wearied of her God, but it is YHWH who has justification to be weary. For while YHWH has not burdened the Israelites, they have in turn burdened YHWH with their sins. Despite the fact that he has wiped out their transgressions, such is their rebellion that they have not called upon him.

All of this comes to a head over the significant point that even while YHWH has proved his power over creation and history, and that as a result his choice of instruments or his plan should not be questioned (44.24; 45.9; 48.12; cf. 46.9; 48.6), yet Israel questions YHWH's choice in using Cyrus as his agent.[303]

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[302] Zenger, "The God of Exodus ", 25-26, notes that the 'former things' have a wide array of referents.

[303] Brueggemann, *Hopeful Imagination*, 91; Klein, *Israel in Exile*, chapter 5; Waldow, "The Message of Deutero-Isaiah," 278-9, notes that the idea of being rescued by a Gentile must have been radical enough to provoke serious resistance.

YHWH's call of Cyrus is an important point because the text associates him with the redemption of Israel. Cyrus is an expression of YHWH's power, it is YHWH who raised up Cyrus from the beginning, it is YHWH who will bring the rulers to nothing, and it is YHWH through Cyrus who will both destroy Babylon and rebuild Jerusalem.[304] Although Cyrus is perhaps likened to Moses as the responsible agent in the new exodus, the most astonishing thing is that the text call's Cyrus a messiah and shepherd, showing beyond all doubt that it is YHWH who is clearly affirming him.[305] YHWH's affirmation of Cyrus becomes the center of Israel's argument with YHWH, for it is YHWH's choice of Cyrus which constitutes the consistent climax to which the later disputations build. Thus in 44.24-28, after declaring himself the creator of all, the confounder of the wise and the one who commands Jerusalem to be rebuilt, YHWH concludes, 'it is I who says of Cyrus, 'my shepherd' and he will perform all my desire'. Then in 45.9-13 YHWH announces woe to those who dare to question their maker, pointing out that he is the creator of all things and finishes by declaring that 'I have aroused him [Cyrus] in justice'.[306] In 46.5-11 YHWH begins by mocking the idea that he can be regarded as an idol, reminding the rebels that he alone knows the end from the beginning. He finishes by declaring that he will accomplish his purposes 'calling a bird of prey from the East, the man of my purposes…' And finally in 48.14, YHWH reaffirms that he 'loves him [Cyrus]', and it is Cyrus who '…shall carry out his good pleasure on Babylon'. The fact that Cyrus has already figured prominently in these trials against the nations only confirms his importance.[307]

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[304] On Cyrus see John Goldingay, *The Message of Isaiah 40-55: A Literary-Theological Commentary* (London: T&T Clark, 2005), 253-300.

[305] Cf. Fried, "Cyrus the Messiah? The Historical Background to Isaiah 45:1," 391, for the similarities between the Davidic king and Cyrus. That Cyrus is called a messiah in Isaiah 45:1 should not be over read, Jenner suggests, since even this notion could have involved a far less enthusiastic perspective than many modern interpreters assume: 'Cyrus, being in a position of dependency and obedience to YHWH, was no more than a useful tool in the service of Jerusalem?' See K.D. Jenner, "The Old Testament and Its Appreciation of Cyrus," *Persica* 10 (1982): 284.

[306] Klein, *Israel in Exile*, chapter 5.

[307] Watts, "Consolation or Confrontation," 41-42. Although it might be objected that Cyrus is only mentioned by name twice, his activities are easily discerned, and in any case this apparent liability becomes an asset when it is noted that no one else from the period is mentioned even once.

The question naturally arises, why this clash between YHWH and Israel over Cyrus? Was Israel disappointed, indignant or perhaps even outraged that a pagan was to be their liberator? Whatever the reasons, the text depicts their rejection of Cyrus as tantamount to them rejecting YHWH.[308] Israel's refusal to accept YHWH's plan functions primarily as a catalyst in bringing Israel's recalcitrant heart into the open. The polemical use of the theme of wisdom becomes focused on YHWH's action through Cyrus. In the prologue the immutability of YHWH's word is established (40.7; cf. 45.23), and this is immediately followed in the first disputation by a challenge to those who think they are more knowledgeable than YHWH (40.12), though his understandings are in fact inscrutable (v. 28). In 44.25 the creative word of YHWH, which causes the wise to draw back, turning their knowledge into foolishness, is epitomized in the word concerning Cyrus. Directly following the Cyrus Oracle (44.24–45.7), YHWH pronounces woe upon those who dare to criticize his skill and wisdom (45.9), concluding with an affirmation of Cyrus as YHWH's agent. The disputation of 48.12-22 further confirms both YHWH 's choice of Cyrus and his instigation of Cyrus' success, as they are followed by a self-designation of YHWH as the one 'who teaches you', those who will 'lead you in the way', further juxtaposed with a lament over Israel's disobedience (48.17). Similarly the epilogue warns Israel to 'seek the Lord while he may be found...' insinuating that 'my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways' (55.6-9).[309]

To summarize, the trials against the nations and Israel challenged Israel's assertion that YHWH is unable and/or unwilling to help. It is Israel, not YHWH, who has been unfaithful. What is more, in rejecting YHWH's plan, and in particular his role for Cyrus, the people show themselves to be obdurate and rebellious still, preferring to operate with the same idolatrous categories of wisdom that led to their exile in the first place. Hence the presentation of YHWH as the incomparable creator and the Lord of history is increasingly directed toward defending the wisdom of his choice of Cyrus. The increasingly hostile tone reflects a growing awareness on the part of the text that the exile has not really changed anything. Israel is still as blind and deaf as ever, still committed to an idolatrous world view that rejects the wisdom of YHWH's way. The question however remains as to how YHWH is to achieve his purpose.[310] How will YHWH restore Jerusalem and Zion, so that she is able to fulfill her commission to the nations?

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[308] Watts, "Consolation or Confrontation," 42.

[309] Watts, "Consolation or Confrontation," 43-44.

The Delay of the New Exodus and the Delay of Liberation

The restoration as predicted in Isaiah 40-55 seems to be predicated on Israel's repentance. So naturally, Israel began to question whether this liberation from pagan rule and the overthrow of her enemies, as outlined in Isaiah 40-55, was contingent upon her repentance and obedience. This is certainly how many later interpretations began to see the vision of Isaiah 40-55.[311] In the vision of the second exodus as delineated in the text of Isaiah 40-55, Israel would repossess the land of Israel, all would return from the diaspora, and rebuild Jerusalem and the Temple in splendor. The return was also envisioned as bringing about the conversion of the nations, Israel was to have no more enemies, and she would have supremacy over the rest of world.[312] It is obvious that the whole vision of the second exodus did not come to fruition as the text had outlined. While the text seems to favor the idea that the deliverance of Israel was to come by Cyrus as the agent, at the same time Israel's response makes it clear that she was still rebellious and obdurate and therefore still unable of fulfill her role as YHWH's servant. Even though Cyrus carries out the word of YHWH and the return from Babylon does indeed take place, Israel still remained under foreign domination and the reality of restored Israel was far different from the glorious hope of the return expressed in Isaiah 1-39 and 40-55.[313] This left the later interpreters with a riddle of what to do with the promises of the new exodus. They could either neglect the second exodus altogether as an organizing motif, or they could reinterpret and reconstruct it as a series of promises that were yet future. Many of the interpretations took the later route, calling for a delay in the promises of the exodus primarily because Israel had failed in her task as servant. Despite the initial return to the land, Israel still remained under judgment for her sin, and although YHWH would remain faithful to his promises, they were relegated to the future. The ambiguity as to the identity of the servant, oscillating between the ideal, the individual, and the corporate, only helped to foster Israel's hope for restoration in a new exodus that was now to be projected into the future, opening up a plethora of possibility for latter commentators.[314]

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[310] Watts, "Consolation or Confrontation," 47-48.

[311] This is seen in the (re)interpretation of this vision in Isaiah 56-60.

[312] Richard Bauckham, "The Restoration of Israel in Luke-Acts," in *Restoration: Old Testament, Jewish, and Christian Perspectives*, ed. James M. Scott (JSJSup 72; Leiden: Brill, 2001), 435.

[313] Cf. with the complete return prophesied in the text of Ezekiel 39.21-29, as well as Ezekiel's vision found in chapters 40-48.

Conclusion

Israel's exilic existence is portrayed as not only a time of physical suffering but also one of existential turmoil. What had happened in the exodus had seemingly been reversed, creation had reverted to chaos, exodus had been reverted to enslavement, all because Israel had neglected her role and continued to be blind and deaf. And while only divine intervention could be conceived of as rescuing them, for all intents and purposes YHWH had just been defeated in the last battle. The text of Isaiah 40-55 attempts to offer comfort by weaving three familiar images throughout in an effort to reassure this defeated and depressed people that YHWH had by no means finished with creation, he had not cast them off, and that redemption would surely come, even if it was still yet in the future. While it was imagined that YHWH would transform Israel and commission her to be his servant, and that this in some way would bring about the much awaited second exodus, the vision of the second exodus never materialized in any convincing way. This would lead to a number of different reinterpretations of this text, but it never really ended the use of these texts within later Judaism(s). If anything, because this text was in need of an ending, it fostered the reuse and reinterpretation we see in the later second temple period. It did not matter to later interpreters that this text was not fulfilled; that it was a text filled with comfort, was enough to give it life beyond its initial context. It was a text that demonstrated that YHWH never separates himself from those who are his own. As Durham succinctly states:

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[314] Watts, "Consolation or Confrontation," 59.

> In his [the prophet's] theology of a New Creation, the prophet took the Yahwist's universal and moved to his own particular. In his theology of A New Exodus, he took Israel's greatest particular and made it universal, in a reversal of much of the exodus-theology of the Old Testament. And in his theology of A New Messiah, he took the shattered hope of the House of David and made it the basis of a hope beyond the exile in a reversal of history the exilic community had experienced. Just as he had spoken of A New Creation that would perfect the first one, and of A New Exodus that would go far beyond the first one, so the poet of Isaiah 40-55 proclaimed A New Messiah to make clear that service does not always mean privilege, as humankind defines privilege, and victory is not always what we have thought it is.[315]

While it was in the redemption of YHWH's people from Egypt that YHWH first 'remembered' and fulfilled his covenant with Abraham, it was the vision of the new exodus from the exile and bondage as told in the text of Isaiah 40-55 that solidified this motif as a formative way to talk about liberation and redemption.[316] And as the (re)use of the exodus material in the text of Isaiah 40-55 makes clear, and as we shall see in the next chapter also, no single comprehensive grand narrative could ever shape the later interpretation of the second exodus.

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[315] Durham, "Isaiah 40-55," 55-56.

[316] Bauckham, "The Restoration of Israel in Luke-Acts," 451.

CHAPTER FOUR
THE CONCEPT OF EXILE DURING THE SECOND TEMPLE PERIOD

A popular approach to the Second Temple period in respect to Pauline literature is to understand the Jews of this time as still experiencing in some aspects the ramifications of the exile.[317] Within this approach it is common to draw a bitter and doleful picture of the Judaism(s) of the Second Temple period.[318] The Jewish existence of this period is often described as both one of despair and as one of continuingly conjuring up the distant dream of restoration.[319] This perspective is often over generalized by insisting that whenever Jews were away from the Promised Land and whenever the land was not under the independent rule of a Jewish king, they would perceive themselves to be 'captive debtors' regardless of their actual status in the diaspora or in the land, economically, politically, or socially.[320] The thesis of a continuing exile has most often been applied to those

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[317] This thesis is of course not limited to the Pauline corpus, but to the wide spectrum which is the Judaism(s) of the First Century, including that of early Christianity. See for example on the Jesus traditions, Craig A. Evans, "Aspects of Exile and Restoration in the Proclamation of Jesus and the Gospels," in *Exile: Old Testament, Jewish, and Christian Conceptions*, ed. James M. Scott (JSJSup 56; Leiden: Brill, 1997), 299-328; D. J. Verseput, *The Davidic Messiah and Matthew's Jewish Christianity* (SBLSP 34; Atlanta: Scholars, 1995), 102-16; N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 126-27, 203-04.

[318] I use the plural noun Judaism(s) instead of the singular noun, more for effect, as I feel the plural jars a reader into recognizing what Barclay describes as, 'the different nuances given to the term 'Judaism,' which can be viewed primarily as a web of beliefs, with multiple variants, or, perhaps more realistically, as an ethnic community whose shared symbols were powerful and enduring precisely because they were open to diverse interpretation.' See John M. G. Barclay, "Diaspora Judaism," in *Religious Diversity in the Greco-Roman World*, ed. Dan Cohn-Sherbok and John M. Court (BS 9; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 56. Although he himself hesitates to use the plural noun, it is my opinion that the singular noun is unfortunately deficient in conveying the 'web of beliefs' that Barclay wishes it to convey, primarily because it can be read without causing the reader to question the ideas of orthopraxy and orthodoxy of the various Second Temple Judaism(s). However, Neusner's view that all texts should be taken as evidence for distinct Judaic systems seems to be a bit extreme. See Chilton and Neusner, *Judaism in the New Testament.*

[319] W. C. van Unnik, *Das Selbstverständnis in der jüdischen Diaspora in der hellenistisch-römischen Zeit*, ed. Pieter Willem van der Horst (Leiden: Brill, 1993), 89-147. Unnik gives credence to such attitudes, by stating that the very term diaspora usually connotes negative connotations of sin and punishment, both in its biblical usage and in its later Second Temple contexts. Erich S. Gruen, *Diaspora: Jews Amidst Greeks and Romans* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 232-52, in a re-examination of the texts argues that this view is unrepresented by the actual participants of history.

[320] George Wesley Buchanan, *Revelation and Redemption: Jewish Documents of Deliverance from the Fall of Jerusalem to the Death of Nahmanides* (Dillsboro: Western North Carolina Press, 1978), 7.

Judaism(s) that found themselves in the diaspora, but recent proponents have gone so far as to declare that even for those Jews living in Palestine the experience of exile still persisted. N.T. Wright a proponent of this view, succinctly describes it in terms of worldview:

> Most Jews of this period, it seems, would have answered the question 'where are we?' in language which, reduced to its simplest form, meant: we are still in exile. They believe that, in all the senses which mattered, Israel's exile was still in progress. Although she had come back from Babylon, the glorious message of the prophets remained unfulfilled. Israel still remained in thrall to foreigners; worse, Israel's God had not returned to Zion.[321]

This new twist has led scholars to re-evaluate the evidence of both diaspora and Palestinian Judaism(s), calling into question the notion of whether the themes of exile and return were prolific enough to capture the imaginations of the various Judaism(s) of this period. Thus it is our intention in this section to listen carefully to what these critics are saying about the subject of exile, in an effort to discern whether or not the themes of exile and return were still evocative enough for the various Judaism(s) to use in order to make sense of their present condition. We will further investigate whether there is traction in viewing these themes as either simple narratives of the past, thus being static and concrete, or whether these themes were more open narratives, being more fluid and open to different interpretive conclusions.

In re-examining the narrative possibilities of the exile we will look at the most recent project on the subject undertaken by N.T. Wright.[322] According to Wright most if not all Jews would consider themselves still in the exile as the quote above details, but it is posited that no 'faithful' Jew would ever imagine that the exile could last forever; God certainly would not allow his people to suffer under pagan oppressors without end. If he did, then the problem of the exile would have been answered in the negative, YHWH was indeed only one tribal god among many, and he had truly lost the last battle. The texts of the Second Temple Period however betray a hope, a hope based upon the 'historical' actions of YHWH in the past, which according to Wright predicate a future restoration. Until then Israel was to wait in faith and hope, if not puzzlement and longing.[323]

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[321] N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 268-69.

[322] See especially, Wright, *People of God*, 145-338.

Wright explains this hope to be based largely upon the faithfulness of Israel's God to fulfill his covenant, which would ultimately result in re-establishing the divinely intended order in the cosmos. Israel's present plight of exile was to be explained, within the terms of this divine covenant faithfulness, as the punishment for her sins. The apparent inactivity of god at the present moment to act was explained by the fact that he was delaying in order to give more time for his people to repent. The obligation of the covenant people was therefore to be patient and faithful, to keep the covenant with all their might, trusting that he will vindicate them in the future.[324]

Not until YHWH acted decisively to change things and restore the fortunes of his people would the exile come to an end. At the present time, the covenant people themselves were riddled with corruption, still undeserving of that redemption.[325] It was the prophets of old who had warned that the nation was accumulating a large onus of debts, which she would not be able to repay, and as a result she would be taken into captivity until she had paid double for all her transgressions.[326] As we have seen in the previous chapter, Isaiah 40-55 looks forward to a 'second exodus,' a return that in many ways would outdo the first. And despite the return of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Zerubabbel to the land and the rebuilt Temple, there was still a sense which the exile was yet ongoing, which the words of Isaiah 40-55 still resonated.[327] This is evident from the speech attributed to Ezra, where he declares: 'From the days of our ancestors to this day we have been deep in guilt, and for our iniquities we, our kings, and our priests have been handed over to the kings of the land, to the sword, to captivity, to plundering, and to utter shame, as is now the case.'[328] Note that here Ezra includes his own time and circumstances in the desolate period that the people had brought on by their sins. Thus it is likely that the author envisioned the audience as still in captivity, albeit in a different sense than for those who remained in the lands of the dispersion.[329] So despite the return to the land, Wright maintains that the 'exile', as a period of history with certain characteristic features, not merely geographical reference, was still in fact ongoing. The texts that declared a 'second exodus' spoke of the return from exile in a more eschatological manner. These texts remained unfulfilled, unless they are relegated to mere fanciful metaphors.

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[323] Wright, *People of God*, 270-71.

[324] Wright, *People of God*, 271.

[325] Wright, *People of God*, 272.

[326] See, for example, Deut 15.8; Jer 16.18.

[327] Cf. Ezra 9.8-9; Neh. 9.36-37

But recent studies of diaspora Judaism(s) which have sought to approach the literature on its own merits, and not for what it might have to contribute to the study of the New Testament, have concluded that the texts themselves betray a much more complex situation then the one Wright reveals.[330] These studies of the diaspora have looked at the life of various Jewish groups in a much more holistic manner, arguing for a much more sympathetic view of the role these various Jewish communities played in the wider world.[331] No longer is it effective to view Jewish existence in relation to only religious ideas and themes, rather we must take into account how these communities interacted within the wider society. In the recent research on the diaspora there has been a concerted effort to dispense with the common either/or dichotomy between assimilation and faithfulness for a both/and framework which is said to better fit the evidence of the texts in question.[332] The implication drawn from this new perspective is that the Jews would have had little reason to seek restoration, for they were on the whole content with their role in society and by in large with the status quo. So if the Jews of the diaspora where contented and contributed to the maintenance of the societies they lived in, then in what ways could the narrative of exile and return evoke meaning for them? And more pointedly does a diaspora Judaism that is both assimilated and at the same time equally committed to a Judaic religion, then completely undermine Wright's basic thesis of exile and return? Does the conception of restoration naturally infer that the Jews have to be 'wallowing' in exile in order to long for restoration?[333] In order to determine whether or not this thesis can still be maintained in light of the new data, it will be helpful to rehearse some of the texts that speak of the exile during the Second Temple period itself.

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[328] Ezra 9.6

[329] James C. Vanderkam, "Exile in Jewish Apocalyptic Literature," in *Exile: Old Testament, Jewish, and Christian Conceptions*, ed. James M. Scott (JSJSup 56; Leiden: Brill, 1997), 89.

[330] In fairness, much of this could be due to the nature of Wright's project: a synthesis of Second Temple Judaism in order to explain the New Testament. It is likely that any synthesis that reads the texts in order to gain a composite picture of the times, as a consequence will overlook the variegated nature of the Judaism(s) which it seeks to explain. Yet it does not necessarily follow that such a broad interpretation is completely without merit, it just may be that it only tells part of the story.

[331] See John M. G. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora: From Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE - 117 CE)* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996); Barclay, "Diaspora Judaism," 47-64; Gruen, *Diaspora*, 232-52.

Exilic thought in the Second Temple Period

A litany of texts from the Second Temple Period can be amassed to support the interpretation that the return to the land and the rebuilt temple had not ended the exile, in the imaginations of many Second Temple Judaism(s).[334] Here we will rehearse only a few.[335]

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[332] See especially Gruen, *Diaspora*, 232-52.

[333] No where to my knowledge does Wright insist that the Jews necessarily had to be wallowing in their exile, it is rather an implication by critics, who undoubtedly fail to recognize the fallacy of the excluded middle, that to yearn for restoration is to necessarily bemoan exile.

[334] See, e.g., Tobit 13.5; 14.5-7; 16-18; Baruch 1.13ff.; 2.7-10, 14; 3. 6-8; 4.18-23; 5.7-9; 2 Macc. 1.27-29; 2.5-8, 18; 3 Macc. 6.10; Sir 48.10; *Jub.* 25.21; 1QM 1.3; 2.2f; 2.7f; 3.13; 5.1; 11QT 8.14-16; 57.5f.; 29.8-10; 1QpHab 11.4-6; CD 6.4-5; 4Q504-506; 1 Enoch 89.73-75; cf. 4.83-90; T. Mos. 4.8-9, 13; *Pss. Sol.* 8.12, 28, 34; 9; 11.2f; 17.28-31; 50; 4 Ezra 13.40-48.

[335]For a more thorough reckoning of the texts see: Brunson, *Psalm 118 in the Gospel of John*, 66-69; F. Gerald Downing, "Exile in Formative Judaism," in *Making Sense in (and of) the First Christian Century*, ed. F.Gerald Downing (JSNTSup 197; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 148-68; Craig A. Evans, "Aspects of Exile and Restoration in the Proclamation of Jesus and the Gospels," in *Exile: Old Testament, Jewish, and Christian Conceptions*, ed. James M. Scott (JSJSup 56; Leiden: Brill, 1997), 299-328; Craig A. Evans, "Jesus and the Continuing Exile of Israel," in *Jesus & the Restoration of Israel: A Critical Assessment of N.T. Wright's Jesus and the Victory of God*, ed. Carey C. Newman (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 77-100; Michael A. Knibb, "The Exile in the Literature of the Intertestamental

The Evidence for a Continuing Exile from Yeshua Ben Sira

The book of wisdom compiled by Yeshua Ben Sira was composed early in the second century B.C.E., and for the most part it can be compared to the book of Proverbs, where its contents concern views concerning right and wrong.[336] But the Wisdom of Ben Sira also includes a peculiar text that suggests Israel still remained in a state of oppression and that the exile was still continuing.[337] In a soliloquy reminiscent of the prophets of old, Ben Sira reminds his readers of the justice that ultimately would culminate in the eschatological judgment. In contrasting the mercy of God with the justice of God, Ben Sira speaks for God stating:

> He will not ignore the supplication of the orphan, or the widow when she pours out her complaint. Do not the tears of the widow run down her cheek as she cries out against the one who causes them to fall? The one whose service is pleasing to the Lord will be accepted, and his prayer will reach to the clouds. The prayer of the humble pierces the clouds, and it will not rest until it reaches its goal; it will not desist until the Most High responds and does justice for the righteous, and executes judgment. Indeed, the Lord will not delay, and like a warrior will not be patient until he crushes the loins of the unmerciful and repays vengeance on the nations; until he destroys the multitude of the insolent, and breaks the scepters of the unrighteous; until he repays mortals according to their deeds, and the works of all according to their thoughts; until he judges the case of his people and makes them rejoice in his mercy. His mercy is as welcome in time of distress as clouds of rain in time of drought (Sirach 35).

What starts out as an appeal for justice concerning those who cannot defend themselves turns rapidly into a plea for eschatological vindication.[338] Ben Sira has

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Period," *Heythrop Journal* (1978): 253-79; James M. Scott, "Exile and the Self-Understanding of Diaspora Jews in the Greco-Roman Period," in *Exile: Old Testament, Jewish, and Christian Conceptions*, ed. James M. Scott (JSJSup 56; Leiden: Brill, 1997), 173-218; Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, 280-338.

[336] George W. E. Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature between the Bible and the Mishnah* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981), 59.

[337] John J. Collins, *Jewish Wisdom in the Hellenistic Age* (Edinburgh: T and T Clark, 1997), 23, suggest, that chapter 36 was a later addition added sometime in the Maccabean period.

[338] This text echoes Isaiah 1.10-17

taken a common conception of how Israel was to practice social justice as a nation, and turned it on its ear. The implication in this text is that it is the nations that bear the brunt of responsibility for the condition of the widow and the orphan.[339] The Most High is called upon as the Divine Warrior, reminiscent of the first exodus, to repay the nations and to destroy the insolent until they are judged according to their deeds. For Israel, she will rely upon the mercy of the Most High in this present time of distress. The text continues:

> Have mercy upon us, O God of all, and put all the nations in fear of you. Lift up your hand against foreign nations and let them see your might. As you have used us to show your holiness to them, so use them to show your glory to us. Then they will know, as we have known that there is no God but you, O Lord. Give new signs, and work other wonders; make your hand and right arm glorious. Rouse your anger and pour out your wrath; destroy the adversary and wipe out the enemy. Hasten the day, and remember the appointed time, and let people recount your mighty deeds. Let survivors be consumed in the fiery wrath, and may those who harm your people meet destruction. Crush the heads of hostile rulers who say, 'There is no one but ourselves.' Gather all the tribes of Jacob, and give them their inheritance, as at the beginning. Have mercy, O Lord, on the people called by your name, on Israel, whom you have named your firstborn. Have pity on the city of your sanctuary, Jerusalem, the place of your dwelling. Fill Zion with your majesty, and your temple with your glory. Bear witness to those whom you created in the beginning, and fulfill the prophecies spoken in your name. Reward those who wait for you and let your prophets be found trustworthy. Hear, O Lord, the prayer of your servants, according to your goodwill toward your people, and all who are on the earth will know that you are the Lord, the God of the ages (Sir 36:1-22) .

In perhaps the most violent text in Sirach, Ben Sira again uses the language of the exodus this time in an effort to plead with God to enact a new exodus, 'Give new signs, and work other wonders; make your hand and right arm glorious...Hasten the day, and remember the appointed time, and let the people recount your mighty deeds.'[340] It is clear that while Ben Sira echoes the Scriptures of Israel, it is not for the purposes of simply recounting the glorious past, but rather like the Isaianic new exodus, he seeks to evoke the traditions of the past so as to foster a new hope in these new times of distress.[341]

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[339] This implication can be taken when read within the context of the eschatological fervor of Sir 36.1-22, but may simply intimate God's universal judgment over the unrighteous, whereby he repays all according to their deeds. See, Collins, *Jewish Wisdom*, 111.

The Evidence for a Continuing Exile from Jubilees

The book of Jubilees, written in the second century B.C.E, is a re-representation of the biblical history from creation to the giving of the Law on Mt. Sinai in order to re-contextualize the narrative for a new generation.[342] The author still sees the restoration from exile as a future event.[343] A striking feature in the narrative that attests to this is set in the wilderness where the Lord tells Moses that once the people enter into the Promised Land, then they will turn to other gods and abandon the covenant (1.7-11). The result of these transgressions is exile, but the text is unclear on which exile is referred to (1.13-14). While the author of Jubilees is rehearsing the biblical narrative, it is evident by the subsequent criticisms of Israel that this return and restoration have not happened.[344] For instance in the vision of the end of exile the author states:

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[340] In fact it is because of the violence of this text and the fact that no where else does Ben Sira invoke wrath upon the nations that this text is disputed. See the discussion in Theophil Middendorp, *Die Stellung Jesu ben Siras zwischen Judentum und Hellenismus* (Leiden: Brill, 1973), 125-32. But even if this text does comes from a latter time (i.e. the Maccabean period) the point still holds that the there were Judaism(s) of the second Temple that still found it useful to invoke the motif of the second exodus in times of distress.

[341] Ex 15.15-16, Ex 7.3, *Contra.* Gruen, *Diaspora*, 235, who, although he acknowledges Ben Sira's plea for the gathering of all the tribes of Jacob to be restored as from the beginning (36.10), he attributes this to mere echoes of the biblical texts, implying that these echoes have nothing to do with the longing for return felt in the diaspora. However, one might wonder why Ben Sira bothers to echo these texts at all, for what other end could the powerful images of the 'exodus' motif produce? The more pertinent question for Gruen's thesis to my mind would be: Is it possible to long for an Isaianic like restoration without condemning the present diaspora? See discussion below.

[342] Lester L. Grabbe, *Judaic Religion in the Second Temple Period: Belief and Practice from the Exile to Yavneh* (London ; New York: Routledge, 2000), 63; Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature*, 72, Jubilees is by and large concerned with halakhah.

[343] Vanderkam, "Exile in Jewish Apocalyptic Literature," 103.

[344] What is interesting here is that the author of Jubilees does not resort to a remnant theology, but rather envisions that since all Israel suffer together (1.12) all Israel will turn back to God

> And afterward they will return to me from among the nations with all their heart and with all their soul and with all their might. And I shall gather them from the midst of the nations. And they will seek me so that I might be found by them. When they seek me with all their heart and with all their soul, I shall reveal to them an abundance of peace and righteousness. And with all my heart and with all my soul I shall transplant them as a righteous plant. And they will be a blessing and not a curse. And they will be the head and not the tail. And I shall build my sanctuary in their midst, and shall dwell with them. And I shall be their God and they will be my people truly and rightly. And I shall not forsake them, and I shall not be alienated from them because I am the Lord their God (Jub. 1.15-17).[345]

The following passage reminds the readers that the return and restoration are bound up in the covenant promises of God to never forsake his people.[346] The eschatological significance of this passage is furthered demonstrated by the subsequent prayer of Moses to not abandon His people Israel (19-21). The Lord responds to Moses:

> And the Lord said to Moses, 'I know their contrariness and their thoughts and their stubbornness. And they will not obey until they acknowledge their sin and the sins of their fathers. But after this they will return to me in and with all of (their) heart and soul. And I shall cut off the foreskin of their heart and the foreskin of the heart of their descendants. And I shall create for them a holy spirit, and I shall purify them so that they will not turn away from following me from that day and forever. And their souls will cleave to me and to all my commandments. And they will do my commandments. And I shall be a father to them, and they will be sons to me. And they will be called 'sons of the living God.' And every angel and spirit will know and acknowledge that they are my sons and I am their father in uprightness and righteousness. And I shall love them (1.22-25).

(1.15-16). Cf. Martha Himmelfarb, *A Kingdom of Priests: Ancestry and Merit in Ancient Judaism* (Jewish Culture and Contexts; Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 81-82.

[345] The translation is that of the *OTP*

[346] Peter Enns, "Expansions of Scripture," in *Justification and Variegated Nomism: A Fresh Appraisal of Paul and Second Temple Judaism*, ed. D. A. Carson, Peter Thomas O'Brien, and Mark A. Seifrid (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 97.

It is in light of this that the author predicts that the people will repent while in exile, not only for the present generation's sins but also for the sins of their ancestors.[347] The return, the sanctuary, and the new ability to perfectly obey the covenant all point to an ideal future that will come about at the 'end of time.' In fact the surface narrative of the whole book climaxes, in the expected jubilee of jubilees, when Israel is to be liberated from slavery in Egypt and receives back the land that is rightly theirs by inheritance.[348] This return from exile is thus envisioned as an eschatological return mapped out in terms of the traditional Sin-Exile-Restoration pattern.[349]

The Evidence for a Continuing Exile from the Texts of Qumran

Probably the least controversial group of texts that speak of the influence and power of exilic ideas and restoration are those texts discovered in the Dead Sea.[350] While the concepts of exile and restoration are prevalent at Qumran, they fluctuate between the restoration of the land of Israel, the restoration of the Jewish people, the restoration of the temple, the restoration of sacrificial worship, and the restoration to a ritual purity and perfection.[351] Furthermore it is often hard to distinguish between the concept of restoration and the overlapping concepts of remnant, eschatology, and messianism. Such fluidity found within these texts ensure that any evidence given for continuing exilic thought must admit to only being a partial picture of the texts and certainly nothing like a theology.[352]

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[347] Gene L. Davenport, *The Eschatology of the Book of Jubilees* (Studia Post-Biblica 20; Leiden: Brill, 1971), 27. The author knew that the transformation of Israel's heart had not yet taken place, for in his own day there was apostasy. What we usually think of as the return from exile had not, in fact, led to a new allegiance to God, but to repetition of the old unfaithfulness and rebellion. Israel had not yet sought God with all her heart. He had not yet truly been found by them. The author however was hopeful that in his own day the authentic return form exile was beginning to occur, that the time of God's return was now.

[348] James M. Scott, *On Earth as in Heaven: The Restoration of Sacred Time and Sacred Space in the Book of Jubilees* (JSJSup 91; Leiden: Brill, 2005), 164-65; James C. Vanderkam, "The Origins and Purposes of the Book of Jubilees," in *Studies in the Book of Jubilees*, ed. Matthias Albani, Jörg Frey, and Armin Lange (TSAJ 65; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997), 22. In fact Doron Mendels, *The Land of Israel as a Political Concept in Hasmonean Literature: Recourse to History in Second Century B.C. Claims to the Holy Land* (TSAJ 15; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1987), 59, 63-5, states that the raison d'être of the book was the reconquest of the land.

[349] Scott, *On Earth as in Heaven*, 165.

[350] When discussing exilic thought in the texts found at Qumran it is important to recognize that despite the fact that most scholars identify these texts with the Essenes, the texts themselves betray a wide diversity of thought on a number of areas, especially that of exile and restoration. See, Lawrence H. Schiffman, "The Concept of Restoration in the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *Restoration: Old Testament, Jewish, and Christian Perspectives*, ed. James M. Scott (JSJSup 72; Leiden: Brill, 2001), 205.

That being said the texts found at Qumran do show that the community[353] itself may have been modeled after the exodus traditions.[354] With this insight it can be readily appreciated just how central the theme of exile was to the authors of the Qumran manuscripts. Martin Abegg, Jr. states that:

> While the sojourn in Egypt and exile of the northern tribes was still reflected in the writings, it was the Babylonian exile which had captured the corporate imagination. In a very real sense it had become a new paradigm which spoke of how god dealt with his people Israel. The new going down to Egypt was the deportation to Babylon in fulfillment of God's warning of Judgment (CD 7.9b-15). The return was followed by an important albeit unknown event which led to a lengthy wilderness wandering (1QS 8.12b-14)—the new Sinai—so as to prepare for the coming of God. The New Moses was the Teacher of Righteousness. The Faithful then waited for God to bring them into the land of promise—the iniquity of the Amorites not yet being full—and establish them in their rightful place (4Q171 1-10 ii 26-iii 2).[355]

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[351] Schiffman, "Concept of Restoration," 203. Furthermore once we begin to examine specific features of the sectarian ideology of restoration in the Qumran documents it is not clear whether only the sectarians will share in the ultimate eschatological restoration, or whether all the people of Israel as a unity will be restored. Cf. The Pesher Psalms' (4Q171) 3: 10-13 with 4Q385 (Pseudo-Ezekiel) frag. 2, 4Q386 (Pseudo-Ezekielb) frag. 1, and 4QMMT.

[352] Schiffman, "Concept of Restoration," 205.

[353] I hesitate to speak of a Qumran community here because the exact nature these texts played within the community is open to debate. Thus I do so knowing that any conclusions cannot definitively speak of the views held by one group, especially the Essenes, but rather may only be evidence of minority views within these texts.

[354] Cross, *The Ancient Library of Qumran*, 56 n. 36a, notes that the camp of the sons of light is ordered according to the prescriptions of the mosaic camp in Num 2.1-5.4; 10.17-28; (1QM 3.12-4.11). The Law of the camp (Num 5.1-4) is kept (1QM 7.3-7). The victory of God in the final war is compared with the first exodus (1QM 11.8)} The typology of the Mosaic camp lies close to the surface in CD, 1QS and 1QSa.

[355] Martin G. Abegg Jr, "Exile and the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *Exile: Old Testament, Jewish, and Christian Conceptions*, ed. James M. Scott (JSJSup 56; Leiden: Brill, 1997), 125.

It is possible that the Qumran community believed that it was already living in the eschaton (cf. CD 1.12), and that the eschatological salvation was already present and able to be found by following the Teacher of Righteousness whom God had raised for this purpose.[356] The Damascus document gives the impression of a community which thought of itself as the continuing faithful remnant of returnees from the Babylonian exile (CD 7.20-8.2). By framing the eschatological beliefs in the 'historical' return from exile it could be argued that the community themselves thought that they were indeed the first-generation of the 'new Israel' to return from exile.[357] In fact when the Damascus document speaks of the returnees (CD 3.21-4.4) it ignores the historical return of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Zerubabbel, since in the sect's eyes the exilic period would continue until the sectarians took control of the Temple's ritual at the end of days. In other words the restoration is not an event that had already taken place in the Persian period, but rather a part of the eschatological future being played out already in his own day.[358] Although the texts make reference to the restoration as in the process of happening, this was still only a kind of prototypical return on which they modeled their vision of the future.[359] In this sense there was still a future element that had not yet taken place.[360] And at least for this segment of Judaism(s), as far as these texts represent a community, the matrix of exile and return was not only very powerful, but central to their own self-understanding.

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[356] On the variety of eschatological views at Qumran see, e.g., Philip R. Davies, "Eschatology at Qumran," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 104 (1985): 39-55; John J. Collins, "The Expectation of the End in the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *Eschatology, Messianism, and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. Craig A. Evans and Peter W. Flint (SDSSRL; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 86-88. On the problems of interpreting the 'age of wrath' see, Philip R. Davies, *The Damascus Covenant* (JSOTSup 25: Sheffield Academic Press, 1983), 61-69.

[357] Mark Adam Elliott, *The Survivors of Israel: A Reconsideration of the Theology of Pre-Christian Judaism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 542-43, states that, 'This could mean that the sect considered themselves later returnees, to be distinguished from those who returned at the time of Zerubabbel, Ezra, Nehemiah, or that they discounted this earlier return as entirely ineffective or incomplete, or at best conditional on the faithfulness of the returnees'. See also, Shemaryahu Talmon, "Between the Bible and the Mishna," in *The World of Qumran from Within: Collected Studies* (Leiden: Brill, 1989), 48.

[358] Schiffman, "Concept of Restoration," 208. See also, CD 6.11-14; 20:20-21, 32-33.

[359] Shemaryahu Talmon, *King, Cult and Calendar in Ancient Judaism: Collected Studies* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1986), 214-15.

[360] Davies, "Eschatology at Qumran," 52; Collins, "The Expectation of the End," 90.

Another interesting set of texts found at Qumran that speak of restoration in terms of the past exodus are the liturgical and hymnic texts. It has long been realized that because these texts do not betray sectarian terminology they may in fact have already been in use before the sect came into existence and may have been used in much wider circles of Jews in the Second Temple period.[361] One of the most interesting aspects then of these texts is that they include prayers for the restoration of Jerusalem and the ingathering of the exiles at a time when Jerusalem and its Temple actually stood and when the bulk of the Jewish people remained in the Holy Land. Clearly, this is an example of how the restoration does not necessitate purely physical conditions, but restoration also rests on religious and political dissatisfaction with the state of the nation and its religious life.[362]

In The Words of the Heavenly Lights (4Q504), which are a collection of prayers for each day of the week, we find a particularly strong recollection of Israel's past, in an effort to stir up hope in a future restoration. The prayer itself reads as if it could be found in Isaiah 40-55 asking God to 'Remember Thy marvels which Thou didst for the poor of the nations,' asking God to heal them from that which caused the exodus, calling for the restoration of Israel so that the nations might see God's glory. This text looks to a time that is yet future, where there will be 'neither adversary nor misfortune' but 'peace and blessing.' In Zion God's holy city, they call for God to remember his Covenant, asking him not to forsake Israel whilst in captivity, seeking God to save them from all the nations of their exile, near or far, as has been promised in Scripture. Likewise, in frag. 6 6-8, in a clear reference to Isaiah 40, God is asked to bring His people back on the wings of eagles.[363] These strong allusions to the Isaianic second exodus surely betray a strong longing for a future restoration that speaks of a still future restoration from sin and exile even at a time when the Temple stood and many Jews resided in the land.

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[361] Schiffman, "Concept of Restoration," 219.

[362] Schiffman, "Concept of Restoration," 217-18.

[363] Schiffman, "Concept of Restoration," 218. The ingathering of the exiles also features in the Festival Prayers (4Q509 frag. 3 3-5) and also appears to be mentioned in 4Q528 (Hymnic or Sapiential Work B) 3.

The Evidence of a Continuing Exile from Josephus

Although the writings of Josephus for the most part downplay the historical exile to Babylon and at times over-emphasize the positive attributes of how Jewish people can contribute to their alien environments, coupled with the fact that Josephus himself spent the last three decades living in luxurious exile in Rome, it is not surprising that he does not emphasize restoration.[364] Josephus, however, does speak of two separate instances where certain Jews who claimed to be sign prophets promised their followers signs of coming salvation: Theudas and the Egyptian.[365]

Theudas came upon the scene during the reign of the procurator Fadus (44-?46 CE). He most likely was responding to friction arising over a dispute about who controlled the vestments of the High Priest.[366] Although Josephus calls Theudas an impostor, Theudas convinced his followers to take all of their possessions and to follow him to the Jordan River where he promised that upon his command the Jordan River would part allowing his followers to cross. Fadus however sent a squadron of cavalry and took Theudas' group by surprise, capturing most of them and beheading Theudas on the spot. The head was displayed around Jerusalem to discourage other would be prophets.[367]

Thaddeus' intentions of parting the Jordan River strongly evokes the re-enactment of the first exodus. By associating their actions with the splitting of the Re(e)d Sea (Ex. 12.29-14.30) and the Jordan river (Josh. 3-4), this group may have thought they were enacting the Isaianic second exodus, thus bringing about the end of the exile by ridding the Jews of their foreign yoke and partaking of the land promised to them.

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[364] Louis H. Feldman, "Restoration in Josephus," in *Restoration: Old Testament, Jewish, and Christian Perspectives*, ed. James M. Scott (JSJSup 72; Leiden: Brill, 2001), 226, 29.

[365] The account of Theudas is found in *Ant.* 20.5.1, 97-98; and the account of the Egyptian Jew is found in *JW* 2.13.4-5, 258-263; *Ant.* 20.8.6, 167-172.

[366] Rebecca Gray, *Prophetic Figures in Late Second Temple Jewish Palestine: The Evidence from Josephus* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 114-15.

[367] Gray, *Prophetic Figures*, 115.

Josephus' account of the Egyptian is part of a longer narrative summarizing the events of Palestine under Felix, who was procurator from 52-60 C.E.[368] Like Theudas, Josephus calls the Egyptian a false prophet, but by Josephus' own estimation the Egyptian seemingly garnered a much wider following.[369] Although there are discrepancies in Josephus' own accounts of the Egyptian, in the Antiquities Josephus tells us that the Egyptian first came to Jerusalem and raised a following there. The mass then marched from Jerusalem to the Mt. of Olives, outside the city walls, and there the Egyptian claimed that the walls would miraculously fall down at his command, allowing his followers to enter and probably enact an armed invasion of Jerusalem.[370]

Here too the Egyptian modeled his actions upon the events surrounding the first exodus, namely in a re-enacting of the original entrance into the Promised Land by the defeat of Jericho by Joshua, by claiming to bring down the walls of Jerusalem. The Egyptian was most likely expecting divine intervention to help them in this new defeat of the Romans and in ridding the land of the political oppressors.[371]

Evans suggests both of these 'prophets' were probably laying claim to the promises in Deuteronomy 18.15-22 that someday God would 'raise up a prophet like Moses.'[372] The promises of Isaiah 40 might have also contributed to the actions of the 'prophets' to start in the wilderness thus drawing continuity between their own actions and the 'high way' of God in the second exodus.[373] Because these signs recalled both the exodus and the conquest they were almost certainly meant as eschatological signs.[374] There is little doubt that in both of these cases some sort of restoration was still pined for, and the fact that both events were modeled after the events surrounding the first exodus gives credence to the idea that a new exodus from exile must have still resonated with many Jews, for it is unlikely that these two men would have collected 'masses' of followers if there was a general consensus that the restoration was complete and thus the exilic experience was over.[375]

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[368] For the larger narrative see, *JW* 2.13.4-5, 252-265; *Ant.* 20.8.6, 160-172.

[369] In Acts 5.36 Gamaliel 1 claims that Theudas had about 400 followers while Josephus cites that Theudas was able to convince the 'majority of the masses.' This is contrasted with Josephus account of the Egyptian in *JW* where he claims the followers to be in the 30,000 range.

[370] On the possible reasons for the discrepancies between *JW* and the *Ant.* see Gray, *Prophetic Figures*, 116-17.

[371] Gray, *Prophetic Figures*, 119.

[372] Evans, "Aspects of Exile and Restoration," 303.

The Evidence for a Continuing Exile from 2 Baruch

The text of 2 Baruch, written after the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE, also shows evidence that the theme of exile still resonated as a useful motif. In recounting the past Baruch seems to fuse all the former exiles into one general captivity (78.4). Like other biblical books before it, the wilderness is not represented as a place of judgment alone, where God has sent his people because of their sins, but it has the added dimension of a refuge for the righteous, a place where they have a mission to perform, so that the nations too can be found worthy at the last times (1.4; 78.5-6).[376] Baruch is represented as a prophet like Moses who deliberately frames his own work within the context of Moses (82.2-7). The problem that Baruch addresses is the fall of Jerusalem, which interestingly to Baruch is an example of the corruptibility of the present world (31:4-5), and like some explanations of the first exile, its destruction was brought about by God, not the Gentiles (7:1).[377] The resounding solution to the fall of Jerusalem is that since God has not abandoned his covenant with Israel, obedience to the Law is imperative if one is to still benefit from the promises.[378] In this vein the exodus is used in the same way it is used in Isaiah 40-55, as a motif to encourage the people to direct and dispose their hearts to the 'Mighty One' and 'His Law', so that in the end they will receive everything which they had lost, and much more, 'by many times' (85.3-6). In the end the Messiah will summon the nations together and judge them based upon how they have treated Israel (70.1-10). [379] He will then sit down in peace forever on the throne of his kingdom in Edenic conditions in an incorruptible Zion and in an incorruptible land.[380]

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[373] Craig A. Evans, "The Beginning of the Good News and the Fulfillment of Scripture in the Gospel of Mark," in *Having the Old Testament in the New Testament*, ed. Stanley E. Porter (McMaster New Testament Studies; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 101.

[374] Richard A. Horsley, *Christian Origins* (A People's History of Christianity 1; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), 30; E. P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 171.

[375] Horsley, *Christian Origins*, 29. Josephus may have used these instances to reassure the Romans that he supported the swift action taken against these false prophets, but nevertheless these 'rebels' were able to garner popular support precisely because exilic notions still prevailed. See Steve Mason, *Josephus and the New Testament* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1992), 110.

[376] Vanderkam, "Exile in Jewish Apocalyptic Literature," 105. Cf. Hos 3.5, Jer 29.7

As one might expect in 2 Baruch the exile was a powerful motif that very well might be used to explain the destruction of the Temple, and thus the re-interpretation of the exile motif itself into a more positive experience was key to 2 Baruch's (re)use of the exodus material. Instead of a place of judgment, the wilderness became an opportune place for grieving and atoning, a place that provided a sanctuary for the righteous, a place to wait until their journey was completed by YHWH's coming restoration (85.10-12).

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[377] David E. Aune, "From the Idealized Past to the Imaginary Future: Eschatological Restoration in Jewish Apocalyptic Literature," in *Restoration: Old Testament, Jewish, and Christian Perspectives*, ed. James M. Scott (JSJSup 72; Leiden: Brill, 2001), 167.

[378] Richard Bauckham, "Apocalypses," in *Justification and Variegated Nomism: A Fresh Appraisal of Paul and Second Temple Judaism*, ed. D. A. Carson, Peter Thomas O'Brien, and Mark A. Seifrid (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 175-6.

[379] Aune, "From the Idealized Past," 158.

[380] Despite the probability that this refers to a heavenly Zion, where the faithful will be received, it nevertheless still shows the power of the exile motif, even if the return is not to the literal land, but the heavenly land. Cf. Aune, "From the Idealized Past," 173.

The Exilic Thought in the Testament of the Patriarchs

The *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* were probably written in the second half of the second century C.E. or the beginning of the third century C.E.[381] There is debate on whether the *Testaments* should be considered Jewish works with Christian additions or whether they should just be read as originating from a Christian group.[382] Whoever the originators of these texts were, we can be certain that the person(s) in question knew these Jewish traditions and found them useful for their own purposes.[383] The *Testaments* themselves are written from the perspective of one of the various named patriarchs and are meant to give the readers moral advice to follow after the patriarch's own death so that the readers might be faithful and obedient.

Throughout most of the *Testaments* is a section that rehearses the sin-exile-return/restoration framework (henceforth, SER). The repetition of the SER passages serves to describe the history of the descendents of the patriarchs till the coming restoration.[384] In some cases the SER passages are expanded and employ the sin-punishment-repentance-salvation scheme that are common to earlier apocalypses, usually specified as sin-exile-repentance-return. These sections of the *Testaments* are perhaps the most stereotyped and contain many parallels to one another. They can be very short, and their content can be very general.[385]

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[381] H. W. Hollander and M. De Jonge, *The Testaments of the Patriarchs: A Commentary* (Leiden: Brill, 1985), 82-85.

[382] Robert A. Kraft, "The Pseudepigrapha in Christianity " in *Tracing the Threads: Studies in the Vitality of Jewish Pseudepigrapha*, ed. John C. Reeves (Early Judaism and its Literature 6; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994), 55-86, has argued compellingly that, since the texts in question have been transmitted by Christians in church languages and survive in Christian manuscripts, most of them rather late, that our starting point for discussion ought to be these manuscripts. We should try to understand these documents initially as Christian works, since this was their function in the forms which they are actually preserved; they must have meant something to their original Christian readers, whatever their ultimate origins.

[383] H. Dixon Slingerland, *The Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs: A Critical History of Research* (SBLMS 21; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1977), 109.

[384] See Hollander and Jonge, *The Testaments of the Patriarchs*, 56.

[385] Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature*, 233.

The return/restoration portion of the *Testaments* can include not only the appearance of an anointed priest and/or king, the binding of Beliar, the return from Dispersion, and the salvation of the Gentiles, but also resurrection from the dead and life in a new Jerusalem and/or in paradise.[386]

In the sin sections much of the sin has to do with the general impiety of Israel and their disobedience to the ordinances of God, and in many of the *Testaments* this treatment is very short and general.[387] In other testaments the list of sins is given in considerable detail and includes such things as witchcraft, intercourse with prostitutes, intermarriage, the giving up of agriculture, and following the ways of the sons of Levi.[388] Many of these specific sins are often hard to match up with any known period in the history of Israel, or even in the later Christian era.[389]

The consequences for sin are conveyed in terms of conquest and in exile. Again this is either described in historical terms as the loss of the sanctuary, forced exile, and the judgment of God; or in greater detail as the Testament of Judah describes:

> In response to this the Lord will bring you famine and plague, death and the sword, punishment by a siege, scattering by enemies like dogs, the scorn of friends, destruction and putrefaction of your eyes, slaughter of infants, the plunder of your sustenance, the rape of your possessions, consumption of God's sanctuary by fire, a desolate land, and yourselves enslaved by the gentiles. And they shall castrate some of you as eunuchs for their wives (TJud 23.3-4).

What is common to all the *Testaments* is that punishment always connotes a forced exile. Often the idea of exile can be explained in the pseudo-historical interest of the Testaments and the figures themselves looking to the future 'historical' exile.[390] Yet there are places in the *Testaments* that specifically warn the present and future generations about the result of these sins, so that when these things happen they will repent quickly.[391]

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[386] Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature*, 233; J. Jervell, "Ein Interpolator interpretiert. Zu der christlichen Bearbeitung der Testamente der zwölf Patriarchen," in *Studien zu den Testamenten der Zwölf Patriarchen*, ed. J. C. Burchard, J. Jervell, and Thomas (BZNW 36; Berlin: 1972), 36, notes that the *Testaments* take for granted that the Gentiles have a part in salvation; it is the position of Israel that leads to repeated warnings, calls for obedience and repentance, and promises of salvation.

[387] See TZeb. 9.5; TNaph. 4.1; TAsh. 7.1

[388] See TLevi. 14.4-8; TJud 23.1-2; TIss. 6.1-2; TDan. 5.4-7; TB 9.1

[389] Hollander and Jonge, *The Testaments of the Patriarchs*, 54.

The *Testaments* are pretty uniform in that repentance must take place before the mercy of the Lord's restoration will be experienced. Though the restoration itself is hardly uniform, some of the Testaments have in view a physical return to the land in a future time and within history,[392] while others see the period of exile only ending at the eschatological end of days.[393] Despite these radical differences the time of exile and captivity is still an ongoing reality for the *Testaments.*

Conclusions Concerning Exilic Thought

As seen from this brief sampling of texts the exile was still a very powerful motif used in the literature of the Second Temple period, although the term 'exile' can be misleading in that it no longer refers to the initial forced diaspora under the Babylonians, nor does it refer to Israel's displacement from the land, rather what we see in these texts is that the idea of exile had evolved into a shorthand for the complex set of beliefs concerning Israel's present plight and their continuing future restoration.[394] Exile as non-restoration was a powerful set of ideas that were used in this period, even if they were never universally applied in any normative way.[395] In the Judaism(s) of the Second Temple period we see that the ideas of exile/return (restoration) were used in multifarious ways to serve the ideological needs of the various communities. If there was continuity in the use of the exile/return (restoration) in this period it was at the basic conceptual level, namely that the end should recapitulate the beginning (the *Urzeit/Endzeit* or protology/eschatology pattern).[396] But despite the wide variety of uses in this period it is evident that the basic thought structure was still used and still maintained currency with various Jewish groups even if it was transformed by them.

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[390] There is a deliberate attempt to attach the exile of the testaments to the biblical exile. As evidence the terms for shame: αἰσχύνη and αἰσχύνεσθαι are also used in connection with Israel's punishment in the exile. Cf. Ezra 9.7; Isa 29.22; Jer 2.26; 3.24f; 22.22; 51.51; Dan 3.33 LXX, Th. ; 9.7f.; Hos 10.6. See, Hollander and Jonge, *The Testaments of the Patriarchs*, 169.

[391] Hollander and Jonge, *The Testaments of the Patriarchs*, 249. Cf. TIss. 6.3-4 'Tell these things to your children, therefore, so that even though they might sin, they may speedily return to the Lord, because he is merciful: He will set them free end take them back to their land.'

[392] TJud 22.2-3; TIss. 6.4

[393] TZeb. 9.8-9

[394] Steven M. Bryan, *Jesus and Israel's Traditions of Judgment and Restoration* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 13; Downing, "Exile in Formative Judaism," 150; Klyne R. Snodgrass, "Reading and Overreading the Parables in Jesus and the Victory of God," in *Jesus & the Restoration of Israel: A Critical Assessment of N.T. Wright's Jesus and the Victory of God*, ed. Carey C. Newman (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 62.

The Variegated Nature of the Exilic Motif in the Second Temple Period

One may wonder if it is enough to sift through the extant texts and to isolate the views of exile and return, which may not have been as important as they seem to be when isolated from their contexts, and marshal this as evidence for a narrative world view, an orthodoxy, or even an orthopraxy. The burden of describing the various Second Temple Judaism(s) in relation to exile and return becomes how much evidence is needed to maintain that the ideas of exile and return proliferated down to the 'common people' and were thus powerful and meaningful motifs during this time period.[397] And moreover what kind of evidence is permissible as evidence at all? It is noted that just as there is no uniform theology in the texts of the Second Temple period there is also no uniform orthodoxy of exile and return. And it is important to remind ourselves that a list of texts is not necessarily proof that such ideas ever proliferated beyond those who read and preserved those texts, but these texts are by in large all we have to go on. Thus we move forward with plausibility, noting that the Jewish sources represent a wide spectrum of divergent thinking upon the subject of exile, but also noting that, at the very least, this divergent thinking about the exile opens up enough interpretive space needed for future generations to never the less interact with these concepts.

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[395] Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 87, refers to the exile and return motif as 'Jewish restoration eschatology,' yet cautions that the expectation of restoration is neither clear nor consistent in the textual corpus of the Second Temple period and therefore one cannot refer to an orthodox theology of hope. Thus in referring to a motif of exile and return, I am speaking of a narrative whose basic outline is clear; God will restore his covenant people as promised this much is clear, even if the detailed plotline is developed in diverse ways in the surviving literature. The fact that Wright seems to describe the exile as a basic belief among all Judaism(s) has been the main criticism of his portrayal of the exile.

[396] Aune, "From the Idealized Past," 147.

[397] This is of course a central problem to all social histories of antiquity, not less a problem with all 'history of ideas' in antiquity.

Two further questions that logically might seem to call into question the use of the exile as a powerful shared narrative in the Second Temple Period that need to be addressed are firstly the notion of a remnant theology emerging in the early Second Temple Period, and secondly the possibility of a vibrant assimilated Jewish community which would have no need for a restoration.

Exile and the Remnant

During the tenuous times of the 'historical' exile, the proliferation of what might be termed 'remnant' theology was developed. It was most likely developed in an effort to make sense of the delay of the second exodus and the ongoing tribulations felt by those Jews in captivity. The theology of a remnant can be traced to the canonical book of Isaiah, especially chapters 56-66. This theology of a remnant dealt with the issue of exile through the obedience and faithfulness of a few.[398] The general thinking was that if God was indeed going to be faithful to his covenant then he would have to preserve at least some of Israel. So even though the nation experienced the punishment for her sins collectively, there was still a reason for the individual to be faithful to the covenant. A careful reading of several texts of the Second Temple period seem to point to the developing view that only a remnant would survive to see the blessings of the restoration.[399] At its core this theology consisted of this basic story: the people transgress against YHWH's will and thus anger him; YHWH is said to destroy the godless among the people; while YHWH spares the remnant.[400]

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[398] On remnant theology see, R. E. Clements, ""A Remnant Chosen by Grace" (Romans 11.5): The Old Testament Background and Origin of the Remnant Concept," in *Pauline Studies: Essays Presented to Professor F.F. Bruce on His 70th Birthday*, ed. Donald Alfred Hagner and Murray J. Harris (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 106.

[399] In Hebrew, the concept of remnant, either שארית or פליטה, assumes that sectarians at Qumran were the true representatives of the biblical remnant and it is they who will therefore survive into the end of days. This notion appears in 4Q393 (Communal Confession) frag. 3.7, where the author

The existence of a remnant theology has recently been used to call into question the power the concept of exile and return had over the Judaism(s) of the Second Temple period.[401] It is argued by Seifrid, in rather syllogistic fashion, that a belief in a continuing exile demands that *generally* the Jews regarded themselves under a corporate guilt (guilt for Seifrid is equivalent to sin) and lamented their condition; but since remnant theology insists that Israel is divided into two groups, the pious and the wicked, the sin of the people as a whole can no longer be considered absolute, as an exilic reading would require; no corporate guilt (sin), no continuing exile.[402] Seifrid essentially wonders how the nation as a whole can be under sin, while at the same time the remnant, still under the umbrella of the nation can be considered faithful.[403] But Seifrid's critique seems to be flawed on at least two fronts. Firstly, no one who argues for a continuing exile thinks that this state is due to the Jews sense of guilt. But as the prophets in the Scriptures of Israel are fond of saying, the exile is because the nation has failed to live by the covenant and failed to be obedient to YHWH.[404] Secondly, his notion that the concept of national sin cannot coexist with remnant theology seems to be a quarrel with the idea of remnant

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sees himself and his fellow (sectarians?) as the remnant of the patriarchs in accord with God's covenant with Abraham. See Schiffman, "Concept of Restoration," 207.

[400] See the discussion in Antti Laato, *Who Is Immanuel?: The Rise and the Foundering of Isaiah's Messianic Expectations* (Åbo: Åbo Academy Press, 1988), 88-94.

[401] Mark A. Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness: Paul's Theology of Justification* (NSBT 9; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000), 21-25.

[402] Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness*, 22.

[403] Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness*, 23. Ironically, the idea of a remnant theology might have been the impetus for a more individual conception of restoration, an idea that suggests the covenant endured through those individuals who despite the rebellion of the nation as a whole remained faithful to YHWH. See, Gary W. Burnett, *Paul and the Salvation of the Individual* (Biblical Interpretation Series 57; Leiden: Brill, 2001), 81-82; Géza Vermès, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (New York: Penguin Press, 1997), 68-9.

[404] Seifrid seems to think that the conception of national sin is highly superficial when compared to Paul's view of sin, seemingly setting up the continuing exile as a foil to the heart of Paul's real thought on sin. See Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness*, 22.

theology itself, rather than that of a continuing exile. If Seifrid is right then why did these Jews hold to any view of restoration at all? What value would they see in nurturing any hopes related to ethnic or national Israel?[405]

It is possible, of course, that restoration was simply such a strongly held traditional belief, clearly expressed in the Scriptures, that removing it completely from the theology of these groups would have been impossible.[406] There is, however, another motivation that would make sense of the inclusion of the theology. The continuation of Israel in some form, even after judgment, offered the opportunity of vindication for the teachings or 'way' of the remnant group. Elliott writes:

> It is a feature of these writings...that Israel would eventually come to the knowledge that the righteous were correct all along, even openly honoring them. Since Israel was the larger unit over against which these groups defined themselves, since Israel was the group they argued with and protested against, and since Israel shared with these groups similar claims on a common inheritance, it can be seen how a fuller restoration would grant to the cause of the remnant groups an especially satisfying, and ultimate, vindication.[407]

The faithful remnant of the present, having perceived an unprecedented degree of apostasy in the nation, and having voiced its protest against the present state of things and against Israel, firmly believed that its message of protest and teaching about the true righteousness would eventually be vindicated. This vindication would not only be by the Gentile nations being brought into the fold, but even more significantly, by the 'elect' nation itself, as they would come to honor the remnant group and eventually join their cause.[408]

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[405] Not to mention Seifrid's assumption that the sin of Israel is somehow their guilt, and not their disobedience. So Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness*, 22, 24-5. Also, Mark A. Seifrid, "Paul's Use of Habakkuk 2.4 in Romans 1.17: Reflection on Israel's Exile in Romans," in *History and Exegesis: New Testament Essays in Honor of Dr. E. Earle Ellis for His 80th Birthday*, ed. E. Earle Ellis and Sang-Won Son (New York: T & T Clark, 2006), 145.

[406] According to Neusner the motif of exile and return itself was a self-fulfilling prophecy which all Judaic systems have incorporated, regardless of whether it ever meshed with reality. See Neusner, "Exile and Return as the History of Judaism," 221-38. One of the main reasons for this was the authoritative nature of the scriptures: Jacob Neusner, *Judaism When Christianity Began: A Survey of Belief and Practice* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 63. Neusner posits that this paradigm of exile and return, even when the Jews in question had no experience of exile and return, tells us more about the power of religion not merely to respond to world, but rather to define the world. See Neusner, *Judaism When Christianity Began*, 58.

[407] Elliott, *Survivors*, 636. Cf. 1 En. 90.30; Jub 1.25

But in most of these texts, while a return from exile is acknowledged, the teaching is that exile is an ongoing condition, one that may never end in historical time. The burden of these authors consequently fits within the same framework of an exilic narrative; i.e. to provide the necessary information and consolation so that the readers of their messages are able to cope with the discouraging course of history and to renew their confidence in the God who governs and directs all of history.[409]

But even if these texts only envision a return from exile within the sectarians' own group, the wide variety of texts certainly would speak then of competing groups who would view themselves as the true remnant. This variegated sectarian use of exile and return (restoration) themes, may cause problems for the Wrightian project of establishing a shared common worldview amongst the Judaism(s) of the Second Temple period, but for our purposes, this would seem to prove that the exile and return motifs had a powerful hold on the imaginations of various Judaism(s), even if they began to signify just who this true remnant was.

Exile and the Diaspora

A far more profound challenge for the exile and return motif is raised when the evidence is read that during this period there was no contemporary use for the exile at all. More specifically does the exilic element in Second Temple Judaism(s) loose all its ability to resonate, if it is discovered that the Jews of the diaspora were not languishing in the constant reminder of national sin and thus not longing for any idyllic restoration, but contented contributors to the maintenance of the societies which they lived?

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[408] Elliott, *Survivors*, 637.

[409] Vanderkam, "Exile in Jewish Apocalyptic Literature," 109.

This new perspective of the diaspora argues that even though the Greek term for 'diaspora' may mean 'scattering', and while it has been argued that in ancient Jewish usage the term generally had the negative connotations of 'exile', which was brought about by divine judgment,[410] we now know that some, perhaps most, Jews in the ancient 'diaspora' did not think of their location in that way, nor did all Jews necessarily regard Palestine as their 'homeland' in any meaningful sense.[411] Many Jews were so integrated into their respective cities of residence, even if this did not mean the abandonment of the active attention to Jewish distinctiveness. More importantly, is this research that indicates that it was as precisely as Jews that they were involved in, and part of, the life of the cities which they lived.[412]

The issue is often too readily conceived of in terms of mutually exclusive alternatives: either the Jews regarded their identity as exilic and the achievement of their destiny was wholly dependent upon re-entry into the Land; or they clung to their heritage abroad, shifting attention to local and regional loyalties, and cultivating a permanent attachment to the diaspora.[413] Those alternatives, of course, have continuing contemporary resonance, but the Jews of the Second Temple period did not confront such a stark choice.[414] The diaspora, in this new interpretation, was not something to be overcome.[415] It was not as if pinning away for the restoration of their homeland was the single ideal which Jews embraced to remain faithful.[416] As a matter of fact, the Jews living around the Mediterranean were unapologetic and were not embarrassed by their situation. They did not describe themselves as part of any diaspora. They did not suggest that they were cut off from the center, leading a separate, fragmented, or unfulfilled existence. People from communities and nations everywhere settled outside their places of origin in the fluid and mobile Hellenistic world without abandoning their identities as Athenians, Macedonians, Phoenicians, Antiochenes, or Egyptians. The Jews could eschew justification, rationalization, or tortured explanation for their choice of residence, but they felt no need to construct a theory of diaspora.[417] The Jewish communities abroad still paid respect to the holy land while standing in full harmony with an allegiance to the Gentile governments. Diaspora Jews did not bemoan their fate or pine away for the homeland. Nor, by contrast, did they ignore the homeland and become people of the book, which became a surrogate for the temple.[418] Palestine mattered, and it mattered in the territorial sense, but it was not a required residence. Just as the Jews made pilgrimages to the Temple in Jerusalem, they likewise announced a devotion to the symbolic heart of Judaism and had singular pride in the accomplishment of the diaspora. Jewish Hellenistic writers were not driven to apology. Nor did they feel obliged to reconcile the contradiction, for as they saw it, there was none.[419]

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[410] See, Unnik, *Das Selbstverständnis in der jüdischen Diaspora in der hellenistisch-römischen Zeit*, 89-147.

[411] Barclay, "Diaspora Judaism," 48. It is important not to understand the encounter with Judaism and Hellenism as being one of only enmity. Furthermore, it follows that hellenization is not a single entity, and so if you are hellenized in one aspect it does not follow that you are hellenized in every respect. Perhaps a more nuanced view of diaspora Judaism is to recognizes that the object was not to ape Greek culture so much as to re-express Judaism within it, sometimes even with a significant polemical edge against non-Jews. So, Barclay, "Diaspora Judaism," 49, 51, 53. See also Thomas Kraabel, "Unity and Diversity among Diaspora Synagogues," in *The Synagogue in Late Antiquity*, ed. Lee I. Levine (Philadelphia: American Schools of Oriental Research, 1987), 57-58, who argues that over the centuries many Jews left the homeland voluntarily, just as did other people of the Mediterranean, to seek their fortunes in the centers of power of the Hellenistic and Roman world. These individuals did not understand themselves to be in exile, but rather welcomed and desired immigration as part of a new situation that was also under the control of Providence. The diaspora was not exile; but in some senses it too became a holy land.

[412] Paul R. Trebilco, *Jewish Communities in Asia Minor* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 187.

[413] Many who view the diaspora in this way view the Jewish people as no longer people of the 'Land' but as people of the 'book'.

[414] Gruen, *Diaspora*, 235.

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[415] Gruen, *Diaspora*, 233.

[416] Gruen, *Diaspora*, 234. Cf. Deuteronomy 30.2-5; 1 Kings, 8.33-34, 8.46-51; 2 Chronicles 6.24-25, 36-39; Jeremiah, 29.10-14.

[417] Gruen, *Diaspora*, 243; Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, 418-24, also argues that the attachment of the motherland could coexist with fidelity to the regions abroad, although he regards the degree of attachment as dependent upon the circumstances of the community.

[418] A popular alternative to an exilic understanding of Second Temple Judaism(s) is to posit that the Jews where in no way interested in a territorial sanctuary or national legitimation because through the Babylonian diaspora they had become 'the people of the book.' In this view their homeland resides in the text—not just the canonical scriptures but in a wide array of Jewish writings that help to define the nation and give voice to the sense of identity. Thus for these Jews the diaspora is no burden, but rather a virtue in the spread of the word. This justifies a primary attachment to the land of one's residence, rather than the home of the fathers. See, S.D. Ezrahi, "Our Homeland, the Text...Our Text, the Homeland," *Michigan Quarterly Review* 31 (1992): 463-97; G Steiner, "Our Homeland the Text," *Salmagundi* 66 (1985): 4-25.

The advancement of this corrective concerning the ability of Jews in the Second Temple period to live faithfully in foreign lands is needed and welcomed. And while we agree that it is simplistic to view the various Jewish rehearsals of the biblical history of exile as automatically proof for exilic thought in the Hellenistic diaspora, it seems that Gruen is alternatively too quick to gloss over any mention of exile during the period as having any present day ramifications. When we view the use of exile as shorthand for the multifarious ideas, namely that restoration, however it may be defined, is still future, we are able to hold together the present day resonances of exile without the doleful picture which Gruen seeks to eradicate.[420] It is true that during this time the Jews did very little about their desire to be free from Roman rule and create a Jewish state in Palestine. But as James C. Scott has shown us it is dangerous to interpret passivity as equal to the idea that Jews had no hopes for a Jewish state at all.[421]

The crux of the issue resides in the questions that Gruen so carefully raises: does exilic theology have to be a theology of despair, a theology of national corporate guilt, where the righteous individual bemoans the fact that the nation is not what it ought to be, that the Temple is not functioning as it ought, or that Israel is not under self-rule?[422] Could it be that a man like Yeshua Ben Sira, while possibly being content with the religious autonomy the Jews enjoyed at the time, nevertheless dreamed that the Jewish nation would regain the political grandeur it had once enjoyed in the past (whether this be described in terms of political nationalism, or as discussed earlier in terms of the eschatological end of time)?[423] In fact, exile could even be interpreted metaphorically as Neusner postulates, in order that an 'Israel' might never take its very existence as a permanent condition; rather, the paradigm of exile and return might remind the Jews that 'the life of an Israel was never to be taken for granted but always to be received as a gift.'[424] In this manner all Judaism(s) became a reworking of exile and return, alienation reconciliation, a group troubled by the resentment of that uncertain past and of that future subject to stipulation.[425]

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[419] Gruen, *Diaspora*, 252.

[420] Gruen, *Diaspora*, 239.

[421] Doron Mendels, *The Rise and Fall of Jewish Nationalism: Jewish and Christian Ethnicity in Ancient Palestine* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 7. On the work of Scott see the discussion in the Excurses.

[422] See, for example, the puzzling criticism of Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness*, 22-25, who bemusingly argues that an exilic interpretation of the Second Temple texts is just a 'mere variation' of an introspective psychologizing of Paul. Only the burden of personal guilt (sin) carried around by Paul, is replaced by the onus of national guilt (sin). Seifrid mistakenly views guilt with sin, the two may go hand in hand, but not necessarily. Why it follows that Jews of the Second Temple period who were expecting the return from exile, necessarily had to be guilt ridden seems to import the vary framework of introspective guilt on to the whole of the nation, a concept that Stendahl has vigorously tried to shed. See Krister Stendahl, "Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West," in *Paul among Jews and Gentiles: And Other Essays* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), 78-96.

Conclusions

Whatever the themes of exile and return meant to the various Judaism(s) of this period (and they were multiple), it was our task in this chapter to show that that despite the multivocality inherent within these themes they still became a shared set of powerful symbolic ideas.[426] Exile and return were ideas malleable enough for the various Judaism(s) of the period to use in diverse ways without talking about completely different concepts. While it is clear from the evidence that not all of the Judaism(s) of this period were waiting for restoration in a literal sense (whether that be conceived of in terms of the land, the temple, or political independence), nor were all the Judaism(s) bemoaning their national sin and eagerly awaited God's vindication (although no doubt some surely did). And while remnant theology offered the rational and means for the sectarian groups to remain holy despite the larger sin of the nation, it did not diffuse the use of the exilic narrative as a powerful narrative, but rather incorporated and transformed it.

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[423] Mendels, *The Rise and Fall of Jewish Nationalism*, 6. Obviously there were Jews who accepted Roman rule and who were quite content with it. They may have actively supported the Romans because they believed either that God had justly deprived them of their state or that the Jews no longer needed an independent state.

[424] Neusner, *Judaism When Christianity Began*, 58.

[425] Neusner, *Judaism When Christianity Began*, 59.

[426] This may do damage to Wright's notion of discussing the themes of exile and return in terms of worldview, but in respect that these themes were still used after the return from Babylon, as recorded in the Scriptures of Israel, shows that these themes still resonated even if over time they began to signify very different things.

Our task in this section was to offer enough plausibility, enough interpretive space, so to speak, in order to warrant our examination of Paul through the lenses of exile and return, through the lenses of a powerful biblical and extra-biblical motif which the 'second exodus' was prevalent, and examine how Paul transformed it to meet his specific purposes.[427] We have seen that neither the existence of a remnant theology nor the perspective of an assimilated faithful necessarily negate the powerful symbolic images of exile and return. We have also acknowledged that not all the Jews of this period believed that they were still in exile, and among those Jews who did, there was even more diversity as to how they thought the restoration would be consummated.[428] Whatever the Jew on the ground actually believed, we may never know for certain, but there are enough texts which have come down to us that speak of a state of exile after the (re)building of the Second Temple, and its subsequent destruction, so as to speak of a plausible shared cultural background of exilic thought, albeit malleable enough to speak in many different ways.[429]

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[427] Of course there are those who deny or downplay the exile/return motif by offering an alternative narrative altogether. Most notably in the essay 'See How They Go with Their Face to the Sun' John Howard Yoder, *For the Nations: Essays Evangelical and Public* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 51-78, sets out the history of diaspora Judaism as a means for God to accomplish the world mission that was impossible when Israel was settled in Judea. Thus instead of the theology of exile/return, the normative theology according to Yoder is that of the diaspora found in Jeremiah 19.4-7. The new pattern for the Jews was to live well among a foreign people, because in their 'welfare you will find your welfare.' See also Daniel Boyarin, *A Radical Jew: Paul and the Politics of Identity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 242-60; John Howard Yoder, Michael G. Cartwright, and Peter Ochs, *The Jewish-Christian Schism Revisited* (Radical Traditions; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003). For a recent biblical theology of exile that incorporates many of these ideas see, Smith-Christopher, *A Biblical Theology of Exile.*

[428] This is to say that the invention of single coherent grand narrative, like Wright suggests, which controls the range of Jewish expectations during this period is probability untenable. See the criticisms of, James D. G. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 473-77.

[429] Certainly enough evidence exists to move forward with a reading attuned to the motif of exile and return, even if such motifs were never part of the larger shared cultural background. See also the discussion in, J. Ross Wagner, *Heralds of the Good News: Isaiah and Paul in Concert in the Letter to the Romans* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 29-33.

CHAPTER FIVE
THE IMPERIAL CULT AND THE POWER OF THE ROMAN GOOD NEWS IN THE FIRST CENTURY

In the preceding chapter we looked at the motif of exile and return in various texts from the Second Temple period in an effort to show both the complexity and continuity of thought concerning the exile up and through the time period of Paul. Now we turn our attention to the context of the Roman imperial order as an additional horizon for the study of Pauline Christianity. By constructing a plausible contextual background it is our contention that what Paul writes in his letter to the Romans is not a benign description of the good news, but a rather powerful polemic against the Roman imperial order and the seat of that power: namely, the emperor.

Over the last decade there has been a steady increase in the popularity of interpretations of Paul that claim his texts betray polemics against the Roman imperial order. While these interpretations may have been initially dismissed out of hand as an eccentric pursuit by a handful of Pauline scholars, these issues are now taken more seriously, and have even reached the status of requiring a corrective.[430] It has been suggested that 'anti-imperial' scholars have tended to overplay the significance the imperial cult had in general and more specifically the influence the Roman imperial order had in relation to the early Christian communities. Much of the work on the Roman imperial order has as its starting point the role persecutions must have played in these early Christian communities.[431] However, much of this criticism stems from the insistence that scholars are working backward from the futuristic scenarios of John's Apocalypse as representative of the real situations and perspectives of most early Christian communities, or even using these texts as a reliable commentary on the nature of the imperial cult itself.[432] While an increasing number of scholars are attempting to locate the context of the Roman imperial order more firmly within the socio-scientific context of agrarian societies and their relationship to Imperial powers,[433] the clarion call is sounding forth for scholars to take care in their study of Paul and his Roman Imperial context, to make sure that the codes found are truly there and not merely imported from the discussions of current events and the growing concern of the exploitation of contemporary empires.[434]

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[430] For an introduction to an anti-imperial interpretation of Paul, see John Dominic Crossan and Jonathan L. Reed, *In Search of Paul: How Jesus' Apostle Opposed Rome's Empire with God's Kingdom: A New Vision of Paul's Words and World* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2004); Neil Elliott, *Liberating Paul: The Justice of God and the Politics of the Apostle* (The Biblical Seminar 27; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995); Dieter Georgi, *Theocracy in Paul's Praxis and Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991); Richard A. Horsley, *Paul and Empire: Religion and Power in Roman Imperial Society* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1997); Richard A. Horsley, "Submerged Biblical Histories and Imperial Biblical Studies," in *The Postcolonial Bible*, ed. R. S. Sugirtharajah (Bible and Postcolonialism 1; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998); Richard A. Horsley, *Paul and Politics: Ekklesia, Isreal, Imperium, Interpretation* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press, 1998); Richard A. Horsley, *Hidden Transcripts and the Arts of Resistance: Applying the Work of James C. Scott to Jesus and Paul* (Semeia Studies 48; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004); Brian J. Walsh and Sylvia C. Keesmaat, *Colossians Remixed: Subverting the Empire* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004); N. T. Wright, *Paul: Fresh Perspectives* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006). For a well-informed critique of some tendencies in anti-imperial reading of Paul, see Simon Price, "Response," in *Paul and the Roman Imperial Order*, ed. Richard A. Horsley (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2004), 175-84. See also interpretations that seek to move beyond the rehabilitation of Paul's gospel amid its imperial context to explore the deeper domains of the rhetoric of domination. So Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *The Power of the Word: Scripture and the Rhetoric of Empire* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007).

The Problems of Context: Possible Pitfalls in the Study of the Roman Imperial Order

Before we look into the nature of the Roman imperial order we need to address some potential problems and pitfalls that might impede our study. We have identified four major problems that arise when studying the nature of Roman Imperial power, especially a study that seeks to take the imperial cult seriously.

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[431] See Khiok-Khng Yeo, "Hope for the Persecuted, Cooperation with the State, and Meaning for the Dissatisfied: Three Readings of Revelation from a Chinese Context," in *From Every People and Nation: The Book of Revelation in Intercultural Perspective*, ed. David M. Rhoads (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), 200-22.

[432] This corrective loosely known as the anti anti-imperial Paul was introduced formerly at the 2007 SBL meetings by John M. G. Barclay, "Why the Roman Empire Was Insignificant to Paul" (paper presented at the Society of Biblical Literature, San Diego, 2007).. See also the comments of Philip Harland, *Associations, Synagogues, and Congregations: Claiming a Place in Ancient Mediterranean Society* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 2003), 241-43.

[433] William R. Herzog, *Parables as Subversive Speech: Jesus as Pedagogue of the Oppressed* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994), 53-76; Horsley, *Christian Origins*, 11.

[434] This reading of Paul has no doubt flourished within the context of globalization as an expression of American imperial and cultural power. See María Pilar Aquino, "The Dynamics of Globalization and the University: Toward a Radical Democratic-Emancipatory Transformation," in *Toward a New Heaven and a New Earth: Essays in Honor of Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza*, ed. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza and Fernando F. Segovia (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2003), 385-406; Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), xi-xvii.

The first problem has to do with our modern and perhaps primarily an American western mentality that there is an essential dichotomy between religion and politics. This mentality tends to see religion and politics as two separate spheres that can never coexist properly. Although these problems seem to be basic, and easily overcome by serious contextual work, nevertheless these presuppositions have a way of rearing their ugly heads, especially in the literature comparing Christianity with the religions of Rome.[435] We need to be mindful that politics and religion, at least in the ancient world, are two different sides to the same coin and any attempt to separate the two will result in a reconstruction that omits half the story.

The second problem which is closely related to the first is the insistence upon the use of a modern Christian definition of religion in order to make sense of 'all' religions; ancient or modern. A definition that assumes *a priori* that religion is essentially designed to provide guidance through an individual's personal crises in order to grant salvation and secure eternal life imposes foreign categories on the study of Roman religion. It is our contention that the study of Roman religion ought to start on its own terms and only then should we seek to compare it to the concepts of Pauline Christianity. This is the only way to avoid serious manipulation of the primary source materials.[436]

The third problem, which is closely related to the second, is the rather Protestant predilection of favoring belief and faith over ritual.[437] Mary Douglas has gone a long way in decisively showing that ritual plays a crucial role in religion, for sacred space is created by imitating the divine attributes, whether it is through drama, dance, or ceremony. Thus as a corrective we must be open to the possibility that rituals are indeed the truest of religious actions, for it is only through ritual that the actions of the gods can be mimicked or repeated.[438] This is important primarily because Roman religion was a religion that was inundated with ritual, and the slow movement toward the worship of the Caesars was manifested through its incorporation into that ritual.

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[435] For studies that offer a corrective to this view see, Steven J. Friesen, *Imperial Cults and the Apocalypse of John: Reading Revelation in the Ruins* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Ittai Gradel, *Emperor Worship and Roman Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); S. R. F. Price, *Rituals and Power: The Roman Imperial Cult in Asia Minor* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Paul Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus* (Jerome Lectures 16; Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1988).

[436] Imposing this definition on the ancient texts of the New Testament has equally damaging results. So Stendahl, "Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West," 78-96.

[437] Mary Douglas, *Natural Symbols; Explorations in Cosmology* (New York,: Vintage Books, 1973), 20-36. See also Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, 112-14.

The forth and final problem deals specifically with the worship of Caesar and the modern conception that humans are not gods, cannot be or become gods, and that any person whether it be now or in antiquity who questions this basic assumption is not completely sane.[439] To enter the study of the imperial cult with the presupposition that nobody in antiquity took it seriously is to enter the study with modern conceptions of the divide between god and humans. While there is no simple solution to this problem we must at least attempt to try and understand the divide between god and humans in its pagan context, focusing on it as a 'distinction in status between the respective beings, rather than a distinction between their respective natures.'[440]

It is our hope that by keeping these pitfalls in mind we can hopefully avoid some of the oversimplifications of past generations, and set up a convincing backdrop of the imperial context which Paul presented his good news, specifically in his letter to the Romans.

The Nature of Empires: On Defining the Roman Imperial Order as a Discourse of Power

In our attempt to define the character of the Roman imperial order and its accompanying discourse of power in a concise and succinct manner, we will naturally be practicing a form of strategic essentializing, something we believe is necessary in order to offer a critique. One of the elements that makes an imperial discourse so powerful is its uncanny ability to harness an optimism that claims to be innocent of imperial motive. In times of anxiety where the only constant seems to be the reign of chaos, the ability to tame that chaos is more often than not welcomed and appreciated, even if the results are not entirely benign.

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[438] Friesen, *Imperial Cults and the Apocalypse of John*, 7.

[439] We tend to take the notion of 'common sense' as forever and always the same, despite known differences in time and culture. In fact the notion of common sense, when put under the microscope, is revealed to be a highly contradictory body of beliefs and an amalgam of ideas. See Stuart Hall, "Gramsci's Relevance for the Study of Race and Ethnicity," in *Stuart Hall, Critical Dialogs in Cultural Studies*, ed. D. Morely and K.H. Chen (London: Routledge, 1996), 431.

[440] Gradel, *Emperor Worship and Roman Religion*, 26. See Günther Hansen, "Herrscherkult und Friedensidee," in *Umwelt des Urchristentums*, ed. Johannes Leipoldt and Walter Grundmann (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1965), 137-41, as an example of scholarship that dismisses the Imperial Cult as mere propaganda.

In order to conceptualize the discourse of the Roman imperial order we will adopt Edwards Said's notion of an empire as a metropolitan place of power from which the power flows, and the colony being the place which, by and large, the power penetrates.[441] Of course this flow of power is made up of an intricate web of practices and attitudes that disseminate from the metropolitan center and its ruling relationship to not only its distant territories but also to all peoples who come into contact with this power.[442] Building upon this notion of empire, we add Keesmaat and Walsh's apt description of empires as being (1) built on systemic centralizations of power, (2) secured by structures of socio-economic and military control, (3) religiously legitimated by powerful myths and (4) sustained by a proliferation of imperial images that captivate the imaginations of the population.[443] Imperial order is thus a systematic ordering of society in a way that validates the authority of certain institutions, behaviors, values, and identities, while attempting to invalidate all alternatives.

Empire's aim to be totalizing systems and like capillaries their power is not administered from top to bottom, but rather is diffused through the actions, speeches, and thoughts of every day life. This power permeates throughout an empire and aims to be all pervasive, and thus impossible to challenge.[444] Gramsci describes this power as being achieved through a combination of coercion and consent, a power that creates subjects who 'willingly' submit to being ruled.[445] Such a discursive system embodies rules or expectations prevalent enough to be nearly invisible from within the system, yet powerful enough to define the relationships between individuals and groups of people. In order for empires to maintain their own singular superiority, they must negate all other visions, all other narratives. That is to say, worldviews have a tendency to become absolutistic ideologies, and these worldviews-turned-ideologies present their view of the world as simply the way the world is and come to make up the status quo.[446]

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[441] See Antonio Gramsci, *Letters from Prison* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975), 235. Ania Loomba, *Colonialism-Postcolonialism* (The New Critical Idiom; London: Routledge, 1998), 6-7.

[442] Friesen, *Imperial Cults and the Apocalypse of John*, 17.

[443] Walsh and Keesmaat, *Colossians Remixed*, 58.

[444] See Edward W. Said, *The World, the Text, and the Critic* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983).

It is in this sense that we view empire as a type of discourse; or a language that determines the acceptable kinds of concepts and thinking. This discourse is made up of a cultural system of symbols and inherited conceptions that communicate meaning. Geertz further describes these symbols as, 'any object, act, event, quality, or relation which serves as a vehicle for a conception—the conception being the symbol's meaning.' As a system of symbols, this discourse coordinates and maintains a way of life, and the world view of a particular group, community or society.[447]

The challenge for empires is that while they seek to create a closed system and are resistant to account for ideas outside the dominant ideology and theoretically offer no possibility for social change, they never become completely monolithic and are never completely successful in incorporating all subjects and all individuals into their systems.[448] Thus there is always a discursive space, no matter how small, for contradiction and contention of the dominant system. In fact it is often the experience of suffering and the encounter with death that provides the impetus for calling the system into question, frequently resulting in resistance. This resistance, when it takes place, is often accompanied with a process Raymond

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[445] Loomba, *Colonialism-Postcolonialism*, 29.

[446] Walsh and Keesmaat, *Colossians Remixed*, 99.

[447] Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, 22-23, 90-91.

[448] Loomba, *Colonialism-Postcolonialism*, 33.

Williams describes as the process of 'unlearning' a questioning of the perceived truths.[449]

The challenging and critiquing of imperial powers from the inside is often complicated because for empires to be effective they must legitimate their hegemony with proclamations of good intentions for those they rule.[450] According to Said this, '...rhetoric of power all too easily produces an illusion of benevolence when deployed in an imperial setting.'[451] This is not surprising, for those in power throughout history have always masked their intentions of power with what is best for the people.

Imperial power provides a discourse of hegemonic ideology and does not represent a window for discovering reality, but rather a mirror that reflects its own ideology.[452] This ideology is persuasive precisely, as mentioned above, because individuals are born into a society which already contains sets of institutions, practices, and a common language, from which they construct not only their world view but also themselves. Imperial ideology certainly can change over time, as can any institutions and practices, but any changes that occur are more often than not rooted in the very traditions which the ideology seeks to advance.[453]

It is important for us to be mindful of this description of imperial power as we try to reconstruct both Rome's own discourse of power and Paul's letter to the Romans in relation to that discourse, being aware that the imperial discourse lies below the surface, hidden so to speak, and the narratives which they create are often implied and couched in rhetoric. In doing this we have to look at the various ideological narratives that Rome used to influence its citizens and its colonies. In this study, we will understand discourse as a hierarchical system within which identities, knowledge, and values are defined and legitimated. Such systems are supported by institutions that have vested interests in their maintenance. In Rome there was a narrative, or a myth, that was perpetuated in order to help shape this discourse of power. It is within this narrative framework that we will later place Paul.

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[449] Raymond Williams, *Culture & Society, 1780-1950* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1958), 376.

[450] Friesen, *Imperial Cults and the Apocalypse of John*, 22.

[451] Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), xvii.

[452] See Slavoj Žižek, *Mapping Ideology* (London: Verso, 1994), 230.

[453] Loomba, *Colonialism-Postcolonialism*, 36-37.

The Imperial Discourse of the Roman Empire and the Function of the Imperial Cult

This understanding of Imperial power will help frame our subsequent discussion of the Roman imperial order. As seen in the definition above, empires work through many machinations in order to maintain power. In Rome fear and shame worked as twin mechanisms of public control. Rome employed the simplest form of psychological propaganda, which sought to convey to those governed that they had no real option other than to submit.[454] Roman propaganda sought to persuade the poor and the barbarian alike that they were not really fit to rule themselves and that those who were fit were currently ruling for the benevolence of all people.[455]

As Roman imperialism broke down the subject people's indigenous culture and social forms and imposed forms of 'civilization' upon them, the form of imperial power shifted from the application of military violence to socio-economic networks of patronage and the use of religious festivals, shrines, and images.[456] It was in this sense that the imperial cult began to stabilize the religious order of the Roman world. The elaborate system of ritual and sacrifice was carefully structured; the symbolism evoked a picture of the direct relationship between the emperor and the gods.[457] It was through this new visual imagery that a new mythology of Rome and a new ritual of power were created. Built on relatively simple foundations, the myth perpetuated itself and transcended the realities of everyday life to project onto future generations the impression that they lived in the best of all possible worlds, in the best of all possible times, the 'Golden Age' had indeed returned.[458] It was through this new mythology that the Roman Empire began to establish a monopoly on the imaginations of her subjects.[459]

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[454] G. E. M. de Ste. Croix, *The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World: From the Archaic Age to the Arab Conquests* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981), 409. When the choices are submission or death, the choice becomes very easy.

[455] Croix, *Class Struggle*, 411. On the rhetoric of benevolence see, Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, xvii.

[456] See, John K. Chow, *Patronage and Power* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), 171; David Braund, "Function and Dysfunction: Personal Patronage in Roman Imperialism," in *Patronage in Ancient Society*, ed. Andrew Wallace-Hadrill (Leicester-Nottingham Studies in Ancient Society 1; London Routledge, 1989), 137-52.

[457] Price, *Rituals and Power*, 248. To modern eyes the imperial cults often appear to be insincere religion, or mystified politics, or both. Such interpretations of imperial cults, however,

The Narrative of the Imperial Cult

The image of antiquity most often conjured up stems from two diverse cities, Athens of the fifth century BCE and Rome of the first century BCE, both of which reached prominence during their respective periods in antiquity. Athens is attributed with starting the great experiment known as democracy, and producing some of the greatest poets and philosophers the world has ever known; Rome on the other hand rose to unparalleled military power and conquered a vast amount of territory, which it governed with an extreme efficiency that has never been duplicated to this day. Both of these great cities, however, were defined by the Rome of the Caesars and the imperial culture that accompanied it. It was during the period of empire that these earlier times were definitively classified as achieving the zenith of distinction which has come to be known simply as 'classic'.[460]

While the expansion of Roman power began under the Republic and increased off and on for around 500 years, it was during the first century BCE that it slowly showed signs of collapse. It was during this chaotic period, when Julius Caesar was assassinated, that individual leaders began to amass more and more political

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represent a failure of the disciplined imagination; see Friesen, *Imperial Cults and the Apocalypse of John*, 4.

[458] Zanker, *The Power of Images*, 4.

[459] Walsh and Keesmaat, *Colossians Remixed*, 82.

[460] D. S. Potter, *The Roman Empire at Bay: AD 180-395* (Routledge History of the Ancient World; London: Routledge, 2004), 3-4.

and military power, ultimately climaxing in the rise to power of the first emperor Augustus. It was under Augustus' political acumen that the empire, which countless numbers of people were conquered through vast military conquests, began to disseminate 'classical' culture as a tool for unification. This use of 'classical' culture and the dissemination of its diverse set of power structures resulted in the emperor being placed into a prominent position of referee.[461] It was out of this context and through these various negotiations of power that the imperial cult began to be adorned with new vestiges of power.

The imperial cult did not emerge in a vacuum, and the Romans were not the first people to worship their rulers.[462] And while the worship of the Roman emperors began primarily in the outlying provinces of Asia, and was influenced in part by the Egyptian cult of Alexander, the primary influences seem to be the honors bestowed upon Julius Caesar upon his death, the expansion of Roman tradition to incorporate a single ruler, and the increasing pressure of colonies to show their continued loyalty through the maintenance of the patronage system.[463] It is important to note that the imperial cult did not have its machinations in fear, but rather began to develop through the intricate networks of diplomacy shown between cities in order to create and define relationships between themselves and their Roman rulers.[464] The long tradition of ruler-cults progressively evolved into the worship of the Roman emperors, but was not seen as a new religion in competition with the other cults; rather, this worship became fully integrated into religious life, and in many cases local cities and provinces were only too happy to demonstrate their loyalty to the emperor by establishing a cult in his honor.[465]

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[461] Potter, *The Roman Empire at Bay*, 6.

[462] Louis Matthews Sweet, *Roman Emperor Worship* (Boston: R. G. Badger, 1919), 25-36.

[463] Gradel, *Emperor Worship and Roman Religion*, 58.

[464] Price, *Rituals and Power*, 242. While, no doubt, a city which sent an imperial priest as an ambassador to Rome to offer Augustus cult hoped to find favor with the emperor, it is quite wrong to reduce the imperial cult to a pawn in a game of diplomacy. See, Price, *Rituals and Power*, 71.

[465] N. T. Wright, "Paul and Caesar: A New Reading of Romans," in *A Royal Priesthood: The Use of the Bible Ethically and Politically*, ed. C. Bartholemew (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2002), 175. For the direct impact of this on Corinth around the time of Paul's establishment of the community there, cf. Bruce W.

As the imperial cult began to grow the presence of the emperor began to take on new meaning and imperial festivals began popping up increasingly within local cultic celebrations, connecting these cities' own religious festivals to that of the imperial cult. As is summed up in a decree of one Asian assembly during the reign of Tiberius:

> Since one should each year make clear display of one's piety and of all holy, fitting intentions towards the imperial house, the choir of all Asia, gathering at Pergamum on the most holy birthday of Sebastos Tiberius Caesar god, performs a task that contributes greatly to the glory of Sebastos in hymning the imperial house and performing sacrifices to the Sebastan gods and conducting festivals and feasts...[466]

Local magistrates began to perform their inaugural sacrifices not to the traditional gods but to the emperor or empress.[467] As the Caesars began to stabilize the Roman Empire both the East and West began to integrate the common strategy of incorporating the emperor into the public space.[468] This was evident in the processions celebrating the divine cult where the public space of the city began to be redefined to express the interrelationship between the key religious and political centers of the city.[469]

The Good News According to the Roman Imperial Order

It is not surprising when one sees power and the use of power in this way that the ruling elites and those interested in maintaining the status quo would use language as a tool to maintain their rule. It is under this rubric that we will look at the phenomenological categories that betray a narrative of good news proclaimed and

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Winter, *After Paul Left Corinth: The Influence of Secular Ethics and Social Change* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 269-86.

[466] IGR iv 1608c = Ephesos vii 2, 3801, restored. As quoted in, Price, *Rituals and Power*, 105.

[467] Price, *Rituals and Power*, 119. In various parts of the empire sacrifices were made to the emperor by those entering upon marriage.

[468] Price, *Rituals and Power*, 143.

[469] Price, *Rituals and Power*, 111.

developed by the Roman elite in an effort that all might understand and cherish the good that the Emperor did for those he served. It is within this context that we look at the good news according to Rome, comparing this good news with the good news in which Paul, a Jewish believer in Jesus as the Christ, proclaimed. Thus we are more concerned with understanding the Roman Empire through the lenses of the early Christian context, and less concerned with how the cult in actuality operated. As Paul seeks to offer a counter claim to the good news of Rome, he is at once offering a caricature of it, and reinterpreting it through his own categories, not in an effort to discredit it per see, but to show how the good news of God in Jesus the Christ is not only superior to it, but also how the two proclamations could not coexist together. While highlighting the imperial context of Paul's writings, and proposing that at least, at some points, Paul is consciously parodying and subverting the imperial ideology, it is important to state that Paul is in no way deriving his theology, either in outline or in detail, from the context of Greco-Roman paganism in general or the imperial cult in particular.[470]

Roman Cosmology, the Imperial Cult, and a Self Fulfilling Prophecy. The Roman imperial order incorporated elements of the imperial cult into the traditional cosmologies of the 'classical' world, creating a new cosmology that was so strong that it produced an eschatological absurdity that the best one could hope for was the eternal continuation of the present Roman rule. This incorporation provided a way of imagining the world in its mythic conception, allowing those influenced by the signification to explore their own nature and meaning by providing a starting point from which the mythic imagination could begin. Without some kind of cosmology, an explanation of humanity, the world and life cannot fully be known. Nevertheless this description of the cosmological beginning must eventually be left behind in order to create a space which the present life can be lived. That is why in cosmologies the primordial age often ends with cataclysm, disaster, and destruction. The beginning stage of the cosmology must be closed so that the mythic imagination can be allowed to explain why the contemporary world has appeared, and to provide the distance in order to explain the meaning of this appearance.[471]

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[470] Wright, "Paul and Caesar," 178.

One of the popular cosmologies that proliferated in the Roman world was that of Hesiod's *Works and Days* which envisioned, within the schemata of the ages of men, a Golden Age that was a pristine idyllic beginning, characterized by peace and harmony. This cosmology was followed by a sequential decline that ended each time in a new age that was slightly worse than the one before it. The decline of civilization narrative was frequently used to highlight the pristine past, in order to encourage a return to the 'Golden Age'. This pining for return is seen in a number of poets, and was declared to have happened in history, upon the ascendancy of Augustus to the imperial throne.

An example of this is found in Virgil's *Eclogues* where he draws on a number of different traditions, combining the sibylline oracles as a prophecy of the return to the 'Golden Age':

> And in your counselship [Pollio's] ... shall this glorious age begin ... Under your sway, any lingering traces of our guilt shall become void, and release the earth from its continual dread ... but for you, child, shall the earth untilled pour forth ... uncalled, the goats shall bring home their udders swollen with milk, and the herds shall fear not huge lions ... The serpent, too, shall perish, and the false poison-plant shall perish; Assyrian spice shall spring up on every soil ... The earth shall not feel the harrow, nor the vine the pruning hook; the sturdy ploughman, too, shall now loose his oxen from the yoke.[472]

The hope here is described in terms of Pollio's counselship being marked by a time of prosperity and happiness, which would itself be a return of sorts, after the long dark days of turmoil described in the poem. And while the poem describes a miraculous child, here it is probably just a generic symbol of this new age.[473] But Virgil later connects the birth of this child with the reign of Augustus in his *Aeneid*:

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[471] Friesen, *Imperial Cults and the Apocalypse of John*, 12.

[472] Virgil, *Eclogue* 4.11-41

[473] Karl Galinsky, *Augustan Culture: An Interpretive Introduction* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 92-93. The tense Vergil uses at the beginning of the fourth *Eclogue* is unique in that it speaks of the return as actually taking place.

> Of whom you so often have heard the promise, Caesar Augustus, son of the deified, who shall bring once again an Age of Gold. To Latium, to the land where Saturn reigned in early times. He will extend his power beyond the Garamants and Indians, over far territories north and south of the zodiac stars, the solar way, where Atlas, heaven-bearing, on his shoulder turns the night-sphere, studded with burning stars.[474]

In the Aeneid the age of Augustus is adorned with visions, and in the mythological context is celebrated as the ultimate realization of an all-encompassing world order. By virtue of his powerful and evocative imagery, Virgil created a national epic that was perfectly designed to bolster the Romans' self-confidence.[475] The Poem's central and greatest innovation lies in the notion of a return of the 'age of Saturn' and casting of that return in the present tense as the time of Augustus.[476]

For many, the ascendancy of Augustus to the throne was proof that the *Saeculum aureum* had indeed dawned, and for each successive generation it became simply a question of maintaining and laying claim to the rightful succession of Augustus to continue the myth of the 'Golden Age'. The rule of Augustus, had after a period of rapid and drastic change, finally arrived at a state of equilibrium, a timeless and mythically defined present. Internal harmony and external strength, fertility and prosperity would all continue unabated, at least so long as the Caesar ruled and both princeps and people made sure to worship the gods as was proper and live according to the ways of their forefathers.[477]

The Golden Age and the Good News of Rome. The success of Augustus' and the rhetoric that the 'Golden Age' had indeed dawned is further established by the prevalence of the Priene inscription.[478] The inscription announced that the birthday of Augustus was the beginning of the good news for all of those lucky enough to be under the *Pax Romana*.[479] The Priene inscription demonstrates that the word 'good news' made sense in Paul's world without having to appeal to transcendence, that it was a political word, with political connotations that were of utmost importance. The term declared that the emperor king who had conquered the world was the one who had finally brought peace and stability. In fact in Asia they devised to honor Augustus describing:

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[474] *Aen.* 6.791-97, trans. Fitzgerald

[475] Zanker, *The Power of Images*, 193.

[476] Zanker, *The Power of Images*, 186.

[477] Zanker, *The Power of Images*, 215.

> Whereas the providence which divinely ordered our lives created with zeal and munificence the most perfect good for our lives by producing Augustus and filling him with virtue for the benefaction of mankind, sending us and those after us a savior who put an end to war and established all things; and whereas Caesar [sc. Augustus] when he appeared exceeded the hopes of all who had anticipated good tidings, not only by surpassing the benefactors born before him, but not leaving those to come any hope of surpassing him; and whereas the birthday of the god marked for the world the beginning of good tidings through his coming...[480]

And on the starting of the new year on Augustus' birthday:

> (It is hard to tell) whether the birthday of the most divine Caesar is a matter of greater pleasure or benefit. We could justly hold it to be equivalent to the beginning of all things, and he has restored at least to serviceability, if not to its natural state, every form that had become imperfect and fallen into misfortune; and he has given a different aspect

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[478] Graham Stanton, *Jesus and Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 28-32, states that there are now thirteen fragments similar to the Priene inscriptions that have been discovered from five different cities in Asia Minor.

[479] See, *OGI* 1.37: εὐανγέλια πάντων, (the good news among all); *OGI* 1.40: ἦρξεν δὲ τῷ κόσμῳ τῶν δι' αὐτὸν εὐανγελίων ἡ γενέθλιος τοῦ θεοῦ, (The birthday of god was the beginning, for the world, of the good news in relation to him). As cited in, N. G. L. Hammond and H. H. Hammond, eds, *Orientis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae* (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1903-1905). See Also, Tiberius *Cat.* no 5, '...the magistracy of Apollonodotus, when news came of the safety and victory of Augustus he sacrificed at the good news to all the gods and goddesses and feasted at the sacrifice the citizens, the Romans and the foreigners and gave to those...'

[480] Translation adapted from Roman Civilization II (ed. N. Lewis, M. Reinhold, 1955) 64. As quoted in, Price, *Rituals and Power*. Translation adapted from Roman Civilization II (ed. N. Lewis, M. Reinhold, 1955) 64

> to the whole world, which blithely would have embraced its own destruction if Caesar had not been born for the common benefit of all. Therefore people would be right to consider this to have been the beginning of the breath of life for them, which has set a limit to regrets for having been born. And since no one could receive more auspicious beginnings for the common and individual good from any other day than this day which has been fortunate for all ... ; and since it is difficult to render thanks in due measure for his great benefactions unless in each case we should devise some new method of repayment, but people would celebrate with greater pleasure his birthday as a day common to all if some special pleasure has come to them through his rule; therefore It seems proper to me that the birthday of the most divine Caesar shall serve as the same New Year's Day for all citizens...[481]

The exaltation of Augustus is carried even further in a lengthy, but poorly preserved Coan decree which starts 'Since Emperor Caesar, son of god, god Sebastos has by his benefactions to all men outdone even the Olympian gods...'[482] Similarly a decree from Mytilene speaks of gratitude for his benefactions and continues:

> That he should ponder upon his own self-esteem because it is never possible to match those honors which are insignificant both in accidence and in essence to those who have attained heavenly glory and possess the eminence and power of gods. But if anything more glorious than these provisions is found hereafter the enthusiasm and piety of the city will not fail in anything that can further deify him.[483]

The inscriptions from around the Roman Empire declaring Augustus as not only the son of God, but the impetus for the dawning of a new age, only increased upon his death. By the end of Augustus's reign a single integrated system of images had evolved which incorporated victory celebrations, the ruler cult, presentation and glorification of the emperor, and honorific monuments. Subsequent emperors expanded and in some cases simplified individual elements, but the system was not fundamentally changed. As Zanker notes:

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[481] Translation adapted from Ancient Roman Statutes (ed. A.C. Johnson, P.R. Colmen-Norton, F.C. Bourne, 1961) 119. As quoted in Price, *Rituals and Power*, 55.

[482] Price, *Rituals and Power*, 55.

[483] *OGIS* 456 = *IGR* IV 39. As quoted in Price, *Rituals and Power*, 55.

> Through the regular repetition of prescribed rituals and festivals and the unchanging visual formulas, the mythology of the Empire took on a reality of its own, removed from the ups and downs of the historical process. The imagery of military glory of the divinely sanctioned world order, or of civic peace and prosperity transcended everyday reality, filtered out the undesirable, and created a certain level of expectation, so that even setbacks would be accepted automatically and on faith as the prelude to a turn for the better ... The constantly renewed imagery of new triumphs quickly swept away such dark shadows. The language of political imagery never even made use of the reversals as warning or admonition. It only took note of the successes and used them to reiterate its civic, political, and ethical leitmotifs. Imperial mythology and the visual expression it found were a contributing factor to the stability of the state that should not be underestimated. They reflected every aspect of the new order and showed how it was anchored in the divine order of the cosmos.[484]

Each succeeding emperor used this ideology to maintain power and keep control within the empire. The imperial cult and the mythology of the new age was able to be perpetuated primarily because there was still peace, and any time the rhetoric of imperial rule was questioned, one only had to recall the distant past and remember the constant conflict associated with the republic.

The Pax Romana as a Solution to the Plight of Humanity

While the Roman Republic was by and large a success, and was the only natural successor to Alexander's vast kingdom, and while it was the only 'superpower' in the Mediterranean during this period, its vast territory was not maintained through the maneuverings of peace, but through violence.[485] In fact after Julius Caesar was assassinated, a power grab resulting in a civil war reminded all succeeding generations that the republic was a time of uncertainty. This uncertainty was compounded by the rampant poverty, misery, the revolt of Mithridates, the incursions of pirates and the seemingly constant campaigns of the Roman civil wars.

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[484] Zanker, *The Power of Images*, 237.

[485] See Adrian Keith Goldsworthy, *Caesar: Life of a Colossus* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 10-14.

This was a period of uncertainty that was transformed under Augustus into almost three centuries of stability and prosperity.[486] The good news propagated by Rome was simple: the Golden Age had indeed come and the evidence of this was the *Pax Romana*. The *Pax Romana* was seen as the great achievement of the Augustan age; it impressed so many people that it led to the mythical exaltation of Augustus as the creator of peace and ruler of the peaceful realm.[487] It was this respect and gratitude coupled with the rhetoric of the Golden Age that allowed Augustus the freedom to devise a number of domestic policies and ethical reforms in an effort to maintain and keep this peace. [488]

Ethics of the Imperial Roman Order

The peace that resulted from the rule of Augustus and his desire to couch such rule in the rhetoric of the Republic gave Augustus the impetus to make large scale ethical reforms that further enhanced the mythology of the 'Golden Age'. Now while most of the ethical reforms were not adopted on any comprehensive scale throughout the empire and while the reforms that were adopted were done so primarily by opportunistic individuals and groups within the ruling elites to gain prestige, in the end the rhetorical effect of these changes far outweighed any real changes that took place.[489] While at times ignored they still served an important symbolic purpose, for anyone who wanted to impress the emperor, or the local magistrates, would know that a sure way to do this would be to follow, at least publicly, the moral reforms proposed by Augustus.

Augustus, playing upon the resurgence of the Golden Age mythology and, armed with achieving the *Pax Romana*, set in motion a program intended to 'heal'

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[486] Price, *Rituals and Power*, 54.

[487] Hans-Josef Klauck, *The Religious Context of Early Christianity: A Guide to Graeco-Roman Religions* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 299.

[488] See, Suetonius *Aug*, 98.2 (LCL 31)

[489] Zanker, *The Power of Images*, 31, notes for instance that often the pleasures the wealthy elite enjoyed in private, they would decry in speeches before the Roman people.

Roman society of the self-destructiveness that threatened to destroy all of Rome. The principal themes of this renewal were to bring back virtue, tradition, honor, and the appropriate worship of the gods. Horace captured this sentiment well when he said, 'You will remain sullied with the guilt of your fathers, Rome, until you have rebuilt the temples and restored all the ruined sanctuaries with their dark images of the gods, befouled with smoke.'[490]

The Ethics of Cultural Reform

It was with Augustus' appeal to tradition that the transformation of Rome began through a deliberate and amazing cultural program. For Augustus the pinnacle of Roman society and premiere example of his cultural renewal included rebuilding the city to model these morals, with a program that included new temples, new statues, new holidays, and new religious responsibilities for Augustus himself; the end results could be seen everywhere throughout the Roman Empire. Rome became a canvas for imperial propaganda where there were indeed no mute stones.

Augustus' piety was put on display for every Roman to see, making it clear that he considered the performance of his religious duties his greatest responsibility and highest honor. It is astonishing as to how many portraits of Augustus were made during his lifetime, both on coins and as honorific statues, showing him veiled in a toga, a symbol of citizenship that itself harkened back to the republic.[491] In fact many such statues were even exhibited in Greece and Asia Minor, where this type of ruler portrait was surely quite alien.[492] As the new style of Augustan rule was beginning to prevail, the pyramid that was Roman society had a clear and undisputed pinnacle. The emperor and his family set the standard in every aspect of life, from moral values to hairstyles. And this was true not only for the upper classes, but for the whole of society. The most ambitious from all classes began actively to pursue religious offices. In the new or revived cult activities there were ample opportunities for self-promotion and, at the same time, for showing solidarity with the new state.[493]

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[490] Horace *Carmen* 3.6

[491] See, Suet. *Aug.* 40.

[492] Zanker, *The Power of Images*, 127.

Never before had a new ruler implemented such a far-reaching cultural program, so effectively embodied in visual imagery. A new pictorial vocabulary was created in the course of the next twenty years that continued to captivate the minds of the Romans. These cultural reforms changed not only the political imagery of Rome, but had lasting effects upon the city of Rome. Zanker opines that, 'It is astonishing how every kind of visual communication came to reflect the new order, how every theme and slogan became interwoven.'[494] While there was no master plan for how quickly the Augustan ethical reforms completely changed the city of Rome, as is often the case with the development of new imagery, many of the things began to perpetuate on their own accord, especially once the princeps had shown enthusiasm and began to initiate the way forward.[495]

The Ethics of Marriage Reform

The influence of Augustus on the Roman society is perhaps best seen in his most ambitious attempt at moral reform: with emphasis placed on reforming family life Augustus enacted the *leges Iuliae de maritandis ordinibus,* the *de adulteriis,* and the *lex Papia Poppaea.*[496] Augustus attributed many of the ills that caused the end of the Republic to the political effects of extra marital liaisons and divorce. Next to godlessness, immorality was regarded by the moral philosophers as the greatest evil of the past and was used as the reason for the collapse of the Republic.[497] Horace lamented, 'O most immoral age! First you tainted marriage, the house, and the family.

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[493] Zanker, *The Power of Images*, 129.

[494] Zanker, *The Power of Images*, 101.

[495] Zanker, *The Power of Images*, 101.

[496] J. A. Crook, *Law and Life of Rome* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), 99-107.

[497] Zanker, *The Power of Images*, 156.

Now from the same source flows pollution over fatherland and people.'[498] The *leges Iuliae* was a comprehensive set of laws, which prescribed criminal prosecution for adultery, major penalties for those who remained unmarried (e.g., in the disposition of their inheritance), as well as rewards and privileges for parents of several children, all conceived by Augustus as a key aspect of his program to renew the Roman family.[499] They were intended to show how closely the dawning of the new age was bound up with and necessitated improved moral conduct. If the mythical past was to be recaptured Augustus would need to use the virtue of the 'Golden Age' to impress upon the Roman people that becoming more moral was indeed in their best interest. Even though the *leges Iuliae* campaign failed, the visual imagery that accompanied it maintained the moral reforms at least at a subliminal level.[500]

The Ethics of Self-Mastery

Closely related to the family reforms instituted by Augustus was the ethics of self-mastery. The Augustan reforms perpetuated an ethos that desire and passion ought to always be under control. The ancient axiom to 'know thyself' was an expression to desire no more than what was appropriate for your station in life, for 'a well ordered life is the fruit of (moral) excellence.'[501] The culture revolved around an ethic of moderation and restraint which was propelled by a steeply hierarchical social stratification.[502] In order to live in such a society it was important to have mastery over the self, over the struggle of reason to master the passions. Self-mastery was seen as a war worth winning, for to let the passions and desires go unsubdued was to lose the war and to be ashamed, but to master them was to be victorious and receive honor.[503]

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[498] Horace *Carmen* 3.6.

[499] Zanker, *The Power of Images*, 157.

[500] Zanker, *The Power of Images*, 172.

[501] καρπὸς δ᾽ ἀρετῆς δίκαιος εὔτακτος βίος. A popular saying of Menander, though its source escapes me.

[502] Certainly there was a difference between what the philosophers said and what the common people did (in religion orthodoxy and orthopraxy), but even if no one followed the philosophers prescribed ethic of self-mastery they certainly knew what it entailed. See Ovid for a very different view during Octavian's reign.

During Augustus' pursuit of power in the Late Republic the rhetoric of self-mastery began to manifest itself in new ways and become the main component in Augustus' propaganda against his rivals. Octavian in a struggle for power with Marc Antony set in motion a campaign that presented this struggle, not as a civil war between Roman factions, but as an epic conflict between the ancient Roman values and the moral licentiousness of the East, where women and eunuchs ruled. Octavian's propaganda made Antony into an object lesson of what would happen to Romans who succumb to the decadence of the East. Antony was seen to have lost his self-mastery, allowing himself to be controlled by his passions, even to the point of taking the subordinate position to a woman. Antony's relation with Cleopatra allowed Octavian to associate femaleness with foreignness, lack of self-mastery, and failure to master inferiors.[504] This rhetoric of the 'other' began to become deeply engrained in his Roman audience.[505]

Once it was sure that Octavian was on his way to victory, the provincial ruling elites, in an effort to impress Octavian, were encouraged to exercise firm control over themselves, their families, and their dependents, thus to be shown as doing their part to make sure that the Romans successfully ruled the world.[506] It was this effort for individuals and groups to differentiate themselves from the rest of the elites and the competition to gain higher status in their respective cities that helped to disseminate the ethic of self-mastery throughout the Roman world. Self-mastery became the prominent ethical discourse of the Empire and was depicted on coins, proclaimed in speeches and literature, and represented in statues, art, and other monuments in the public space.[507] As the Republic ended and the Imperial Age began, a massive propaganda effort arose that centered on this exaggerated form of the 'Golden Age' myth, proclaiming that while early Rome had been disciplined in all things, the present time had seen a dramatic loss of public and private discipline and an 'age of sin' had enveloped Rome.[508] Self-mastery was the ideology that was effectively disseminated by Octavian's followers to the conquered local elites as the remedy to this malady. This myth and the images that evoked it became the metanarrative of the Augustan good news.[509]

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[503] Stanley K. Stowers, *A Rereading of Romans: Justice, Jews, and Gentiles* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 45. That is why ἐνκρατεία was more noble than mere endurance because endurance means only successful resistance to passions whereas ἐνκρατεία involves their mastery.

[504] Stowers, *Rereading of Romans*, 53. See also Dio Cassius (50.28.3)

[505] While the discourse on self-mastery was not limited to non-Greeks, the invention of the barbarian opened up a new frame of reference, where in many cases the lack of self-mastery became closely associated with ethnicity. See Edith Hall, *Inventing the Barbarian: Greek Self-Definition through Tragedy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 60. On the ethnic stereotype becoming largely a ethical stereotype in New Comedy, see Timothy Long, *Barbarians in Greek Comedy* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1986), 152-54.

[506] Stowers, *Rereading of Romans*, 52.

In succeeding generations the discourse of self-mastery would wax and wane depending upon how much the current emperor needed to emphasize it for his political purposes. But in the time of Nero, when Paul produced his letter to the Romans, there was a particularly strong resurgence into the realm of the propaganda of self-mastery. In Nero's early reign, the 'golden age' ideology began to re-circulate and the hope of the people may have reached its highest peak since Augustus. No less than in Augustus' day, the good news 'of the emperor's accession' proclaimed the restoration of a golden age, not only for the Roman people but for all peoples fortunate enough to be brought beneath the benevolent wings of empire for as Calpurnius Siculus sings, 'kindly Justice returns to the earth' and 'Peace in her fullness shall come', for the gods have brought 'holy rites instead of war.'[510]

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[507] See the related discussion in Price, *Rituals and Power*, 90-91.

[508] Stanley K. Stowers, "Paul and Self-Mastery," in *Paul in the Greco-Roman World: A Handbook*, ed. J. Paul Sampley (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2003), 530.

[509] Stowers, *Rereading of Romans*, 53. See also Jasper Griffin, "Augustus and the Poets: Caesar Qui Cogere Possit," in *Caesar Augustus: Seven Aspects*, ed. Fergus Millar and Erich Segal (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), 189-218; A. J. Woodman and David Alexander West, *Poetry and Politics in the Age of Augustus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 19; Zanker, *The Power of Images*, 101-238. Even Philo and Josephus in their apologies of Judaism can, without too much difficulty, be read as describing the Torah as an ethic of self-mastery *par excellence*, so Stowers, *Rereading of Romans*, 51, 58-65.

[510] Neil Elliott, "Paul and the Politics of Empire: Problems and Prospects," in *Paul and Politics: Ekklesia, Israel, Imperium, Interpretation Essays in Honor of Krister Stendahl*, ed. Richard Horsley (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2000), 37. The Roman imperial rhetoric saw the Emperor's ability to bring peace and safety tied to the self-mastery of the inhabitants.

In the century after Paul, Galen wrote an ethical tract entitled *The Passions and Errors of the Soul,*[511] and argued, in a way that would have been typical for centuries, that the way to self-discipline was by wisdom (either inborn or learned), for only those who were wise had the means for overcoming passionate desire.[512] For Galen one of the treatments for maintaining self-mastery was by the reasoned observation of others who followed their passions and desires. By observing at a moral distance the shame that naturally resulted from the passions, one would in an exercise of reason abstain from such folly. Galen states, 'We must observe what is shameful and to be shunned in the instances of those who are caught in the violent grip of these diseases, for in such men the disgrace is clearly seen.'[513] Thus for Galen the engagement of the moral will is largely achieved by a powerful appeal to the sense of shame. For passion-controlled behavior simply makes one look 'silly and ridiculous'. It is the training and therapy of this philosophical reason that ultimately will enable the addressee to live a life of self-mastery.[514]

The rhetoric surrounding self-mastery was an influential part of Roman ideology that not only permeated most, if not all, of the Roman Empire, but began to define the empire itself, and most certainly would have resonated strongly in the Roman capital.[515]

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[511] Claudius Galenus, *Scripta Minora*, ed. J. Marquardt, I. Mueller, and G. Helmreich, vol. 1 (Leipzig: Teubner, 1884), henceforth SM I ; Galen, *On the Passions and Errors of the Soul*, trans. Paul W. Harkins (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1963), henceforth Passions.

[512] Loveday Alexander, "The Passions in the Novels of Chariton and Xenophon" (paper presented at the SBL Annual Meeting, New Orleans, 1996), 2. See also, *Passions* I.3, p.22; SM I p5.18-22.

[513] *Passions* I.7 p.54, SM I p27.14-17

[514] Alexander, "Passions in the Novels", 4. Thus for Galen the passions are in principal diseases of the soul which can be cured.

[515] See again Zanker, *The Power of Images*.

Augustus was so efficient at promoting the rhetoric of the return of the 'Golden Age', ethical reforms, and the importance of a self-mastered life, that soon a permanent architectural stage was set, and it was against this stage that the subjects of Rome played out their lives. The average person under this vast empire encountered pictures, statues, and coins bearing Augustus' likeness almost everywhere they traveled.[516] Sacrificial processions in honor of the emperors were likewise practiced everywhere, linked with parades, public meals, and lavish games. Imperial feast days became the high point of the entire year for both the poor and the rich; people would travel form neighboring towns, impromptu markets were set up, and self-important embassies came to lavish honors on the emperor and enjoyment for their fellow citizens.[517] These rituals and feasts became community-forming events, as Harland suggests:

> On the one hand, sacrifice was a setting which the bonds of human community were expressed and reinforced, revealing the nature of social relations and hierarchies within society. On the other, sacrifice was a means of communication or relation with the gods in order to solicit or maintain protection and avoid punishment for the group or community. Sacrifice was a symbolic expression of a world view concerning the nature of the cosmos and fitting relations within it. In other words, sacrifice, like other forms of ritual, encompassed a set of symbols which communicated a certain understanding of relations between humans within the group (or community) and between human groups and the gods. The incorporation of the emperors within the Greek system of sacrifice, therefore, tells us something about both group-identity and the place of the imperial gods within the world view of the members of associations.[518]

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[516] Zanker, *The Power of Images*, 299-300.

[517] Zanker, *The Power of Images*, 299.

[518] Harland, *Associations, Synagogues, and Congregations*, 97. See also Catherine M. Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), xi, who states that, 'the fundamental efficacy of ritual activity lies in its ability to have people embody assumptions about their place in a larger order of things.

This imperial mythology and cultural ideology began to infiltrate all spheres of life and gradually became internalized throughout all levels of the imperial population.[519] Millions of people, regardless of whether they had ever seen Rome or the Roman emperor, who knew nothing of Roman politics, Roman constitutional forms, or doctrines, began to make prayers for the health of the emperor. They put his statue in their temples; they turned out in their best clothes to attend ceremonies of the imperial cult, and began to invoke the living emperor's genius. The Augustan reforms had worked and subjects from around the empire expressed a common loyalty to Caesar which promoted a sense of unity within the empire.[520] It was against these claims and against this intricate and pervasive imperial ideology that we propose forms the context of Paul's letter to the seat of imperial power.

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[519] Zanker, *The Power of Images*, 337.

[520] F. E. Adcock, *Roman Political Ideas and Practice* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1964), 102.

CHAPTER SIX

PAUL'S LETTER TO THE ROMANS, THRESHOLDS, AND CENTRIFUGAL INTERTEXTUAL ENCYCLOPEDIAS

In our discussion on intertextuality in the opening chapter we attempted to lay out a rather large canvass of interpretive options, highlighting theoretical aspects that might be useful in serving our interpretive interests. Now in examining the particulars of the letter to the Romans we can build upon our previous discussion, while focusing on the specific intertexts of the exodus and the possible allusions to the 'good news' of the Roman imperial order. It is our aim, in this chapter, to highlight how an intertextual reading, whether textual or cultural, helps unearth Paul's message, bringing to light how both the use of the exodus material as well as the polemical use of Paul's good news helps determine the meaning of the text. To that end it is important that we discuss the rhetorical opening of the letter so as to tease out the importance of Paul's pre-texts for the interpretation of Paul's epistle to the Romans.

That the letters of Paul are rhetorical in nature is certainly not a novel observation, but it is an important one nonetheless. It is our contention that Paul's epistle to the Romans was written to elicit a response, written in order to persuade his audience of its importance. In this sense Paul's letter is highly occasional and should be seen as confronting specific issues. Therefore what Paul does in this letter, especially with regards to the intertextual interpretation of the Scriptures of Israel, should not be viewed in any way as Paul's normative means of interpreting Scripture. Rather as this study unfolds, it will reveal that Paul shows a considerable amount of flexibility in his interpretations, on the one hand interpreting Scripture in a sympathetic and positive manner which transfers the original meaning into Paul's new context, while elsewhere Paul can be seen to be in a more sophisticated dialogue with these Scriptures and playful with the receptions that surround them, even to the point of transformation. Much of this flexibility lies within Paul's pragmatic attempt at convincing his audience of the importance of his message.[521] Therefore it is important that Paul's letter be viewed as a rhetorical act and should be understood in terms of the audience, through whom the argumentation was meant to develop.[522] If the study of rhetoric in Pauline letters has taught us anything, it is that the beginnings of texts do matter, and that the start of Paul's discourse to the Romans is of considerable importance in determining the meaning and purpose of the letter.[523]

It has been argued by Peter M. Phillips, in his doctoral dissertation concerning the prologue to the Gospel of John, that texts represent thresholds to their readers.[524] They either invite a reader into the world of the text, or they offer enough resistance to dissuade a reader from becoming fully invested in the interpretive process. Seeing the beginnings of texts as thresholds is helpful in the attempt to produce tangible imagery that describes the importance of beginnings. Likening the Beginnings of texts to open doors, is to say that they do not dissolve the boundaries between the two realms which they connect, but offer an invitation to those who want to enter the world of the text. On the other hand beginnings can also resemble closed doors, to a reader who is unwilling to learn, ultimately frustrating the reading process, and eventually leading readers to disengage from the text or reject it, thus inhibiting the reader from fully entering the world of the text. It is important to note that it is often at the beginnings of a text where the nature of the threshold is reveled. As Phillips reiterates:

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[521] This is why Paul can interpret the Scriptures of Israel in a rather conservative way, while at the same time interpreting the cultural codes of the Roman Imperial Order in a rather subversive manner.

[522] Chaim Perelman and Lucie Obrechts-Tyteca, *The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1969), 4. In this sense the reading, at least initially, should proceed linearly.

[523] Michael Bünker, *Briefformular Und Rhetorische Disposition Im 1. Korintherbrief* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984). See also John L. White, "New Testament Epistolary Literature in the Framework of Ancient Epistolography," *ANRW II* 25, no. 2 (1984): 1733-38.

[524] Peter M. Phillips, "The Prologue of John's Gospel - an Exploration into the Meaning of a Text" (Ph.D., University of Sheffield, 2004), now published as Peter M. Phillips, *The Prologue of the Fourth Gospel: A Sequential Reading* (Library of New Testament Studies 294; London: T&T Clark, 2006).

> The beginning of a text represents a threshold into a new dimension, an introduction into a new world. This new world offered to the reader is the creation of the author. It is a sample of all that could have been recorded; a distillation of the chaos of reality to the relative order of a narrative world. Readers stand on one side of the reading contract, in the real world, and look through into this new reality with which they are invited to engage by the act of reading.[525]

Gérard Genette addresses the thresholds of a text in his work on *paratexts*. For Genette the *paratext* refers to the apparatus surrounding and adorning the modern text.[526] The paratext is not a sealed border, nor a hindrance, but rather a vestibule that offers the world at large the possibility of either stepping inside the text or turning away. The paratext is at the service of the reader to allow for a better reception of the text by offering a more pertinent reading of the text.[527] For ancient texts the information found within Genette's paratext loosely conforms to the conventions of the προοίμια, or the exordium, these being the heavily stylized rhetorical introductions of ancient texts.

The framing of a text with the rhetorics of thresholds not only provides the necessary distance from which the narrative world can be narrated, but also a bridge which readers may cross in order to interact with the new world the text helps introduce. Accordingly if these thresholds are framed within an intertextual space, as we suggest, then the classic cultural texts which are alluded to are essential to the decoding of the texts meaning.[528]

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[525] Phillips, *The Prologue of the Fourth Gospel*, 3-4. See also, Seymour Benjamin Chatman, *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980), 96- 214; Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980), 162.

[526] The paratext are those things that are usually presented before a text in modern works of literature, such as an authors name, a title, a preface, and illustrations. And while it is ambiguous as to whether these productions are to be regarded as belonging to the text, he argues that they are used to surround the text and to extend it, in an effort to present it. See Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* (Literature, Culture, Theory 20; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 1.

[527] Genette, *Paratexts*, 1-3.

[528] These are what Hirsch would call the schemata needed in any culture in order to be considered 'literate' in that culture. See E. D. Hirsch, Joseph F. Kett, and James S. Trefil, *Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know* (New York: Vintage Books, 1988).

Thus in order for the reader to fully make sense of the text one must be made aware of these intertextual references. The allusions and the implicit presence of one text within another imply that these texts can be understood only through the knowledge of other texts. It is here, we suggest, that the text itself offers the necessary clues in order to create the model, or ideal reader.[529] Here Umberto Eco elucidates two distinct ways which readers may encounter a text. The first way Eco calls a 'semantic reader', or a reader who simply wants to know what happens in the text and ultimately how it will end. This reader is only interested in the surface of the text, and as a consequence after consuming the text, usually for its ending, it is never read again. The second way to encounter a text Eco calls a 'semiotic reader', a reader who asks the self penetrating questions of what kind of reader this particular text is asking her to become. This reader is willing to be shaped by the text, and seeks for clues as to how the text is instructing its own interpretation. To become a semiotic reader, Eco suggests, one has to read or, in the case of ancient literature, hear the text multiple times.[530] In order for the text to help foster the creation of the model reader, the reader must be willing to engage the text, and be willing to be shaped by it. It requires a centrifugal rather than centripetal intertextual reading.[531]

A centripetal intertextuality attempts to grasp a text on its own terms, it is expository in nature, trying to locate the original intention located in the center of the text, exploring central motifs, sources, and influences upon a text. A centrifugal intertextuality attempts to relate the text to the reader's world, driving the reader to the culture behind the text, or to its circumference, forcing the reader into other texts and into other cultural manifestations in order to explore the deep-seated foundations to which the text in question is a part.[532] Centrifugal intertextuality represents what the author thinks is the essential knowledge in order for the audience to understand where the text and its own ideology is coming from. In order to advance this ideology to the reader, centrifugal intertextuality sets up a dialogue between a set of texts, which affects both the reader's understanding of the text being read, and the text being cited, encouraging the reader to interpret the text being read through the lenses of this classic text, meanwhile causing the cited text itself to take on new meanings.[533] If the reader does not understand the allusions within the text, then the tension created between lack of understanding and the desire to become the model reader encourages the reader to pursue the intertextual encyclopedia, which the author is assuming the model reader ought to already have.[534] Intertextual dialogism demands that the reader be familiar with the intertextual encyclopedia presupposed by the text.[535] For Genette this literal presence of one text within another means that the intertextual reference offers a deeper understanding of the original text, and as such it has a direct bearing on the reading and reception of the text.[536] In other words, centrifugal intertextuality helps to determine the interpretative horizon with which a text is to be read. So the more explicit the intertextuality becomes, the more definite the horizon becomes. Intertextuality, then, necessarily forms part of the interaction between any text and should be seen in terms of its centrifugal impact on the reading process – in an attempt at making the center certain, it drives the reader into the classic texts which under gird the text currently being read.[537] This would suggest that intertextuality seeks to influence the way which the reader engages the text.[538]

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[529] For a discussion on the ideal reader see Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978).

[530] Umberto Eco, "Intertextual Irony and Levels of Reading," in *On Literature* (New York: Harcourt, 2004), 222-23.

[531] Peter M. Phillips, "Biblical Studies and Intertextuality: Should the Work of Genette and Eco Broaden Our Horizons?" (paper presented at the Limerick Conference on Intertextuality, Ireland, May 2005), 4. The terms centripetal and centrifugal refer to the dialogism of Bakhtin, see M. M. Bakhtin, "Discourse in the Novel," in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist (UTPSS 1; Austin: University of Texas Press, 2006), 272.

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[532] Robert E. Scholes, *Protocols of Reading* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 8.

[533] What Moyise has termed dialogical intertextuality, so Steve Moyise and J. L. North, *The Old Testament in the New Testament: Essays in Honour of J. L. North* (JSNTSup 189; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 14-41.

[534] Phillips, "Biblical Studies and Intertextuality", 12.

[535] Umberto Eco, *The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts* (Advances in Semiotics; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 7-40.

[536] Phillips, "Biblical Studies and Intertextuality", 6.

[537] Phillips, "Biblical Studies and Intertextuality", 9-10.

The results are naturally unpredictable, as a reader may run afoul in any number of directions. In fact a reader may not recognize the intertexts and be relegated to only a surface understanding of the text, or a reader may refuse to explore the intertexts thus being aware of potential interpretive avenues but unwilling to realize them, or a reader may come to accept the mixture of classical references and explore them and ultimately become the reader the text is encouraging.[539] This uncertainty is obviously heightened when the text in question is presupposing cultural texts that do not already belong to the readers, which is the case for Paul's audience in letter to the Romans (Rom. 1.5). The encouraging of the reader to acquire the necessary knowledge of the cultural past before the text can be properly interpreted, is what the author attempts to do in the threshold of the text. The reader is, as noted above, never fully obliged to follow through with the author's encouragement.[540] Ultimately, the intertextual nature of texts which we have described is meant to uncover meaning rather than obscure meaning. As Phillips states :

> Intertextuality is not a device for tripping up readers, or for making them hunt for the footnotes. Intertextuality actually signals a text's integration within a wider cultural setting, within a specific cultural identity, it is a heuristic tool informing the reader with the necessary prerequisites in order to become a model reader.[541]

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[538] Phillips, "Biblical Studies and Intertextuality", 8; Phillips, *The Prologue of the Fourth Gospel*, 11.

[539] See, Eco, "Intertextual Irony and Levels of Reading," 218.

[540] 'De la même façon, les lecteurs des Actes qui ne partageaient pas encore la connaissance culturelle présupposée par le texte étaient encouragés à l'acquérir, et de ce fait à identifier le passé biblique comme étant «notre histoire», à apprendre et à penser à Abraham, Isaac et Jacob comme à «nos pères», à Shechem et Réphan comme faisant partie de «notre» monde. En d'autres termes, lire cette histoire et apprendre sa préhistoire fait partie du processus d'acquisition d'un lieu culturel nouveau.'Loveday Alexander, "L'Intertextualité et la question des lecteurs. Réflexions sur l'usage de la Bible dans les Actes des apôtres," in *Intertextualités: La Bible en écho*, ed. Daniel Marguerat and Adrian Curtis (Geneva: Labor et Fides, 2000), 213.

[541] Phillips, "Biblical Studies and Intertextuality", 11.

Ultimately, in the case of Romans, the failure to think Pauline thoughts means that the reader will consistently be victimized by the text, while the acceptance of the centrifugal intertextuality allows the reader to share the author's point of view and to become in a limited sense a part of the Pauline community itself.[542] In essence it is our contention that to understand Paul's letter to the Romans, you need to know something else first. And it is our contention that it is the new exodus and the political polemics within this vision of the new exodus that forms the necessary backdrop to this text.

The Centrifugal Intertextuality of the Narrative of Exile and Return as a Pre-text in Paul's Letter to the Romans

Viewing the beginning of Paul's letter to the Romans under the rubric of thresholds, and centrifugal intertextualities, allows us the interpretive space to examine the ideas of exile and return, the exodus motif, and its transformative use in the later Second Temple literature and to ask how Paul may have used these ideas to further advance his own cause, or mission. Essentially this is to tie our theoretical discussion into the social situation Paul found himself in by sending a letter to the nations who had congregated in Rome, a group he himself had never visited. It is our aim to show that key to Paul's intertexual use of Scripture and his appropriation of the prophets, was to show that his message, his good news, was what the prophets and the scriptures had always been talking about. Like Stendahl noted many years ago, concerning the 'continuity' of the Scriptures of Israel in both Second Temple Judaism(s) and the New Testament:

> In the New Testament the major concern is to make clear that all is 'old', in accordance with the expectations of the prophets...Thus the issue between the Essenes and the early Christians was not one of 'originality', but a searching question about who were the legitimate heirs to the

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[542] Phillips, "Biblical Studies and Intertextuality", 12-13.

> prophetic promises and who could produce the most striking arguments for fulfillment.[543]

If we look at Paul's letter to the Romans in light of Stendahl's thesis, the motif of exile and return, even if latent in Paul, would be a striking way to attach continuity to the prophets who had gone before, and at the very least, is deserving of further investigation.[544] Furthermore, that other contemporary Jewish texts, whether Christian or otherwise, deal with the similar themes of exile and return, shows that Paul's contemporaries located these themes within the intertextual space of Scripture.[545] When we couple this with an investigation of the intertextual encyclopedia which, as we argue, is introduced in the beginning of the letter, it further allows us to tease out the motif of exile and return in a manner that makes it discernibly present, even if revolutionary and unique. Furthermore if these echoes and quotations are viewed as ungrammaticalities, or textual difficulties which prompt a rereading of the text, they may in fact reveal a 'higher level of significance'. In recognizing these ungrammaticalities 'which indicate the latent and implicit foreign body in the text', we can begin to search for ways which they may function in the text, and not only as possible violations of the audience's horizon of expectations, but perhaps as a heuristic tool to create the readers necessary to incorporate the message Paul sets forth.[546] In this sense these 'ungrammaticalities,' attract the attention of the audience, causing them to reevaluate both the generic expectations of their understanding of the text, and those which may violate them. This back and forth process, which we discussed above, where the audience compares the text with the tradition from which it derives, encouraging the reader to obtain the intertextual encyclopedia, is the very intertextual reading we believe this text encourages.[547] Here, the intertextual dynamic works in two directions, helping the subject to interpret the individual text, but also causing one to re-examine the understanding of the tradition as a whole, allowing transformation. The intertextual reading is then dialogical, like the textual processes it attempts to account for. It is our thesis that Paul's dialogue with the Scriptures of Israel essentially becomes a reinterpretation of the tradition itself.[548] Once we understand this relationship we can attempt to uncover the matrix of the text, the overarching interpretive grid that will help us make sense of the whole. It is in this section that we attempt to read the text with the assumption that the overarching matrix in Paul's letter to the Romans is the fulfillment of the new exodus which itself is germane to the exile and return motif and the political polemics found within the Scriptures of Israel. It is under this matrix which the ungrammaticalities should then be understood.

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[543] Krister Stendahl, "The Scrolls on the New Testament: An Introduction and Perspective," in *The Scrolls on the New Testament*, ed. Krister Stendahl (New York: Harper, 1957), 6.

[544] On whether Paul viewed himself as continuing in the line of the prophetic tradition in replication of the call narratives, and the possibility that he framed his mission upon Isaiah 66 see Karl Olav Sandnes, *Paul: One of the Prophets? A Contribution to the Apostle's Self-Understanding* (WUNT 43; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1991); J. Ross Wagner, "The Heralds of Isaiah and the Mission of Paul: An Investigation of Paul's Use of Isaiah 51-55 in Romans," in *Jesus and the Suffering Servant: Isaiah 53 and Christian Origins*, ed. W. H. Bellinger and William Reuben Farmer (Harrisburg: Trinity Press, 1998), 193-222.

[545] See Francis Watson, *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith* (New York: T & T Clark, 2004), 5.

[546] Michael Riffaterre, "L'Intertexte inconnu," *Littérature* 41 (1981): 5 , describes ungrammaticalities as, 'indiquent la présence latente, implicite, d'un corps étranger, qui est intertexte'.

Through this reversionary re-reading of the prophets, it is my claim that Paul finds in the prophets a prefiguration of his own apostolic mission to the nations and a prophecy of the return from exile. By retelling the stories that the prophets, especially Second Isaiah, tell about YHWH's faithful love for his people, Paul is able to maintain confidently that it has always been YHWH's plan to embrace the nations as his own, and this itself is a mark that YHWH will also be faithful to redeem and restore his covenant people Israel, so that both the Judeans and the nations can with one voice praise the incomparable mercy of YHWH, in bringing an end to the conditions that perpetuate the exile.[549]

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[547] Or more precisely called metalepsis. See Gerald Prince, *A Dictionary of Narratology* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987), 50.

[548] This implies that Paul was a reader of scriptures before he was a writer of his letters; on the ancient practice of reading and the availability of texts in antiquity, see Christopher D. Stanley, *Paul and the Language of Scripture: Citation Technique in the Pauline Epistles and Contemporary Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Harry Y. Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church: A History of Early Christian Texts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995). It is fairly clear that in the second Temple period, the Prophets were not read within the context narrowly circumscribed by the literary boundaries of the books themselves. Rather, interpreters freely culled oracles from the prophetic writings and assembled them in accordance with the larger stories they told about God and Israel. So John Barton, *Oracles of God: Perceptions of Ancient Prophecy in Israel after the Exile* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1986), 150.

The Purpose of Paul's Letter to the Romans

It seems fitting, at this point in the argument, to give at least an overview of why we think Paul wrote this letter to the Romans, not in an effort to resolve the Romans Debate, but rather to give the reader an indication of the interpretive decisions that inform our intertextual reading of this letter. Obviously the purpose of Paul's letter has been a bone of contention among interpreters for generations, with no consensus view ever likely to be convincingly offered, and we certainly have no illusions of settling it here.[550]

It is our contention that Paul ultimately needed a base of operations in order to further his missionary reach to the Spanish provinces of the Roman Empire.[551] In order to secure the support of the Roman churches, he needed to assist them in overcoming their conflicts, which were in large part the result of their buying into the social structure and social status as defined by the empire. By trying to live within the social structures set up by the empire, the Roman churches were operating with notions of honor and shame that were in tension, and could not coexist with the ethic of the cross that Paul had dedicated his life to proclaiming.[552] The Letter to the Romans was not Paul's attempt to inform his addressees of his theology, nor a chance for him to lay out his dogmatics, but rather it was an opportunity for him to confront the ideology of the Empire and the ethics of the churches in Rome with the good news.[553]

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[549] See the slightly different discussion in Wagner, *Heralds of the Good News*, 41. On the use of Judeans instead of Jew or Jewish see, Steve Mason, "Jews, Judeans, Judaizing, Judaism: Problems of Categorization in Ancient History," *Journal for the Study of Judaism* (2007): 457-512.

[550] See, for example, the discussion in, Karl P. Donfried, *The Romans Debate: Revised and Expanded Edition* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1991); L. Ann Jervis, *The Purpose of Romans: A Comparative Letter-Structure Investigation* (JSNTSup 55; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991); A. J. M. Wedderburn, *The Reasons for Romans* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991).

[551] See Dieter Zeller, *Der Brief an die Römer* (RNT 5a; Regensburg: Pustet, 1985), 15; Robert Jewett, "Paul, Phoebe, and the Spanish Mission," in *The Social World of Formative Christianity and Judaism: Essays in Tribute to Howard Clark Kee*, ed. Howard Clark Kee, Jacob Neusner, Ernest S. Frerichs, Peter Borgen, and Richard Horsley (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988).

[552] Paul Sevier Minear, *The Obedience of Faith: The Purposes of Paul in the Epistle to the Romans* (Studies in Biblical Theology 19; London: S.C.M. Press, 1971), 2.

Paul recognized that one of the obstacles to overcoming the divisions between the various church groups in Rome was the pervasiveness of notions of honor and shame, which were central to the Roman imperial order, and seemingly embraced by all members of society in a carefully constructed hierarchy.[554] Only if Paul could break this deeply engrained mindset could he achieve the kind of acceptance of racial, religious, and social difference necessary to bring about harmony in the Roman churches in order to provide himself with a secure base for his mission to Spain.[555]

Hints of Paul's agenda can be heard as he addresses the 'uneducated' and 'barbarians', who probably formed the majority of Paul's audience, and consequently formed his intended audience.[556] For them, the good news of Christ's shameful death on the cross spoke of a God whose power was directed to the powerless and despised.[557] Thus creating the notion of a 'paradox of power,' that is seen throughout Paul's writings, and is the central component to Paul's cruciform ethic.[558] Paul, in proclaiming this shameful good news that elevated a defeated and crucified messiah, took a message that seemingly had no chance to prevail into the heart of the empire. The paradox for Paul, of course, is that this is precisely how the power of God is in fact revealed. For Paul the proclamation of this good news, and the communities that are formed as a result, is the tell-tale sign that a social and ideological revolution has indeed been inaugurated by the good news.[559] Thus, when Paul speaks of the righteousness of God, he refers to God's apocalyptic activity in bringing 'back the fallen world into the sphere of his legitimate claim,' itself a new exodus theme.[560] In the death of Christ, God has performed this 'newly-creative act' which a new sphere of existence is established; 'the cosmos which Paul previously lived met its end in God's apocalypse of Jesus Christ'.[561] For Paul, then, it is in the presentation of the invasion of God into the world in order to subjugate forces that run contrary to God's will and to set relationships aright that is behind his concern for the ethics practiced by these communities.[562]

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[553] Lauri Thurén, *Derhetorizing Paul: A Dynamic Perspective on Pauline Theology and the Law* (WUNT 124; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002), 9.

[554] Stowers, *Rereading of Romans*, 46-52.

[555] Cf. Gal 3.28

[556] See the compelling argumentation in Runar M. Thorsteinsson, *Paul's Interlocutor in Romans 2: Function and Identity in the Context of Ancient Epistolography* (CBNT 40; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 2003), 100-22. See also, Neil Elliott, *The Rhetoric of Romans: Argumentative Constraint and Strategy, and Paul's Dialogue with Judaism* (JSNTSup 45; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990), 9-43; John G. Gager, *Reinventing Paul* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 106-08; Gaston, *Paul and the Torah*, 134; Krister Stendahl, *Final Account: Paul's Letter to the Romans* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 4; Stowers, *Rereading of Romans*, 29-33. *Contra* Steve Mason, "For I Am Not Ashamed of the Gospel (Rom. 1.16): The Gospel and the First Readers of Romans," in *Gospel in Paul : Studies on Corinthians, Galatians and Romans for Richard N. Longenecker*, ed. L. Ann Jervis and Peter Richardson (JSTSup 108; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 254-87, who sees the implied audience to be strictly Judeans.

[557] Cf. 1 Cor 1:27–29

[558] Cf. Michael J. Gorman, *Cruciformity: Paul's Narrative Spirituality of the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 214-67.

> At heart, then, Paul's good news is not simply about soul-saving, involving ethical or doctrinal teaching. Such features are contained within a larger theological program, one that concerns the warfare between God and the forces that are stacked up in hostility to God's beneficent reign over the world. This warfare is carried out not just in the future when hostility to God is completely eradicated, but at every stage in the drama of reconciling the world in Christ to God.[563]

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[559] Robert Jewett, *Romans: A Commentary* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006), 137.

[560] Ernst Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, trans. Geoffrey William Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 29.

[561] Bruce W. Longenecker, *The Triumph of Abraham's God: The Transformation of Identity in Galatians* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998), 7.

[562] Naturally that is why many commentators insist that Romans should be described in terms of theodicy. Pauline theodicy describes how God's sovereignty remains intact despite threats from opposing forces. It focuses on the divine reclamation and rectification of the cosmos, something inaugurated in Christ, driven on by the Spirit and completed eventually when God becomes 'all in all' (1 Cor. 15.28).

[563] Longenecker, *The Triumph of Abraham's God*, 8.

For Paul, this good news was to play itself out over against the Roman imperial order, within these newly formed communities. And it was precisely this apocalyptic vision of the cross, formed in part by the prophecies of the end of exile, that gave these communities the strength to persevere within the empire. For Paul it was the power of this 'inclusive good news that equalized the status of Greeks and barbarians, wise and uneducated, Jews and Gentiles, which offers new relationships in communal settings to all on precisely the same terms,' again a premise central to the ingathering of the nations found within some interpretations of the new exodus.[564]

Obviously, one of the most stunning features of Paul's message is the very contention that the preaching of the good news is meant to establish faith communities over against the communities within the Roman Empire. It was not by the 'force of arms or apocalyptic miracle', that the world was to be restored to its intended condition, but by these communities living out this cruciform love.[565] In place of the salvation of the *Pax Romana*, based on military power and imperial administration, there is the salvation of small groups who believe in the good news of a crucified Christ. Paul's goal then is on the one hand to encourage these small groups to cooperate with each other to extend this new form of salvation to the ends of the world. The global offensive, so to speak, to bring the world back to rights on behalf of divine righteousness envisioned by Paul's good news is 'missional and persuasive rather than martial and coercive'.[566]

Paul's letter is then ethics, all the way down, in that it seeks to advocate on behalf of the good news in order to sustain a base in Rome in order to expand the mission and evangelize Spain. Ethics because core to Paul's success is the ability of the Roman communities to live out ethical admonitions of this cruciform ethic, and be an example of how the good news is to be lived out 'in a manner that would ensure the success of this mission'.[567] Of course central to this claim is the impartiality of divine love and compassion, which seeks to unite all in communities of hope and reconciliation, in communities above all where discrimination, the diminishing of people on grounds of ethnicity, class, education, and ultimately belief are outlawed. For Paul, the ekklesia is 'the community of people who confess that Jesus Christ is Lord', the community created by the exaltation of Jesus Christ as Lord. This exaltation occurs by way of Jesus' death and resurrection, which are the culmination of a life that embodies God's reconciling action on behalf of the entire world.[568]

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[564] Jewett, *Romans*, 142.

[565] See Gorman, *Cruciformity*, 214-67.

[566] Jewett, *Romans*, 146-7.

[567] Jewett, *Romans*, 44.

It is our contention that it was the Scriptures known to Paul and his contemporaries, and more precisely those texts dealing with the second exodus and the end of exile, that not only gave him the basis for his mission to the nations, but also for his polemics against the Roman imperial order. For Paul it was in the Scriptures of Israel that the 'oracles of God' (Rom 3:2) spoke directly to his own day, just as it was through the prophets that the good news of God was promised to the nations in Rome.[569]

Unearthing the Ungrammaticalities: An Inquiry into the Centrifugal Intertextual Encyclopedia to Paul's Letter to the Romans

Surely the onus is on the interpreter who claims that there are any meaningful ungrammaticalities and allusions to other texts in the letter to the Romans. Generations of commentators and interpreters alike have claimed to not only know what Paul said but also to know, with certainty mind you, what he thought.[570] I am certainly not so ambitious as to think that the detection of ungrammaticalities is some magical elixir that will solve all of our interpretive problems with the text, but rather hope that the exploring of these ungrammaticalities, within the orbit of a centrifugal intertextual encyclopedia, might offer another way we can approach the text, in order to see where such observations might lead. To do this we need to pay special attention to the rhetoric Paul uses.

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[568] Watson, *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith*, 19.

[569] Arland J. Hultgren, "The Scriptural Foundations for Paul's Mission to the Gentiles," in *Paul and His Theology*, ed. Stanley E. Porter (Pauline Studies 3; Leiden: Brill, 2006), 22.

[570] I tend to think, like Eco, that the very phenomenon that is set up in a text is that it has a plurality of meanings, even if the author was not thinking about it at all, and has done nothing to encourage a reading on a multiplicity of levels. See Eco, "Intertextual Irony and Levels of Reading," 226.

The Rhetoric and the Centrifugal Intertextuality of Romans 1.1-12[571]

It is interesting that no other known ancient letter from the Greco-Roman, or traditionally Jewish, environment contains such an extensive letter opening. This unique opening would have been noticed by Paul's audience, and no doubt they would have paid special attention to the information provided in it.[572] While Paul starts off his epistle to the Romans with a series of compact statements that loosely conforms to the epistolary practices of the time, these compact statements are not merely convention; they are pre-figurations of the deeper argument of the letter itself, giving his readers the necessary clues in order to interpret the rest of the text.[573] When these statements are examined in light of the possible intertextual echoes, coupled with the importance placed upon the introduction in the framing of ancient letters, we are convinced that the second exodus offers a reading perspective that provides an important hermeneutical key to the letter as a whole.

Paul opens his letter in a manner that corresponds to the *exordium* of an oration, or the προοίμια of a dramatic narrative. Both of these rhetorical conventions were concerned with establishing the ethos of a speaker and the acknowledgment of the situation, with the goal of making sure the audience was attentive in an effort to win their sympathy.[574] There are countless ways which this could be achieved, but commonly a persuasive ethos was set up by the 'author' claiming a position of authority and by seeking to persuade the audience with a deep exigency, in an effort to offer them help. In this manner the author normally would offer a condensed version of what later would be expounded in full, claiming it as either something foreign or something that the audience has not fully contemplated. Encouraging the audience that it indeed has something to learn, the author attempts to make an audience receptive to the message about to be developed.[575] In this manner the beginning sets up the context with which the ensuing letter ought to be understood. As such it not only sets up a general interpretative framework, but by providing contextual markers for the interpretation of the rest of the work, it also sets the audience's minds at ease, as it gives them a glimpse of what is to follow.[576] In this way the author makes use of rhetoric both to identify with the reader but also to guide the reader into a correct appreciation of the point of view or perspective of the text.[577] In this respect the exordium or προοίμια helps to foster the creation of the model reader just as Paul's proclamation of the good news has the goal of creating a new communities, the beginnings of texts create a community of those who are aware of the proper way to engage the text, who are given the necessary clues in order to understand what is really happening in this text.[578] These clues hinge on Paul's allusions to the Scriptures of Israel and his quoting from an outside text in order to lend support to his overall arguments, and in order to motivate his audience to believe and act in particular ways.[579] It is our intention to analyze Paul's exordium, or προοίμια, with a view to the specific clues these allusions provide for the audience.

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[571] While we believe that the exordium extends to v. 17, we have chosen to deal with vv. 13-17 in depth in the next chapter.

[572] Samuel Byrskog, "Epistolography, Rhetoric and Letter Prescript: Romans 1.1-7 as a Test Case," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* (1997): 38.

[573] This is true in regards to both ancient epistolary and rhetorical theory, see, e.g., R. Dean Anderson, *Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Paul*, Revised ed. (CBET 18; Leuven: Peeters, 1999); Byrskog, "Letter Prescript," 27-46; Elliott, *The Rhetoric of Romans*; George Alexander Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 36; Wilhelm Wuellner, "Greek Rhetoric and Pauline Argumentation," in *Early Christian Literature and the Classical Intellectual Tradition: In Honorem Robert M. Grant*, ed. Robert McQueen Grant, William R. Schoedel, and Robert Louis Wilken (Théologie historique 53; Paris: Beauchesne, 1979), 177-88; Wilhelm Wuellner, "Paul's Rhetoric of Argumentation in Romans: An Alternative to the Donfied-Karris Debate over Romans," in *The Romans Debate*, ed. Karl P. Donfried (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1991), 128-46. I use the terms epistle and letter interchangeable as mere lexical *variatio*, making no distinction as does, Gustav Adolf Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East: The New Testament Illustrated by Recently Discovered Texts of the Graeco-Roman World*, trans. Lionel R. M. Strachan (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1927). For a thorough critique of this thesis, see Stanley K. Stowers, *Letter Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity* (LEC 5; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986), 18-20.

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[574] William J. Brandt, *The Rhetoric of Argumentation* (New York: Bobbs Merrill, 1970), 51-57. For the classic work on rhetoric, see Richard von Volkmann, *Die Rhetorik der Griechen und Römer in systematischer Übersicht*, 2 ed. (Leipzig: Teubner, 1885), 127-48. See the discussion of ancient rhetoric in *Ad Herennium* I.4.7; Cicero, *De Inventione* 20; *De Partitione Oratoria* 29; and *Ad Alexandrum* 29, 34.

[575] Byrskog, "Letter Prescript," 39-41. The *exordium* should make the audience well disposed (Cic, *Inv.* 1.16.22; Quint, *Inst.* 4.1.7-15, 30), attentive (Quint, *Inst.* 4.1.41; *Rhet. ad Her.* 1.4.7), and docile (Quint, *Inst.* 4.1.34; 4.2.47-49). Jeffrey A. D. Weima, "Preaching the Gospel in Rome: A Study of the Epistolary Framework of Romans," in *Gospel in Paul: Studies on Corinthians, Galatians and Romans for Richard N. Longenecker*, ed. L. Ann Jervis and Peter Richardson (JSNTSup 108; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 354, states that, 'Paul is not simply informing his readers about his future travel plans so as to satisfy their curiosity or to provide details about himself for their general interest Rather, this epistolary convention serves as an affective literary device by which Paul can exert his apostolic authority and power over his letter recipients. This should not be interpreted as a power-hungry, ego trip by Paul but as a pragmatic means to place his readers under the apostolic authority such that they will accept and obey the contents of the letter.' But Thurén rightly notes this authority is not neutral and easily causes reactions pro and con. So Thurén, *Derhetorizing Paul*, 15.

[576] See Aristotle *Rhetoric* 1415a

[577] Phillips, *The Prologue of the Fourth Gospel*, 45.

Paul and the construction of a powerful ethos.

It is often taken for granted that Paul and his fellow-Jews read the same scriptural texts, the Torah and the prophets. And that they both interpret these texts with a dual effort, on the one hand, to make sense of the world which they live, and on the other hand, to convince their respective audiences of the validity of their interpretations. That these interpretations, often of the same texts, differ, at least in emphasis, seems natural.[580] Francis Watson has recently proposed:

> If Paul's Jewishness is hermeneutically significant, and if Paul is a reader of scriptural texts alongside other readers, then it is no longer possible to read his own texts as monologues. Instead, they come to represent...a conversation. As a Jew, Paul is engaged in animated and sometimes contentious debate about the scriptural texts...[581]

The significance of this insight is that the texts which Paul is so keen to use ought to be seen through the lens of praxis. Paul's dialogue with scripture has at its aim the creation of a community committed to cruciform ethics, which stems from Paul's ability to negotiate the scriptures in a way that shapes a world that has seen the in breaking of God's divine righteousness as revealed in the new exodus and the end of exile.[582]

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[578] Wayne C. Booth, *A Rhetoric of Irony* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975), 28-9.

[579] Christopher D. Stanley, *Arguing with Scripture: The Rhetoric of Quotations in the Letters of Paul* (New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 3.

[580] Watson, *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith*, 1.

[581] Watson, *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith*, 2.

Thus when Paul reveals to the Romans his rhetorical identity, the specific literary forms he chooses within the letter and his pathos are interrelated. When Paul applies certain fixed phrases in the epistolary opening, this choice, rather than a different choice, potentially tells us of his status in relation to his audience.[583] Paul attempts to create this rhetorical relationship with his readers by describing himself as a δοῦλος, as 'κλητὸς, and as ἀφωπισμένος, all terms which evoke strong connections with those who served YHWH in special ways, especially the prophets of old. It is clear that rhetorically Paul is seeking to establish himself within that prophetic heritage.[584]

When Paul uses the word δοῦλος in the epistolary opening it no doubt would have had many different connotations to his audience. Two are rather significant in light of what is said later on in the letter. The first connotation that Paul probably had in mind was that expressed in the scriptures of Israel, namely that he was a 'slave of YHWH'.[585] This was a phrase that Paul adapted from his Jewish heritage and was often used of individuals who served YHWH in some special way.[586] In this sense Paul was not only claiming to serve a higher authority, just as the prophets of old had, but was also interacting with the broader discussion of slavery within early Judaism.[587]

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[582] Watson, *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith*, 3.

[583] Thorsteinsson, *Paul's Interlocutor in Romans 2*, 9; John L. White, *Light from Ancient Letters: Documentary Greek Letters for Studying the New Testament & Early Christian Letter Tradition* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 219.

[584] Brendan Byrne, *Romans* (Sacra Pagina 6; Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1996), 38; C.E.B. Cranfield, *Romans*, 2 vols. (ICC; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998), 50-54; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 33; New York: Doubleday, 1993), 228-9; Sandnes, *Paul: One of the Prophets?*, 146-53.

[585] Marie Joseph Lagrange, *Saint Paul. Épitre aux Romains* (Etudes Bibliques; Paris: Gabalda, 1950), 2.

[586] Cf. 2 Kings 18.12; Judges 2.8; 2 Samuel 7.5; Amos 3.7; Zech 1.6; Jer 7.25; Dan 9.6; Neh. 1.6; Ps 19.11, 13; 35.23; 135.22.

[587] Charles H. Talbert, *Romans* (Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary: Macon: Smyth & Helwys, 2002), 27. See also John Byron, *Slavery Metaphors in Early Judaism and Pauline Christianity: A Traditio-Historical and Exegetical Examination* (WUNT 2; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 18, 203-07.

Resident within this tradition was the imagery of the exodus from Egypt, where Israel was released from slavery in order to become the slaves of YHWH.[588] Paul can take this imagery and processes it through his understanding of the cross, death and resurrection, and see in it Jesus who becomes the paradigmatic slave of YHWH. He can then appropriate it ethically cueing his readers, by his example, that it is through the imitation of the life and death of Jesus that one partakes in this slavery.[589] Thus in order to fulfill the obligations inherent in such slavery one must be willing to live out the ethics bound up within the narrative of the cross. Slavery to Christ becomes Paul's short hand account of how the Christ event enables believers to fulfill their obligations as God's slaves.[590] There is no reason to quarrel over this possibility, for it would make sense in the context of an exordium that Paul would attempt not only to establish a strong ethos but also a convincing pathos.[591]

However, there is really no way for Paul to control the meaning of the text in regard to what his Roman audience might hear in this self description. The question of what it meant to be a slave in the Roman world and more pointedly the shame associated with slavery cannot be exorcised from the potentiality that lies within this text. As Dale Martin notes, 'Slave terminology almost always carries negative connotations in Greco-Roman literature.'[592] The reality in the Roman world was that regardless of a slave's standard of living, there was an extreme public dishonor associated with the status of slavery; in fact if this legal status was inherited at birth, then it would be the main determiner of status throughout one's life in the Roman world.[593] Most scholars would now agree that to be a self-described slave was to assign to yourself the greatest 'opprobrium' in the social world of Paul's readers.[594] Yet for Paul to describe himself as a slave in this way is to call into question the prevailing social norms concerning status, while at the same time hinting at an ethic that would replace those norms, namely slavery to God.[595] It is our contention that Paul right at the beginning of the letter is suggesting to his audience that the status quo of the Roman imperial order is not in fact the only way which one is able to exist, thus giving his audience a key tool in the decoding of the letter.

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[588] Byron, *Slavery Metaphors*, 148.

[589] Byron, *Slavery Metaphors*, 175.

[590] See the paradigm in Philippians 2.6-11.

[591] Although Jewett maintains that this prophetic connotation would be in conflict with Paul's priestly description of his ministry in Romans 15.15-20, there is no reason to limit Paul's description of his ministry to one or the other. See Jewett, *Romans*, 100.

[592] Dale B. Martin, *Slavery as Salvation: The Metaphor of Slavery in Pauline Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 46. Although in other places Martin argues for a rather positive sense of Paul's slavery terminology (47-49).

[593] Joseph H. Hellerman, *Reconstructing Honor in Roman Philippi: Carmen Christi as Cursus Pudorum* (SNTSMS 132; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 139; Ekkehard Stegemann and

Paul continues to establish his ethos by using another term associated with the prophets of old. When Paul uses the term κλητός he most likely does so to echo the prophets' conviction that just as YHWH had chosen Israel to be peculiar and particularly his, so too was Paul called to a particular and peculiar task.[596] Paul thus emphasizes that his purpose in writing to the Romans was on the same level as the proclamation of the prophets, that is, to carry out a specific task in YHWH's plan of salvation.[597] In this way Paul sets up an ethos that puts him on a par with the writers

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Wolfgang Stegemann, *The Jesus Movement: A Social History of Its First Century* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), 60. *Contra* Jewett and Brown, who suggest that Paul might be using 'slave of YHWH' in the same sense that slaves of the Caesar's household used 'slave of Caesar,' a phrase that, in this rather strict context, would suggest Paul used the term to show his unique status. See Michael Joseph Brown, "Paul's Use of ΔΟΥΛΟΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ ΙΗΣΟΥ in Romans 1:1 " *Journal of Biblical Literature* 120, no. 4 (2001); Jewett, *Romans*, 100-01.

[594] I see no reason why Paul would be comparing his status vis-à-vis YHWH with that of the lowest status group in the Roman imperial society unless this was a calculated step by Paul to introduce a subtle polemic against the power of the house of Caesar; for this inclination see Brown, "Paul's Use of ΔΟΥΛΟΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ ΙΗΣΟΥ in Romans 1:1 ". For this new consensus see Allen Dwight Callahan et al, *Slavery in Text and Interpretation* (Semeia 83/84; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1998).

[595] This is similar to the thesis put forth by I. A. H. Combes, *The Metaphor of Slavery in the Writings of the Early Church: From the New Testament to the Beginning of the Fifth Century* (JSNTSup 156; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 87-89.

[596] Isaiah 49.1-8. It certainly played a role in shaping his own understanding of his call is apostle to the gentiles, along with the other prominent servant passages in Isaiah (cf. Galatians 1.15—Isaiah 49.12; Corinthians 6.1-2—Isaiah 49.8; Romans 15.21—Isaiah 52.15; Philippians 2.16—Isaiah 49.4; Acts 13.47—Isaiah 49.6; Acts 26.18—Isaiah 42.7). The theme of God calling his servant/slave for ministry to the gentiles (and the diaspora as part of his covenant purpose) is certainly prominent both in Isaiah 49.1-8 and Paul's opening statement here in 1-7, which case it is presumably implying that Paul saw his ministry to the gentiles both as for fulfilling Israel's covenanted role (according to Isaiah), and as bringing to full effect Jesus' own role as a servant of YHWH; see James D. G. Dunn, *Romans*, 2 vols. (WBC 38b; Dallas: Word Books, 1988), 8.

[597] Cf. Joshua 14.7; 24.29; Ps 36; 77.70; 2 Esdres 9.11 1QpHab 2.9; 7.5. See also Sandnes, *Paul: One of the Prophets?*, 146-53. Cf. Dunn, *Romans*, 7, who notes that the using of this idea does not

of Scripture, explaining to them that what he writes must be viewed in continuity with the message which the prophets brought. This is a key component to Paul's ethos if he hopes to convince his Roman audience that he is competent to continue the message which the prophets started.

Furthermore Paul's employment of ἀφωπισμένος (perfect passive participle) refers to God's action in setting Paul apart for a specific task.[598] While Paul's commission closely resembles the way which Roman officials sometimes presented themselves and their offices in epistolary superscriptions, Paul's opening is more likely set in a certain official context by means of who he is called by, rather than by the mimicking of a Roman official.[599] The term may very well play upon Paul's pharisaic background, and if this is the case it is important to note here Paul would be ironically showing the reversal which has taken place because of the good news.[600] Paul as a Pharisee would have prided himself on his separation from the nations, yet because of the good news Paul is now set apart, called even, by God to bring this good news to the very nations which, before now, had not had a place in the promised redemption.

The Good News of God and the *raison d'etre* of the Pauline mission

After setting up a rather powerful ethos, Paul continues by explaining what governs his prophet-like ministry; namely the good news (εὐαγγέλιον) of God.[601] This section might be labeled an excursus, summarizing the content of this good

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necessarily imply that Paul saw himself as being like one of these great figures of Israel's past, but could simply be using it to indicate that his message had the same importance.

[598] Leander E. Keck, *Romans* (Abingdon New Testament Commentaries; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005).

[599] See for example Thorsteinsson, *Paul's Interlocutor in Romans 2*, 32.

[600] Matthew Black, *Romans* (New Century Bible; London: Oliphants, 1973), 20.

[601] On the establishment of Paul's authoritative status see Elliott, *The Rhetoric of Romans*, 70-77; Bengt Holmberg, *Paul and Power: The Structure of Authority in the Primitive Church as Reflected in the Pauline Epistles* (ConBNT 11; Lund: Gleerup, 1978), 76-77; Thorsteinsson, *Paul's Interlocutor in Romans 2*, 34; Weima, "Preaching the Gospel in Rome," 338-44.

news.[602] The formulation here, εἰς εὐαγγέλιον θεοῦ (God's good news), is interesting because this is the only *exordia* in Paul's letters that places the emphasis upon the good news instead of the fact that Paul is an apostle of Jesus Christ.[603] The reason that this is significant here is because it signals that the same God who has acted in the history of Israel is acting through the story of Jesus, again telling the audience that it is within the Scriptures of Israel that the antecedent of the good news is to be found.[604] Paul furthers this claim by declaring that the good news of God is that which was promised beforehand through the prophets and the Holy Scriptures.[605] It is here that we get an indication of what Paul intends as the intertextual encyclopedia for this letter. We find in this phrase what Riffaterre might term an ungrammaticality, an indeterminacy within the text which offers the readers a choice to either follow Paul in recognizing that this good news belongs to another textual system, offering a hermeneutical window that signals to the reader to look to another set of texts for meaning; or the readers can chose their own intertexts in order to discover meaning. Because Paul's readers are separated culturally from the context and the textual system that surrounds the production of this text, there is the real possibility that the readers will make their own leaps in interpretation, it is therefore doubly important that Paul clearly lay out in the threshold of this letter the interpretive matrix of the prophets.

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[602] On the presumption that this is a pre-Pauline christological confession see Robert Jewett, "The Redaction and Use of an Early Christian Confession in Romans 1:3-4," in *The Living Text*, ed. D.E. Groh (Lanham: University Press of America, 1985), 99-100; C. H. Dodd, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans* (MNTC; New York: Harper, 1932), 4-5.

[603] Jewett, *Romans*, 102.

[604] Paul here seeks to offer an interpretation of the past in order show the continuity of the Israelite scripture's with the good news of God in Jesus the Christ. Paul's arguments are meant to convince his audience of his interpretation of the collective memory of Israel. See the discussion in Philip F. Esler, *Conflict and Identity in Romans: The Social Setting of Paul's Letter* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 137.

[605] The placement of the presentation of the good news in the opening suggests that Paul had a specific reason to unpack what was meant by the phrase 'God's good news,' and that Paul's audience would have recognized that this section of Paul's letter would have held special weight for the following presentation. So Thorsteinsson, *Paul's Interlocutor in Romans 2*, 34-35.

This interpretative problem is even more difficult for the modern reader as we are separated both culturally and historically from the contexts that surround the production of the text. This is evident in the modern tendency to appropriate the phrase 'promised beforehand through the prophets' as a license to search the prophets for veiled proof texts in order to weave them into predictions of the crucifixion. But this phrase makes more sense when understood as the matrix of the text, driving the readers to discover what the prophets themselves had been promised.[606] Just as the prophets of the exile took the story(s) of Israel's exodus and sought to relate them to their new situation of exile and captivity in an effort to bring hope to the community, Paul, in turn, invokes the prophets of the exile calling into view a narrative of promise and hope that lacked clear resolution, placing the semiotic weight of his letter in the very story of restoration.[607] Like the prophets of the exile Paul has in view the multiple stories of Scripture which make up the drama of God's dealings with his people, but unlike the prophets Paul views those events through the lens offered to him by the death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, who has now become for Paul the cosmic Lord.[608] For Paul it was through the event of the cross that God was enacting the eschatological renewal that embraced the nations of the world.[609] This is precisely what it means for Paul to ground the good news in Israel's sacred text: Paul proposes to read the story of the scriptures as a narrative with no closure. It is within this context that the term εὐαγγέλιον reverberates with the prophets of old to form for Paul an essential part of the master plot of scripture.[610] Two particular passages that allude to the εὐαγγέλιον in the LXX seem pertinent for Paul's meaning:

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[606] It is important to see the good news as promised in the scriptures and not that the crucified messiah Jesus was predicted in them. See Keck, *Romans*, 42. And the pertinent discussion in, Mark D. Nanos, *The Mystery of Romans: The Jewish Context of Paul's Letter* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 227-29.

[607] See again Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel.* Of course this is one of many stories which make up the web of stories Paul and other early Jewish thinkers might have used to construct their understanding of God and the world which they lived. See the helpful essays in Bruce W. Longenecker, ed, *Narrative Dynamics in Paul: A Critical Assessment* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002), and the response by; Richard B. Hays, "Is Paul's Gospel Narratable?," *JSNT* 27.2 (2004): 217-39.

[608] For Paul and much of the early Christians it was the resurrection that established the Lordship of Christ, so Larry W. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 133; Richard N. Longenecker, *The Christology of Early Jewish Christianity* (Studies in Biblical Theology 17; London: S.C.M. Press, 1970), 128-40; Jürgen Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit: A Contribution to Messianic Ecclesiology* (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), 74.

[609] N. T. Wright, *What Saint Paul Really Said: Was Paul of Tarsus the Real Founder of Christianity?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 45; Posener, *Dictionary of Egyptian Civilization.* David C. Steinmetz, "Uncovering a Second Narrative: Detective Fiction and the Construction of Historical Method," in *The Art of Reading Scripture*, ed. Ellen F. Davis and Richard B. Hays (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 54-68,

> Go up reporting good news (ὁ εὐαγγαλιζομένος) to Zion upon the high mountain; raise your voice with strength. Report the good news (ὁ εὐαγγαλιζομένος) to Jerusalem, raise it, without fearing; say to the cities of Judah, Behold your God.[611]

And;

> As a season upon the mountains, as the feet of one reporting good news (εὐαγγαλιζομένου) of peace (εἰπήνης), as one bringing good news (εὐαγγελιζόμενος ἀγαθά): For I will make audible my salvation (σωτηπίαν), saying, O Zion your God shall reign. (Isa. 52.7)[612]

Both of these passages are of particular importance not just because of the echoed term εὐαγγελιζόμενος, but because as we have seen they are among the climactic statements of the narrative that make up Isaiah 40-55.[613] In the context of Isaiah 40-

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who envisions this process as the telling of a second narrative, which is not a new narrative, but a way of integrating new events into the first narrative in order to better make sense of it.

[610] In this respect the letter to the Romans is unlike any letter which Paul wrote; the sheer volume of direct quotations and the allusions of the scriptures of Israel are more prominent than in any other letter. According to Dietrich-Alex Koch, *Die Schrift als Zeuge des Evangeliums: Untersuchungen zur Verwendung und zum Verständnis der Schrift bei Paulus* (BHTh 69; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1986), 88, there are sixty-five Old Testament quotations of which fifty-six are explicitly marked. On the function of master plots see. H. Porter Abbott, *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 42-44.

[611] Isa. 40.9

[612] Isa. 52.7; It is no particular coincidence that when one examines the volume of quotations and allusions in the writings of Paul, it becomes evident that the prophecies of Second Isaiah are held to be integral to the interpretation of Paul's understanding of this narrative. See Richard B. Hays, "'Who Has Believed Our Message?' Paul's Reading of Isaiah" (1998), 205, who notes that out of thirty-one references to the book of Isaiah in the authentic Pauline letters ten of them are found in Isaiah 40-55, and out of the fifty allusions twenty-one point to Isaiah 40-55. Hays also reminds us that Paul himself would have been unaware of the modern tri-part division of Isaiah, yet it is clear that throughout Romans he gravitates to the section that modern scholarship calls Second Isaiah.

[613] See also Isaiah 60.6; 61.1

55, they both proclaim that YHWH will return to Zion and be enthroned as king, and that YHWH's return will signal the end of Israel's exile in Babylon. The good news is thus not a generalized message of comfort for the downcast; but the very specific end of exile for Israel.[614] Furthermore, as we have discussed earlier, the narrative of Isaiah 40-55 was itself a complex narrative about the enthronement of YHWH and the subsequent dethronement of the pagan gods; about the victory of Israel and the fall of Babylon; about the nations coming to worship the god of Israel; and about the arrival of the servant king who would bring peace and justice.[615] The texts here speak to the time when the Jewish God would act to deliver his people, and then, and only then, would the gods of the nations finally be defeated. It is only then that YHWH would set up his own king as the true ruler of humanity, his true earthly representative, that all other kingdoms would be confronted with their rightful cosmic lord.[616]

This rhetoric would not have been missed especially when proclaimed in the heart of the Roman Imperial power. The good news in the Roman world, as discussed earlier, would have been heard in light of the ruler's announcement and accession to the throne within the matrix of the classical mythology of the Golden Age, signaling that this new ruler was the one who might bring about, or merely sustain, the *Pax Romana*.[617] The point here is not that the Paul is concerned with the politics of displacing the power of Rome, but rather is concerned with the effects this power has upon those who claim to be followers of Jesus the cosmic Lord. Paul by linking the good news with the enthronement of YHWH is necessarily calling upon the dethronement of all other the principalities and powers including those that rule from Rome.[618]

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[614] N. T. Wright, "Gospel and Theology in Galatians," in *Gospel in Paul: Studies in Corinthians, Galatians and Romans for Richard N. Longenecker*, ed. L. Ann Jervis and Peter Richardson (JSNTSup 108; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 224. Compare these passages with those found in Pss. Sol. 11.

[615] Wright, "Gospel and Theology in Galatians," 227. Cf. the Isaianic polemics against idolatry in the previous chapter.

[616] Käsemann, *Romans*, 7; Wright, "Gospel and Theology in Galatians," 228.

[617] N. T. Wright, "The Letter to the Romans," in *The New Interpreter's Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002), 415.

Davidic descent and the Son of God: the role of the flesh and the spirit of holiness in God's good news. Paul continues with his powerfully and densely compact theological excursus further explaining the contents of what the good news entails:

> ...concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh (σάρκα) and was designated the Son of God with power (ἐν δυνάμει) according to the spirit of holiness (πνεῦμα ἁγιωσύνης) by resurrection (ἀναστάσεως) from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord (κυρίου).[619]

Often the notion that this good news concerning God's son, who was descended from David according to the flesh, has been seen as Paul's attempt to provide proof that Jesus has met the 'requirements', so to speak, of being the Messiah.[620] But the contemporary Jewish conception(s) of the Messiah were by and large triumphalistic, often describing one who would renew and rebuild the temple, defeat the pagans, rescue Israel, and bring God's justice to the world.[621] Curiously, anyone who died without accomplishing these things, particularly one who attacked the temple, died at the hands of the pagans, and left the world unjust; would obviously be deemed a failed Messiah.[622] This general contention leads us again to a possible ungrammaticality in this text. At the heart of understanding what exactly this might be we need to look more closely at the antithesis found within the text concerning flesh and spirit.[623] On the negative side, the text seems to devalue the significance of the Davidic origins of the Messiah. The point Paul seems to be driving at here is that the Messiah is more than a biological descendant of David, not that he is other than a descendant of David.

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[618] However, while it seems clear that Paul does not seek to offer a rival politics of the state, he does nonetheless offer a rival ethics, see Stanley Hauerwas, *The Peaceable Kingdom: A Primer in Christian Ethics* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983).

[619] Even if this material is pre-Pauline, it is most certainly used here by Paul to convey his purposes, and must not be seen as merely a common text that would put Paul and his audience on common ground. See the discussion in Jewett, *Romans*, 103-04.

[620] In some Jewish thought, it is claimed, the Davidic king represented Israel so that what is true of him is true his people. So to belong to Israel, in the past, could conceivably be thought of as to be 'in David' or in the 'son of Jesse', so Wright, "Romans," 416. See also A. E. Harvey, *Jesus and the Constraints of History* (London: Duckworth, 1982), 76-78.

[621] See John J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star: The Messiahs of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Ancient Literature* (The Anchor Bible Reference Library; New York: Doubleday, 1995), 12, 194, 209; Sigmund Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, trans. D.R. Thomas, 2 vols. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1962), 333-45.

Paul's use of the lineage of David, looked upon through the matrix of the text, de-centers the importance of Davidic descent, negating it whilst still conserving it. The democratization of the promises bestowed upon David to all of Israel in the texts of the prophets leads Paul to the supposition that a Messiah who is merely political is not what the good news of God in Jesus was about.[624] It is important for Paul to make this clear as the political polemic imbedded within his rhetoric is not intended to bring about a revolution over against Rome. Rather Paul insists that the redemptive power of Christ is derived from his spiritual authority, as seen by his resurrection, rather than his Davidic origin.[625] Paul seeks to contextualize this good news within the apocalyptic expectations of the dawn of the new age, the age promised to the prophets of the exile, so that the salvation brought about by the Son of God is seen within the same pneumatic experiences as those promises that describe the use of the Spirit of God to describe new life, especially within the matrix of the exile.[626]

Paul continues to place emphasis on Jesus as the Son of God by highlighting that it was through the resurrection that the messianic candidate was installed in power and exalted as the Cosmic Lord. He does this with the pregnant phrase, 'Jesus Christ our Lord' (1.4),[627] calling into question the prevailing conception of what the Messiah was to be (i.e., not a political earthly king), the impetus for such a recasting being Jesus' resurrection from the dead.[628]

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[622] Wright, "Romans," 418.

[623] It is our opinion that too often this antithesis is explained away by the claim that this is an ancient Christian hymn, popular in the communities of Roman, and thus inserted by Paul to garner support for the contents of his letter.

[624] It is interesting that Israel is depicted as God's adopted son in the scriptures of Israel at the time of the exodus, and when the exodus is used to plead for subsequent deliverance. See Exod. 4.22; Jer 31.9; and Hos 11.1.

[625] Jewett, *Romans*, 106.

[626] See Ezek 37.5, 9-10, 14; Joel 3.1-5, as discussed in, Wright, "Romans," 419.

The eschatological ingathering of the nations: a glimpse of the end of exile. Paul concludes the compact excursus on the good news by highlighting his own role in proclaiming this good news to the nations, stressing that it is through:

> Jesus Christ our Lord, that we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith (εἰς ὑπακοὴν πίστεως) among all the nations (ἐν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν) for the sake of his name, including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,

For Paul it is because of the cosmic lordship of Jesus that the obedience of faith among the nations is even a possibility. Paul here envisions the fulfillment of the covenant (Gen 15), namely that the nations will be blessed through Abraham as a direct result of Jesus' death and resurrection on the cross.[629]

Here we follow Hultgren in translating the term ἔθνεσιν as 'nations' instead of 'Gentiles', and we do this for a couple of reasons. First, since the context of the excursus calls for the reader to find the antecedent of the good news in the Scriptures of Israel, it is more natural to import the language of the prophets, rather than to use the dichotomous term of Gentiles.[630] Second, the adjective 'all' should not be missed. Paul is writing to Rome, a metropolitan city where 'all the nations' are gathered; it thus not be fitting for Paul to speak of the Christians at Rome as Gentiles alone, because it does not convey the various ethnic groups that existed within a huge metropolis.[631] Third, the Greek term itself (nominative plural ἔθνη) often has a broader meaning than simply that of a non-Judean individual; it can refer to 'nations' or 'peoples', and when it does, it has a corporate meaning. So when Paul speaks of himself as commissioned to bring the good news ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν one must ask whether that means that he was to evangelize among non-Judeans (individuals), or whether the phrase means primarily that he was to evangelize among 'the nations' known to him (non-Judean peoples).[632] We believe that Paul was speaking of corporate people groups here, primarily because the apostle Paul refers to himself in his letter to the Romans explicitly as an apostle to the nations (ἐθνῶν ἀπόστολος, 11:13), and in Galatians he speaks of his commission to proclaim Christ among the nations (1:16) and of his being entrusted with the good news for their sake (2:7-9).[633] The question conceivably becomes whether or not Paul has any more room for proclaiming the good news (and founding congregations) in the eastern sphere. As Hultgren notes:

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[627] Käsemann, *Romans*, 8,12; Byrne, *Romans*, 39; Wright, "Romans," 416.

[628] James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 209. It is also important to note that Paul probably did not expect everyone to come to this interpretation from a reading of the texts themselves, that is why elsewhere he uses μυστερίον language to describe such events, see James D. G. Dunn, *Jesus, Paul, and the Law: Studies in Mark and Galatians* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1990), 90.

[629] Although there is some debate upon what it meant for the nations to be blessed through Abraham, it is within the scope of interpretation to presume that the gathering of the nations in worship of YHWH in the Isaianic corpus could have been re-read as what the covenant looked forward to all along. Cf. Otto Michel, *Der Brief an die Römer* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1966), 365, who argues that Isaiah 66 might be the impetus for Paul's own understanding of his apostleship.

[630] Cf. Isa 42.1; 52.5; 55.4. Also it is important to note that the term Gentile is usually used as a pejorative term, when from the point of view of the Judean.

> Certainly he has not preached the good news to every single person. Certainly there is plenty of room for evangelism among individual Gentiles (and Jews) throughout those areas. But Paul says that there is no more room for evangelism in those regions. The key to understanding what Paul has written is that he does not think here in terms of individual persons but instead of 'nations.'[634]

The driving force for Paul's mission to the nations must reside in the eschatological expectations expressed in the Scriptures of Israel concerning the inclusion of the 'nations' into the people of God. Already in Gen 12:3 the promise is given to Abraham, 'in you shall all the families of the earth be blessed'. Furthermore, Gen17.5 is quoted later on in Paul's argument (Rom 4.17) within the context of making the case for the inclusion of the nations within the new humanity apart from circumcision.[635] Paul, before his call, would have no doubt believed that God would one day act to fulfill his covenant with Israel, and that the promises of the prophets as a result would come to fruition, but whether this understanding would have included the inclusion of the nations is unclear, although it remains a possibility. Paul after his call and commissioning to the nations, however, maintained many of the same convictions, but found them transformed by the belief that God had already acted in Christ to fulfill the covenant, resulting in this 'new creation'. Consequently, the nations are now summoned to share in the blessings promised to Israel, as Paul concludes from his re-reading of the prophets.[636] In linking the fulfillment of the new exodus promises with the ingathering of the nations into the people of God, Paul may be both echoing both Psalm 2 and Isaiah 49, where the exaltation of YHWH's servant results in his worship from all the nations.[637] Paul may also be comparing the very concept of obedience with the central ideal in the Jewish self understanding; the *Shema'* (Deut 6.4).[638] The *Shema'* served as a constant reminder of the special status and to the responsibility of obedience. This obedience was viewed as the only proper response to God's covenant of grace. The point would then be that Paul conceives of the faithful response of the nations to the good news as the fulfillment of God's covenant purpose through Israel. And more precisely that this is the start of the eschatological inauguration of the new age, thus the nations obedience is the equivalent of Israel's obligation under the covenant.[639] The phrase 'obedience of faith' would not only be designed to evoke the biblical sense of Israel as an obedient nation, but also emphasize that the nations of the world, formerly characterized by disobedience and a refusal to glorify God, are now being drawn together, through the good news, into the sphere of obedience which is the mark of the eschatological people of God.[640] The turn of the ages affected by the Christ event for Paul meant that the idea of separation from the nations has come to an end in the Cosmic Lordship of Christ.[641]

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[631] Hultgren, "Paul's Mission to the Gentiles," 24-25; Michel, *Der Brief an die Römer*, 42; James M. Scott, *Paul and the Nations: The Old Testament and Jewish Background of Paul's Mission to the Nations with Special Reference to the Destination of Galatians* (WUNT 84; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1995), 122.

[632] Hultgren, "Paul's Mission to the Gentiles," 24.

[633] Hultgren, "Paul's Mission to the Gentiles," 21.

[634] Hultgren, "Paul's Mission to the Gentiles," 27; Käsemann, *Romans*, 395.

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[635] Hultgren, "Paul's Mission to the Gentiles," 29-30.

[636] See the helpful discussion in Longenecker, *The Triumph of Abraham's God*, 20; Terence L. Donaldson, *Paul and the Gentiles: Remapping the Apostle's Convictional World* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), 293-307.

[637] See Leslie C. Allen, "The Old Testament Background of (Προ)Οριζειν in the New Testament," *NTS* 17 (1970-71): 104-8. See also, Ps 110.

[638] As he most certainly does in Rom 3.29-31. On the *Shema'* in Paul see Nanos, *The Mystery of Romans*, 179-201.

[639] Dunn, *Romans*, 18; Don B. Garlington, *Faith, Obedience, and Perseverance: Aspects of Paul's Letter to the Romans* (WUNT 79; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1994), 329-55.

Paul carried on a mission as an apostle to the nations not simply because he had good news to share, but because he had been commissioned to do so.[642] Since the redemptive work of God in Christ is cosmic in scope, and since peoples of all the nations are to enter into this new humanity, Paul conceived of his mission as world-embracing. The communities that he sought to form on earth accordingly must mirror what is to come. Good news and a mission for the Jews alone, or one that requires circumcision and the keeping of the law on the part of the nations, in effect, conversion first to Judaism as a precondition to entering the people of God, is incomplete and, in effect, a denial of the Paul's understanding of the good news itself.[643] The new age, which has already dawned with the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, is the messianic kingdom, and that kingdom includes in principle all nations in its scope, as the eschatological promises of the prophets declared it would. Those promises had been set forth in the Scriptures of Israel, and they were foundational for Paul's self understanding and mission to the nations. Paul set out to proclaim the good news among the Gentile nations and thereby to establish communities among them as the 'first fruits' of this new creation. Or to use other cultic language, Paul could speak of his work as rendering a priestly service, preparing an offering acceptable to God consisting of believers from among the nations, representative of all the inhabitants of the world. The unity of all humankind in Christ, which will come into its own at the end, was thus being initiated at the dawn of the new age.[644]

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[640] Byrne, *Romans*, 40.

[641] Dunn, *Romans*, 9.

[642] It is most likely that this phrase probably denoted two things at the same time, on the one hand, God's saving grace, which even Paul had to experience, and his commission. Cf. Jervis, *The Purpose of Romans*, 76.

[643] Why this was the case for Paul is bound up in his understanding of the Christ event.

Paul ends the excursus with a profound statement that this good news is for the 'sake of His name'. Here Paul concludes this densely compact excursus by echoing Isaiah 52.1 (which itself looks forward to Romans 2.24), stating that the good news is the fulfillment of the covenant embodied in the obedience of the nations, since this reverses one of the main consequences for the exile in the first place. Isaiah 51.2 indicates that the nations blasphemed YHWH as a result of his seeming defeat at the hands of the nations' gods. The exile not only put into question the power and promises of YHWH to his people, but was the major impetus of the nations in relegating YHWH to a mere tribal god, and a defeated one at that. Paul boldly indicates that in the death and resurrection of Jesus the new eschatological age is inaugurated; the nations no longer blaspheme YHWH but are now brought into a sphere of obedience and worship which is the natural consequence according to Paul's understanding of the Isaianic program. Thus for Paul the enemies of Israel have been defeated, not in battle, nor in humiliation, like what was expected, but rather through incorporation.

Paul's expression of thanksgiving and mutuality

In Romans 1.8-12 we see Paul continuing with his exordium after a brief but pregnant excursus. Building upon the foundation laid in the address formula, Paul expands upon his exigency with the conventional thanksgiving clause of his greeting.[645] Paul's aim in this section is to build support and win the hearts and minds of his audience; he does this by carefully moving forward with a spirit of mutuality, first by appealing to their emotions and then by expressing his own.[646] Paul includes the Romans as those called to participate in this good news, those who like Paul were called to belong to Christ, and who like Israel were called to be saints. It is precisely Paul's point in emphasizing the faithfulness of the nations, and that their faithfulness is proclaimed around the world that gives the pragmatic proof that the exile is indeed over, and the eschatological new age has been inaugurated, proof that Paul intends his audience to use in overcoming their own conflicts.[647] The Romans have now been incorporated into the people of God, and this is definitive proof that the Isaianic program, as interpreted by Paul, has indeed been put into effect.

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[644] Hultgren, "Paul's Mission to the Gentiles," 43-44.

[645] John L. White, "Saint Paul and the Apostolic Letter Tradition," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 45 (1983): 437-39.

Paul Concludes his powerful exordium in 1.13-17, with a 'disclosure formula' (v. 13), alerting the readers that what follows is a transition to the body of the letter and ought to be paid special attention.[648] It is here that the deep exigency underling the exordium of the letter comes to its fullest expression, an expression we will pick up more fully in the next chapter. Briefly, these verses mark the function of the good new as the climactic fulfillment of the Jewish scriptures, announcing God's claim upon all of creation, demanding the obedience of faith, both from within the new communities and those outside too.[649]

Conclusion: The Threshold of Romans and the Role of Centrifugal Intertextuality in Creating the Model Reader

Thus in the short amount of space that Paul fleshes out his exordium, he is giving hints to his audience exactly what is expected of them and firmly establishing that a certain amount of background information is indeed needed in order to understand this text.[650] In this respect the letter to the Romans exhibits a high threshold. As Phillips contends, 'high thresholds suggest closed texts –texts written either with a specific audience in mind, or an audience who is willing to learn.'[651] In order for these high thresholds to be overcome the audience must be willing to approach the threshold, to read the text, to actualize the narrative world beyond, and to bring the necessary meaning to it.[652] The audience must get their hands dirty, as it were, if meaning is to be wrestled from the marks on the paper. As we have argued the opening of the text is the first opportunity for a reader to encounter this new world, its setting and situation, the characters which populate it and the ways which they will interact with one another to form the purpose of the writing. The impressions gained at this point will be crucial for what follows, since they will set the tone which the reader will view the rest of the narrative.[653]

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[646] Esler, *Conflict and Identity in Romans*, 137; Thomas H. Tobin, *Paul's Rhetoric in Its Contexts: The Argument of Romans* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2004), 80. Elliott, *The Rhetoric of Romans*, 77-79, notes that this language is indicative of Paul creating a relationship rhetorically that in other places would have been created by prior preaching.

[647] Contra Thurén, *Derhetorizing Paul*, 36-44, who views the rhetoric here as mere hyperbole.

[648] Elliott, *The Rhetoric of Romans*, 81; Terence Y. Mullins, "A Literary Form in the New Testament," *Novum Testamentum* 7 (1984): 44-50.

[649] Elliott, *The Rhetoric of Romans*, 85.

This invitation stands, of course, whether the readers know the background or not. If they want to engage with this text, they need to acquire the relevant knowledge.[654] We have attempted to show that by approaching the text with a theory of centrifugal intertextuality, the text attempts to control its own decoding, by seeking to be interpreted within the light of prophecies found within the Israelite Scriptures, and in particular with the prophecy of the new exodus found within Second Isaiah. Ultimately it is Scripture that informs Paul's argument of the good news, and it is within the sphere of this new world which the nations are called to partake that Paul is commissioned. The letter of Romans is Paul's attempt to show that the good news creates a new reality, where new standards apply, where new rules are to be followed, and where new habits are to be formed. The world which Paul used to live, and the world which the nations used to live, were characterized by many different things. It is Paul's aim for the people of Rome to partake in this new creation, to live out the good news over against the competing good news of Rome, in order to secure for himself a base to continue his mission to Spain.[655]

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[650] Stanley's persuasive argument concerning the literacy rates around the Mediterranean and in Rome ought not to concern us, namely because Paul's creation of the model reader (or hearer) can conceivably be done within a community that reads Scripture and not merely as individuals. This is true especially if we suppose that Paul imagined that his letters would have been studied and discussed rather than just read once. See Stanley, *Arguing with Scripture*, 136-42.

[651] Phillips, *The Prologue of the Fourth Gospel*, 14.

[652] Phillips, *The Prologue of the Fourth Gospel*, 3. Eco notes that readers who are either incapable of recognizing the intertextual quotations in a text are excluded from truly understanding of the text. So Eco, "Intertextual Irony and Levels of Reading," 214.

[653] Emma Kafalenos and others call this privileging of what comes first in a discourse the 'primacy effect'. See Abbott, *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative*, 81-82.

[654] Alexander, "L'Intertextualité et la question des lecteurs," 213.

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[655] See the similar discussion about Paul in Longenecker, *The Triumph of Abraham's God*, 37.

CHAPTER SEVEN
THE INTERTEXTUAL ROLE OF SCRIPTURE IN THE PIVOTAL TRANSITION TEXT OF ROMANS 1.13-17

As mentioned in the previous chapter we concur with Elliott in our understanding of Romans 1.13-17 as still part of Paul's exordium (Rom 1. 1-17), accepting that Romans 1.13 is a 'disclosure formula', which functions as transition to the letter's body, while at the same time alerting the audience to the significance of these few verses.[656] Since this is part of the exordium it is still functioning as part of the introduction, and thus it is still part of the heuristic in Paul is attempting to form the model readers, so that they may fully understand the text.[657] In going against the long standing tradition of seeing Romans 1.16-17 as the thesis statement of this letter, we are not trying to undermine the importance of this section, but rather offering a pragmatic reason on why 1.16-17 ought not be isolated from 1.1-15.[658] Too often in the interpretation of Romans 1.16-17 is claimed as the thesis statement, with the net effect of relegating 1.1-15 as an unimportant aside in the interpretation of the letter. It is our aim in this chapter to show the importance of interpreting 1.1-17 as a unit, and how this interpretation can benefit the interpretation of the letter as a whole.

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[656] On the use of disclosure formulas see the discussion in Terence Y. Mullins, "Petition as a Literary Form," *Novum Testamentum* 5 (1962): 48; Mullins, "A Literary Form in the New Testament," 45-47; E. Randolph Richards, *The Secretary in the Letters of Paul* (WUNT 42; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1991), 137-40, 204; Jack T. Sanders, "The Transition from Opening Epistolary Thanksgiving to Body in the Letters of the Pauline Corpus," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 81 (1962): 353; White, "Saint Paul and the Apostolic Letter Tradition," 439.

[657] The choice to treat it separately from the previous chapter is done only because of its climactic importance as the end of the introduction and the prelude to the beginning of the body of Paul's argument.

[658] Romans 1.16-17 is taken by most commentators to be the programmatic statement for the entire epistle. See, e.g., Käsemann, *Romans*, 30; Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 64-65. In rhetorical studies this is known as the *propositio* of the letter. See, e.g., Jean Noël Aletti, "La présence d'un modèle rhétorque en Romains. Son rôle et son importance," *Biblica* 71 (1998): 1-24; David Hellholm, "Amplificatio in the Macro-Structure of Romans," in *Rhetoric and the New Testament: Essays from the 1992 Heidelberg Conference*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Thomas H. Olbricht (JSNTSup 90; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 137; Robert Jewett, "Following the Argument in Romans," *Word and World* 6 (1986): 382-89; Wuellner, "Greek Rhetoric and Pauline Argumentation," 177-88; Wuellner, "Paul's Rhetoric of Argumentation in Romans," 128-46.

Romans 1.16-17 as Part of the Exordium

Since it is important to our argument to show that the exordium extends through v. 17, and the Habakkuk passage quoted by Paul is part of the centrifugal intertextuality, it will be beneficial to develop the reasons for this analysis in detail, both thematically and syntactically.

> I desire (θέλω) you (ὑμᾶς) to know (ἀγνοεῖν), brothers and sisters, that (ὅτι) I have often intended to come to you – but have thus far been prevented – in order that I may reap some harvest among you as I have among the rest of the nations, Greeks and to barbarians, wise and to the foolish. I am bound, then to proclaim the good news (εὐαγγελίσασθαι) with eagerness to you who are also in Rome.[659]

Thematically, Rom 1.13 finishes the thought expressed at the end of v. 10, explaining now in detail the reasons why Paul has not been able to make his long desired journey to Rome. Paul here continues his efforts to supplement the rather powerful ethos, which he started in v. 1, with a more pastoral one, specifically by making known his concern for the Romans and by expressing his desire to minister among them.[660] Paul clearly establishes that his desire to come to Rome is bound up in the apostolic mandate of bringing about the obedience of faith to all the nations.[661] This mandate, he explains, he has been attending to elsewhere, which is the very reason that has delayed him from personally coming to Rome.[662]

Structurally, the argument for the inclusion of 1.16-17 in the exordium can be made on syntactical grounds. Firstly, the πρῶτον μέν phrase that begins v. 8, corresponds with the δέ of v.13 (after two subordinate clauses signaled by γάρ in v. 9

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[659] For this translation see Runar M. Thorsteinsson, "Paul's Missionary Duty towards Gentiles in Rome: A Note on the Punctuation and Syntax of Rom 1.13-15," *New Testament Studies* 48 (2002): 539-44.

[660] The use of καὶ ἐκωλύθην here is meant to convey Paul's deep desire to be present with the Romans.

[661] Cf. Gal 1.16

[662] Elliott, *The Rhetoric of Romans*, 81.

and v. 11), which is thematically answered in vv. 14 and 15.[663] Furthermore, grammatically v. 17 forms a subordinate clause to v. 16, as v. 16 is subordinate to v. 15.[664] Thus severing v. 13-15 from 1.16-17 would not only ignore the syntactical γάρ markers (twice in v.16, once in both v.17, and v.18) that run throughout this passage; but would according to Elliott, consequently 'neutralize the rhetorical dimension of the passage as a whole.'[665]

That vv. 14-17 ought to be seen as part of the exordium is furthered by the presence of a disclosure formula in v.13. Disclosure formulas usually start with a verb of disclosure (usually, θέλω), continue by identifying the persons addressed, a noetic verb in the infinitive (as ἀγνοεῖν), and conclude with the information wished to be disclosed (usually introduced with, ὅτι); all elements which are present in v. 13.[666] The function of the disclosure formula is to transition from the thanksgiving (also part of the exordium) to the body of the letter, establishing the topic of mutual concern that will be expanded upon in the letter's body.[667]

It is within this transition that the deep exigency underling the exordium of the letter comes to its fullest expression, while simultaneously giving further clues to the audience about the key themes which they need to familiarize themselves in order to become the model reader. It is here that Paul highlights a number of significant features of the good news which he desires to bring to the Romans. We will attempt to discuss these features thematically, seeking to treat the densely pregnant passage of vv. 16-17 only after a summary of vv.13-15. Firstly, we will look at the contents of the good news. Secondly, we will look at how Paul delineates who this message of good news is intended. And thirdly, we will look at the results this good news will have for the Romans. We will look at each of these briefly below.

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[663] Thorsteinsson, "Paul's Missionary Duty," 546 n. 13. Consequently, Anderson, *Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Paul*, 185, remarks that syntactically v. 15 makes up the propositio of the letter as a whole.

[664] Paul J. Achtemeier, *Romans* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1985), 35. *Contra* Dunn, *Romans*, 1.38, who understands the γάρ as an introductory marker.

[665] Elliott, *The Rhetoric of Romans*, 82. However, the γάρ in used in vs. 18 is used as a transition to the body of the letter.

[666] See, Mullins, "A Literary Form in the New Testament," 47-8; Richards, *The Secretary in the Letters of Paul*, 204.

[667] Mullins, "A Literary Form in the New Testament," 46-47; Sanders, "The Transition from Opening Epistolary Thanksgiving to Body in the Letters of the Pauline Corpus," 348; John L. White, "The Introductory Formulae in the Body of the Pauline Letter," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 90 (1971): 91-93.

What is the good news?

Paul further expands upon the good news in the climactic section of the exordium, and rhetorically speaking, this letter is what Paul would have personally preached had he been able to make it to Rome.[668] It is clear that when Paul uses the term εὐαγγελίσασθαι (v. 14) he is primarily referring to the content of the εὐαγγέλιον.[669] This assumes the information already set forth in his excurses of 1.2-6; namely, that the good news is the proclamation that Jesus the Christ is Lord. Expanding upon that here Paul explains that good news offers the Romans strength and encouragement (1.11-12); to jump ahead a little, he states that it is the power of God to bring about salvation (1.16), it is the definitive manifestation of God's justice (1.17), and it is the revelation of divine wrath against human wickedness and impiety (1.18). All of these elements for Paul are bound up in the promises made to the prophets, which we will discuss at length below.

One of the interesting questions that arises when studying Paul's presentation of the good news, is why would Paul insist upon proclaiming the good news in a location presumably already familiar with it, especially when he already claims his audience has a reputation for faithfulness (see 1.8).[670] Is Paul simply flattering his audience in order to create enough rhetorical exigency necessary to sway them?[671] This potential problem is resolved if we understand that for Paul the good news did not only entail the power God for salvation, but also the power of God necessary to continually live out a cruciform life.[672] Although not stated here, salvation for Paul is only possible through the power of God made available to the community through the gifts given to it by the Spirit, and the power of the good news is essential to these gifts.[673]

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[668] Stanley, *Arguing with Scripture*, 3.

[669] See, e.g., Rom 10.14-18; 15.18-21.

[670] See the discussion in Günther Klein, "Paul's Purpose in Writing the Epistle to the Romans," in *The Romans Debate*, ed. Karl P. Donfried (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1991), 29-43

[671] See the discussion in Thurén, *Derhetorizing Paul*, 36-44.

Who is this good news for?

Picking up on our previous discussion of the good news in Rom 1.2, Paul is continuing to expand upon the good news in respect to the promises given to the prophets, namely that of the new exodus, and the end of exile. It is here that Paul reaffirms to his audience that his mandate is to proclaim the good news to the nations, which he has already reaped a harvest, which itself is, in part, a result of the way Paul understands the fulfillment of the new exodus promise.[674] Paul elaborates upon this by further describing these nations, using rather stereotypical language, illustrated by his focus on the antithesis of the word pairs Greek/Barbarian and wise/foolish.[675] Paul here further breaks down the nations into cultured and non-cultured subgroups, perhaps causing his audience to categorize themselves in regards to one or the other.[676] The terminology was common in Greco-Roman literature; Jewett notes that the, 'triumph of Rome over the barbarians was celebrated in public art and monuments, in victory parades, in the gladiatorial

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[672] Esler, *Conflict and Identity in Romans*, 138.

[673] Elliott, *The Rhetoric of Romans*, 84. Another closely related problem is the potential discrepancy between Paul's words in Rom 1.15 and 15.20, i.e. between his stated 'eagerness' to proclaim the good news in Rome and his canon of not proclaiming the good news 'where Christ has been named'. Since most scholars assume that it is Paul's belief that, 'Christ has [already] been named' in Rome, attempts to adjust the text in 1.15 to Paul's canon in 15.20 are not infrequent. This problem is lessened when we view Paul's cannon on referring to people groups instead of individuals, and since Rome is essential to his further ministries in Spain, the problems are not so crystallized. See the discussion in Donfried, *The Romans Debate*.

[674] While the good news refers, in short, to God bringing the world to rights, it naturally includes all nations, including Judeans and other ethnic Jews, as well as all creation; that however does not negate that Paul had a specific mandate as the apostle to the nations.

[675] Which in the bilingual context of Rome is equivalent to Greco-Roman. See Fréderic Godet, *Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1977), 89.

[676] Keck, *Romans*, 49.

games, and on coins'.[677] This antithesis was a basic part of imperial propaganda and an important element to the imperial worldview, which we will comment on more latter. No doubt the Romans would have placed themselves within the wise and Greek category, since the barbarians were viewed as, 'inhuman, ferocious, arrogant, weak, warlike, discordant, and unstable'; all characteristics that were seen as the polar opposites of the Greco-Roman virtues.[678] At least part of the reason why Paul uses such language, is his intention to identify with his non-Judean audience.[679] Even when Paul speaks of the good news being for the Judean first he is more than likely speaking chronologically,[680] because the idea that the good news is for the ethnic Jew is fairly obvious, what is particularly surprising in Paul's discourse is the insistence that it is also for the nations.[681] Paul's rhetoric here is meant to highlight the particular advantages the good news has for his non-Jewish implied audience.[682] The key to Paul's thought here is his particular interpretation of Jewish messianic expectation.[683] Although he reminds them that the promises of God were historically for ethnic Jews, he is explaining to them that through Jesus Christ, they now have a share in the liberating power.[684] Paul's insistence on the good news being available for the nations means that the end was at hand, and that it was time for the nations to enter the people of God, just as the prophets had said.

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[677] Jewett, *Romans*, 131.

[678] See Yves Albert Dauge, *Le Barbare: Recherches Sur La Conception Romaine De La Barbarie Et De La Civilisation* (Collection Latomus 176; Bruxelles: Latomus, 1981), 472-73. as quoted in Jewett, *Romans*, 131.

[679] Johannes N. Vorster, "Strategies of Persuasion in Romans 1.16-17," in *Rhetoric and the New Testament: Essays from the 1992 Heidelberg Conference*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Thomas H. Olbricht (JSNTSup 90; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 160.

[680] Dunn, *Romans*, 40; D. Fraiken, "The Rhetorical Function of the Jews in Romans," in *Anti-Judaism in Early Christianity*, ed. Peter Richardson and David M. Granskou (Studies in Christianity and Judaism 2; Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1986), 96; J. A. Ziesler, *Paul's Letter to the Romans* (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1989), 69.

[681] Vorster, "Strategies of Persuasion in Romans 1.16-17," 160.

[682] See again Thorsteinsson, *Paul's Interlocutor in Romans 2*, 100-22.

[683] W. D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism: Some Rabbinic Elements in Pauline Theology*, 4th ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), xxxiv. E. P. Sanders, *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 56-57 n 63. That Paul interpreted the Scriptures of Israel through an eschatological lens ought not surprise us. Although coming to a different conclusion, the Qumran exegetes also viewed the Scriptures of Israel through an eschatological lens. See, James A. Sanders, "Habakkuk in Qumran, Paul, and the Old Testament," in *Paul and the Scriptures of Israel*, ed. Craig A. Evans and James A. Sanders (JSNTSup 83; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 107.

What the good news does?

For Paul it is clear that in announcing the good news he is announcing God's claim upon the whole of creation, and it requires obedience and faithfulness.[685] It is here that the God who is in the process of bringing back the fallen world into his claim, setting the world to rights, is the same God who has set apart Paul as the instrument of that claim towards the nations, and by calling the nations into the sphere of Christ's Lordship he both demands and creates holiness.[686] For Paul, the good news is precisely the promises written beforehand to the prophets, that the non-Judean nations are now included into the people of God, marking off the end of exile, because Jesus is Lord.[687] For Paul, with the inclusion of the nations into the people of God, the point of the good news for all humanity is that they live how God intends; that is to say, the telos of the good news is ethics.

The Good News as the Apocalypse of God's Climactic Justice

With this general understanding of the good news, and the importance of its role in Paul's exordium, we can begin to look in more depth not only the rich allusions to Israel's Scripture that permeate the climax of Paul's exordium in 1.16-17, but also at Paul's first use of quoted Scripture.

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[684] Vorster, "Strategies of Persuasion in Romans 1.16-17," 161.

[685] Elliott, *The Rhetoric of Romans*, 85.

[686] Elliott, *The Rhetoric of Romans*, 83-84.

[687] If the nations are incorporated into the people of God, logically there can be no more national exile; however it is not clear that Paul had this logical deduction in mind. On this eschatological mission to all the nations, see Nils A. Dahl, *Studies in Paul: Theology for the Early Christian Mission* (Minneapolis: Augsburg 1977), 73.

> For I am not ashamed (ἐπαισχύνομαι) of the good news (εὐαγγέλιον); it is the power (δύναμις) of God for salvation (σωτηρίαν) to everyone who has faith, to the Jew, obviously yes, but especially the Greek (Ἕλληνι).[688] For in it the vindicating justice (δικαιοσύνη) of God is revealed from God's faithfulness (covenant promises) to (man's response in) faithfulness (ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν);[689] as it is written, 'The one who is just will live by faith' (ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται).

The Shame and the Power

Paul finishes this densely rich section of his exordium by boldly proclaiming that he is not ashamed of the good news that has been entrusted to him to preach. This statement seems to indicate that he had every reason to be ashamed of this good news. Not only was the good news a message that took the shame and honor ethic of the culture which he lived and turned it on its ear, but it was a message of a crucified messiah, which for all intents and purposes, as we have remarked previously, signified a failed Messiah.[690] But it was also good news that at least pragmatically displaced Israel and gave preference to the wicked nations; an idea that from a Judean perspective seemed to call into question the very justice of

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[688] For this interpretation of οὐ μόνον....ἀλλά, see Gaston, *Paul and the Torah*, 118; Vorster, "Strategies of Persuasion in Romans 1.16-17," 161 n. 10.

[689] For this interpretation see Dunn, *Romans*, 44, 48. See also, Charles L. Quarles, "From Faith to Faith: A Fresh Examination of the Prepositional Series in Romans 1:17," *Novum testamentum* 45 (2003): 17, 21.

[690] Bruno Blumenfeld, *The Political Paul* (JSNTSup 210; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 311-12, notes that implicit in Paul's declaration that he is 'not ashamed' is that the good news had been the source for public scorn. On how the categories of honor and shame played themselves out in primitive Christianity, see Gerd Theissen, *A Theory of Primitive Christian Religion* (London: SCM, 1999), 61-118. Gorman, *Cruciformity*, 5, reminds us of the importance and the centrality that the crucified Christ played in Paul's good news, and hints at the polemical edge this must have had. For the general categories of honor and shame see, again Halvor Moxnes, "Honor, Shame, and the Outside World in Paul's Letter to the Romans," in *The Social World of Formative Christianity and Judaism: Essays in Tribute to Howard Clark Kee*, ed. Howard Clark Kee, Jacob Neusner, Ernest S. Frerichs, Peter Borgen, and Richard Horsely (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), 210. For the concept of honor and shame in Greek literature, see Douglas L. Cairns, *Aidos: The Psychology and Ethics of Honour and Shame in Ancient Greek Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993).

God.[691] Paul, however, is not ashamed precisely because he sees this good news as the power of God (δύναμις θεοῦ ἐστιν). It is the power of God more precisely for salvation (σωτηρίαν). Both the concepts of power and salvation resonate with the message promised to the prophets of old.[692]

It should not surprise us that the terms Paul uses here for 'power' and 'salvation' in relation to God both have their antecedents in the narrative of the exodus, and the subsequent narratives which reuse the exodus material. It was through the powerful arm of the Lord that the Israelites were brought out of Egypt.[693] It was a matter celebrated from generation to generation. Although the stories of the power-of-YHWH are the antecedents to all subsequent talk of the power of God, it is within the context of the second exodus that these reverberations most resemble Paul's text. For example, Isaiah 45.14-17 states:

> Thus says the Lord of hosts; Egypt has labored for you; and the trade of the Ethiopians, and the Sabeans, men of stature, shall be transferred to you, and shall be your slaves; and they shall accompany you in handcuffs, and shall worship with you, and make supplication with you: because God is with you; and there is no God beside thee, *O Lord*. For thou art God, yet we knew it not, the God of Israel, the Savior (σωτήρ). All that are opposed to him shall be ashamed and confounded, and they will walk in shame: You islands, keep a feast to me. Israel is saved (σῴζεται) by the Lord (κυρίου) with an everlasting salvation (σωτηρίαν): they shall never again be ashamed (αἰσχυνθήσονται) nor confounded forevermore.[694]

In a text that alludes to the exodus event and how the Egyptians gave Israel her spoils as she was being rescued by God, we have here a text declaring that soon all the mighty nations will labor for Israel. The text envisions a fantastic reversal to the experience of exile, by proclaiming that the nations will follow Israel in chains and handcuffs, and that they are the ones who will finally be shamed. Yet it is through this event that they are said to come to a realization that YHWH is the one and true and cosmic Lord, and as a result they will worship Him, and as a consequence Israel will never be shamed by another nation again. It is this sort of creative and explosive saving power of God which invades the cosmos that consequently gives Paul reason not to be ashamed.[695]

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[691] This question, viewed as a theodicy, may be the issue which the subject of faith and faithfulness arises. See A. Katherine Grieb, *The Story of Romans: A Narrative Defense of God's Righteousness* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 10; Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*, 38-39; Rikki E. Watts, "For I Am Not Ashamed of the Gospel: Romans 1.16-17 and Habakkuk 2.4," in *Romans and the People of God: Essays an Honor Gordon D. Fee on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday*, ed. Sven K. Soderlund and N.T. Wright (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 4; Wright, "Romans," 424-5.

[692] Cf. Exod 15.6, 13; 32.11; Isa 40-55.

[693] For the exodus as reflecting God's power, see Exod 1.4 (δύναμις); 15.6, 13.32.11 (ἰσχύς); 6.1, 6; 32.11; 15,16 (βραχίων); and thematically the whole hymn of Exod 15.

[694] Translation is adapted form the LXX.

Paul continues in this text in Romans to describe the good news as a creative power able to break down both the ethnic and national boundaries. No longer is God's salvation only for those who belong to the nation Israel, but it is for those who have faith. It is perhaps with this realization, namely that with the inclusion of the nations into the people of God those things that used to demarcate the people of God can now no longer exclude *ipso facto* the nations. It is Paul's understanding of Jesus as the crucified Messiah which leads him to recognition that it is now through his faith/faithfulness that the people of God are demarcated.[696] It is with this move that Paul reaffirms that the good news was for the Jew, obviously yes, but especially for the Greek.[697]

The Apocalypse of God's Vindicating Justice

Paul continues to unfold this dense passage by continuing his exposition of the good news, claiming that in it the justice of God (δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ) is revealed (ἀποκαλύπτεται).[698] While the justice of God as a theme is very important to Paul, its function in the text is not at all clear. This may be due to the fact that Paul's audience would have been quite familiar with the theme and needed no further explanation in understanding it.[699] However, for this to be the case, we would have to suppose that Paul's intended Greco-Roman audience would have a great deal of knowledge about the Scriptures of Israel, or that Paul intended the meaning of the term to reside in its Greco-Roman context. Whatever Paul's intentions may have been, it is our position that within the exordium these oblique references, such as the justice of God, are meant to signal, to the readers an ungrammaticality, a construction which functions metonymically, signaling a whole host of intertextual referents that are dialogically in play. The ungrammaticality of the phrase 'justice of God' functions as a heuristic marker driving the intended Greco-Roman audience, who may not catch its rich array of referents, to search for its various meanings.

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[695] Käsemann, *Romans*, 22.

[696] Jewett, *Romans*, 139.

[697] Vorster, "Strategies of Persuasion in Romans 1.16-17," 161 fn. 10. Interestingly, breaking down ethnic and cultural barriers is the very thing which Caesar hoped his good news of the *Pax Romana* would achieve but could not, and here Paul declares in bold polemics that his good news actually achieves what Caesar's could not.

[698] My primary intention in translating δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ as the justice of God is to place the term back within the political context which Paul's Greco-Roman audience would have no doubt heard it.

In order to elucidate the meaning, then, the Greco-Roman audience must look for answers to what Paul might mean by this text, most likely through consultation of the Scriptures of Israel.[700] In his more specific appeal to the 'justice of God (vindication)' as 'revealed' in the good news, we find that Paul stands in continuity with a biblical tradition greatly shaped by the exilic prophet of Isaiah 40-55. Here the 'justice' language is connected to the saving and liberating acts of God on behalf of captive Israel. God's saving acts on behalf of the exilic community were an exercise of his justice, revealing God to be just (faithful) in terms of his relationship with Israel.[701] When we take a closer look at some of the passages that echo these crucial theological terms, Paul's programmatic use of this language becomes apparent.[702] In Isaiah 51.4-9 the text states:

> Having heard listen to me my people, and you kings pay close attention to me, because my law (νόμος) will go forth, and my judgment (κρίσις)

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[699] So Sam K. Williams, "The "Righteousness of God" In Romans," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 99, no. 2 (1980): 260.

[700] This consultation could be a community affair.

[701] Byrne, *Romans*, 53.

[702] Indeed, in certain LXX passages, Hays concurs that these key terms converge in ways that prefigure Paul's formulation strikingly. See Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*, 36.

> like a light to the nations (ἔθνῶν). My vindicating justice (δικαιοσύνη) approaches quickly and will go forth like a light bringing salvation (σωτήριον) and the nations (ἔθνη) will hope in my arm, the Islands will stand firm in me, and will hope in my arm.... Listen to me, you who know my judgment (κρίσιν), you people who have my Law (ὁ νόμος)in your hearts....my vindicating justice (δικαιοσύνη) will be forever, and my salvation (σωτήριον) to all generations. [9] Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the LORD! Awake, as in days of old, the generations of long ago! Was it not you who cut Rahab in pieces, who pierced the dragon?[703]

This text is part of a motif in the text of Second Isaiah that speaks of YHWH keeping his promises to Israel. By appealing to how YHWH had kept his promise to Abraham and Sarah (51.2), the text is calling for the exiles to cling to the new promise that YHWH will once again comfort Israel. Not only will this comfort result in a transformation of the wilderness into a paradise like Eden (51.3), but it will also result in the transformation of the nations (51.4). This justice and salvation in this text are talked about in the context of YHWH's promises to rescue his people from the exile; the salvation is thus both the comfort that comes from knowing that YHWH will rescue his people in joy through the second exodus (51.9-11) and the actual liberation that will take place in the future. While the justice is the fact that YHWH will vindicate himself against the charges of being an inferior and defeated God.

Likewise in Psalm 97 (98 MT), a hymn which anticipates the coming of YHWH's salvation, is also significant for our understanding of the meaning of God's justice:

> Sing to the Lord a new song, because the Lord has performed wonderful things. Your right hand and your holy arm have delivered us. The Lord made known his salvation (σωτήριον), he revealed (ἀπεκάλυψεν) his vindicating justice (δικαιοσύνην) before (in judgment of) the nations. He remembered his compassion to Jacob and his truthfulness to the house of Israel. All the ends of the earth observed the salvation (σωτήριον) of my God ... Because the Lord comes in vindication (δικαιοσύνη) and in justice to judge the earth, the world, and the people.[704]

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[703] Cf. Isaiah 50.7-8; 52.10; 54.1-5

[704] Psalm 97.1-4 LXX (98 MT); cf. Ps 22.32, 36.7, 40.11, 51.16, 71.15-16.

In a passage that echoes the first exodus, the psalmist invokes the past in order to bring hope for the future (97.1).[705] Here this future is depicted in a cosmic arena of praise, and the threatening roar of the sea is transformed into waves of overwhelming praise. The old song has become a song of conflict, which is itself transformed into an impotent song due to the experience of the exile, for YHWH had lost the last and decisive battle. The power of YHWH, however, is rescued, because he is coming to judge the earth in judgment, he is coming to act again. The implicit lament is turned to thanksgiving; the old song is to be replaced by this new song of victory.[706] It is the once powerful forces of chaos represented by the sea that become a metonym of universal praise, expressing YHWH's solitary and uncontested reign.[707] YHWH's saving justice in this passage is an action on display for all to see, YHWH promises to deliver his people while at the same time establishes his incomparability against those who might contend against him.[708]

The phrase δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ thus functions in this text as God's vindicating justice.[709] It signifies God's just action in the world. It is when God acts in this justice that Israel will be restored, the wicked and unjust will be punished, pagan rulers will be overthrown, and God's new kingdom of peace will be established, thus vindicating God, over against the other gods, as the true cosmic Lord.[710]

It is our conjecture that it was within this framework that Paul wants his readers to understand the justice of God, which breaks forth onto the scene through the death and resurrection of Jesus, and is seen as the very covenant faithfulness of God, which all humanity, both Jew and Greek can now respond in faith.[711] For Paul the fulfilled promises of God's vindication is why he can declare unashamedly this good news; because the good news as both the vindication of God and the fulfillment of his promises–albeit fulfilled in unexpected and heretofore unimaginable ways.[712]

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[705] The new song is no doubt alluding to the song of Moses, in Exodus 15, as the old song.

[706] See the discussion in Sylvia C. Keesmaat, "The Psalms in Romans and Galatians," in *The Psalms in the New Testament*, ed. Steve Moyise and M. J. J. Menken (London T & T Clark International, 2004), 142-43.

[707] William P. Brown, *Seeing the Psalms: A Theology of Metaphor* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 128-29.

[708] Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness*, 39.

[709] This translation is similar to that of Wright, *Paul: Fresh Perspectives*, 69, who translates δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ as 'God's saving justice'. This, however, does not take into account with enough precision the fact that Paul says in 1.17 that the good news is God's power for salvation because the δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ is being revealed through it. See Williams, "Righteousness of God," 258.

[710] Sylvia C. Keesmaat, "Operation Infinite Justice: The Righteousness of God in Paul" (paper presented at the Society of Biblical Literature, Washington, D.C, 2006), 3.

Paul continues his exordium by stating that the good news of God's vindicating justice is revealed from God's faithfulness in order to elicit the response of humanity's faithfulness.[713] That it is being revealed has the sense of being disclosed or unveiled, clueing his audience in to just how unexpected this good news was, and how it came to fruition in such an unexpected way. Paul here is describing the apocalyptic vision that combines the death and resurrection of Jesus, as the impetus for Jesus' Lordship, which is tantamount to God's commitment to keep his promises.[714] In further describing the good news (1.16-17) with such multifarious terminology, the text is playing on the term ἀποκαλύπτεται, no doubt alluding to the traditions (see Ps 98.2 above), and insinuating that the time is now, that it is Jesus' faithfulness to the plan of God to follow the way of the cross, which he is revealed to be the Christ, through the power of the resurrection; that this is the apocalyptic happening, which signals, in part, the start of the new exodus promises.

The use of the Scriptures of Israel in Romans follows our discussion concerning the centrifugal intertextual encyclopedias of the beginnings of texts. That Paul has in mind here the specific narrative that unfolds in the second exodus and

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[711] Grieb, *The Story of Romans*, 12; Stephen Westerholm, *Preface to the Study of Paul* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 1997), 9-19, 41-49; Wright, *What Saint Paul Really Said*, 118-33. *Contra* Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness*, 39-40, who claims that Psalm 98 does not fit a covenantal context because it resembles the action of a king, because it contains creational elements, and because these elements are often associated with ruling and judging which extends beyond yhwh's relationship with Israel.

[712] Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness*, 37, who rightly highlights the mystery of this revelation.

[713] The first term of the phrase ἐκ πίστεως ἐς πίστιν could conceivably be referring to Christ's faithfulness, at least thematically this could coexist with what we know of Paul's theology. See Douglas A. Campbell, "Romans 1.17- a *Crux Interpretum* for Πιστισ Χριστου Debate," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 113 (1994): 265-85.

[714] Grieb, *The Story of Romans*, 13.

God's promises to once again rescue his people, to bring the nations under the umbrella in worship, and to restore the creation into an edenic paradise, are all part and parcel of how Paul understands the good news. It is thus not surprising that Habakkuk 2.4 is marshaled in a crucial place in Paul's argument in the letter to the Romans. It is this text that Paul uses to frame his entire message, and it is important to see just how this text functions in dialogue with Paul's own text.

Habakkuk 2.4 and the Narrative of the End of Exile

Paul's use of Habakkuk 2.4 in the letter to the Romans, in the history of interpretation, has been seen not only as a vital clue on how Paul might use Scripture elsewhere, but often as a key to the interpretation of Paul's use of πίστις and δικαιοσύνη, and consequently the letter to the Romans itself. That the use of Habakkuk is usually construed either as a scriptural confirmation of the principle 'from faith to faith,'[715] or that of a further explanation of the good news,[716] really is of no help, since the interpretation of how the texts function is what is at issue. It is our contention that Paul uses of Habakkuk 2.4 as a metonymic trope or synecdoche meant to bring the whole narrative of Habakkuk into dialogue with Paul's text.

In this vein the introductory formula 'as it has been written' invites the reader to acknowledge a correspondence between the new text and the old. It is here that we get Paul's second explicit call to his audience to participate in the task of interpretation or reinterpretation (1.2 being the first) – 'an invitation to the reader to revisit the scriptural text in order to subject the alleged correspondence to critical testing'. [717] After the invitation is signaled to the readers that the text quoted suggests another ungrammaticality, forcing the reader to once again take a step back in order to resolve the tensions within the text, and inviting them to explore another textual system for hints of meaning. Here Paul's quotation of a text works on a metonymical level calling on the reader to discover the contiguity of the deleted narrative that gives this quote its original signification. The quote, like a synecdoche, invites the reader to see the whole in terms of the part, in order to complete the missing potential of the text. It must be cautioned, however, that even with Paul's explicit use of the introductory formula, the readers can still chose their own intertext(s) in order to discover the texts meaning.[718]

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[715] Jewett, *Romans*, 144.

[716] Dunn, *Romans*, 48.

[717] Watson, *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith*, 127.

The quote offered by Paul in this text, 'The one who is just will live by faith' (ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται), suggests a dialogical reading where the Habakkuk text is transformed by being placed into this new context, dialogical because both the text and the reader (or hearer) open themselves to the sphere of transformation by the very act of interpretation. While the Habakkuk text is placed in this new context, we must be aware that there is more intertextuality here than the direct reference to Habakkuk. Paul's use of this text actively echoes other texts as well as a whole narrative web of exile, God's vindicating justice, and the nations. So in order to better understand the dialogue that is going on between these texts, we need to have a better idea of what the context of the prophecy of Habakkuk entailed.

The Vision of Habakkuk

In the prophecy of Habakkuk we find in this short work a depiction of a prophet who is lamenting the ways of YHWH in particular respect to his dealings with his people. The work is often construed as a theodicy, where ultimately the ways YHWH are ultimately justified.

In the first lament the prophet cries for YHWH's help, and is wondering why YHWH does not respond (1.2). The reason the prophet quarrels with YHWH has to do with the prophet's perception that the law is apparently impotent in restraining wickedness, and justice is nowhere to be found. So he appeals to YHWH in order for wisdom, and in order for him to do something about it (1.4).[719] YHWH responds to the prophet in a unexpected manner, which seems to call into question the very character of YHWH's justice. The prophet who grieved over the escalating wickedness of his own people is answered, by YHWH, with the unsettling declaration that Israel's wickedness was to be punished by Israel's, and thus YHWH's own enemies. The text declares that it is the traditional enemy nations would rise up and conquer the nation and take Israel into captivity (1.5-11). While the prophet possibly would have been content with a response that claimed the wicked were only prospering for a season, and that soon YHWH will overpower the wicked just as the wicked were currently overpowering the righteous.[720] However, the text indicates the prophet had no means to reconcile his perceived response with YHWH's actual response. Dumbfounded that YHWH would realistically allow a nation which was more perverse and more wicked then Israel to seemingly prosper in judgment over her was too much for the prophet to take in. For the prophet who was seeking answers, YHWH's response evoked a new series of questions, this time concerning YHWH's justice and the covenant faithfulness of YHWH to his promises (1.12-17).

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[718] In fact it is here that Hay's suggest that quote is used as a metaphorical trope where the foci being transferred is the justice of God (theodicy), Hays, *Echoes of Scripture, 41*.

[719] While it could be that the failure of the Torah resulted in the leadership's role in not enforcing its requirements, and that is the reason injustice has run rampant. It may be that the prophet is citing some weakness inherent in the Torah itself. So, Marshall D. Johnson, "The Paralysis of

The prophet, intent on receiving answers from YHWH, stations himself in the tower, unwilling to budge until answers are forthcoming (2.1).[721] YHWH answers the prophet by giving him instructions to write on a tablet in large letters a vision of the end (2.2), a vision that may tarry but will most certainly come to fruition (2.3). While we are not told the content of what was written on the tablet, we do know that it encourages the prophet to be confident, so confident that the prophet for the first time in the narrative can speak with assurance about the security of the righteous and the eventual doom of the wicked.[722] The prophet, then, because of his faith in the vision inscribed on the tablet, and in the faithfulness of YHWH to bring about the

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Torah in Habakkuk 1.4," *Vetus Testamentum* 35 (1985): 259-61; J. Gerald Janzen, "Eschatological Symbol and Existence in Habakkuk," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 44 (1982): 397.

[720] Carol J. Dempsey, *The Prophets: A Liberation-Critical Reading* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 80.

[721] James D. Newsome, *The Hebrew Prophets* (Atlanta: J. Knox Press, 1984), 96.

[722] Watson views vv. 4-20 as the prophets own response to YHWH's vision. So Watson, *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith*, 149.

vision, proceeds to decry YHWH's enemies with pronouncements of woe.[723] The narrative constructed from these woes triumphantly decries the wickedness from the perspective of this new found confidence gained from his assurance in the vision; however, there is still the subtext that cannot fully be extracted, namely the misery of exile for the righteous.[724] Never the less, the narrative goes to great lengths to show the prophet as one encouraged to trust in the faithfulness of YHWH to deliver on his promises.[725] After this initial word of comfort, the focus again turns to the wickedness of the captors, as YHWH has presumably dealt with the recalcitrant Israelites, who were the instigators of the prophet's lament in the first place, with the judgment brought by Israel's enemies.[726]

The prophet then responds in a hymn that recalls YHWH's miraculous deeds of old and discloses a theophony which presumably reveals the essence of the vision itself (3.1-19).[727] If the hymn details the vision of Habakkuk 2.2 then what the prophet sees is of central importance. For the hymn casts YHWH approaching from the wilderness, presumably using the same route used by those who journeyed from Egypt to Canaan in the first exodus, shinning in radiance, and coming in judgment, as the earth trembles.[728] The imagery of YHWH's advance is like that of the exodus of old. The vision describes a new exodus, where YHWH, the Divine Warrior, again does battle with the forces of chaos.[729] The Divine Warrior again comes to the aid of his people to win deliverance for them, in the process defeating the powers of chaos.[730] The hymn culminates in an eschatological message of hope, amid the struggle of current events and the apparent lack of justice within the community, the prophet extols his message for the moment and for the future.[731]

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[723] Newsome, *The Hebrew Prophets*, 96.

[724] August Strobel, *Untersuchungen zum eschatologischen Verzögerungsproblem; auf Grund der spätjüdisch-urchristlichen Geschichte von Habakuk 2,2 ff.* (SNT 2; Leiden: Brill, 1961), 8-78, argues that it is this delay that catches the attention of later exegetes, and thus figured prominently concerning the coming messianic age (1QpHab 7.7). Thus it can be said that both the Qumran community and the early Church believed that Habakkuk was addressing himself primarily to that moment in history to which each community believed itself to bear witness, Sanders, "Habakkuk in Qumran, Paul, and the Old Testament," 107..

[725] Although the text is ambiguous, the trustworthiness of the vision is probably in view here. See Robert D. Haak, *Habakkuk*, Supplements to Vetus Testamentum, V. 44. (Leiden ; New York: E.J. Brill, 1992), 59; J. Gerald Janzen, "Habakkuk 2.2-4 in the Light of Recent Philological Advances," *Harvard Theological Review* 73 (1980): 70-71; J. J. M. Roberts, *Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah: A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991), 107, 11; Ralph L. Smith, *Micah-Malachi* (WBC 32; Waco: Word, 1984), 107. Although, Habakkuk most certainly made the connection that to have faith in the trustworthiness of the vision is to have a radical faith in the sovereignty of the God who gave the vision. This sovereignty cannot simply be over Judah, but over the Chaldeans, and over the whole earth. It was the righteous person who was distinguished by his faith in God's lordship over against the current events in history (Hab. 3.17-18). Sanders, "Habakkuk in Qumran, Paul, and the Old Testament," 113. The MT has, 'the just, or righteous man shall live (survive) by his loyalty (to YHWH)'.

[726] Watts, "For I Am Not Ashamed of the Gospel," 12.

[727] F. F. Bruce, "Habakkuk," in *The Minor Prophets: An Exegetical and Expository Commentary*, ed. Thomas Edward McComiskey (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992), 882; Theodore Hiebert, *God of My Victory: The Ancient Hymn in Habakkuk 3* (HSM 38; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986), 118-24. Cf. Judges 5.4-5; Deut 33.2-3; Psalm 68. On the exodus and conquest motifs, see Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, 70-71, 99-105.

Paul's Use of the Habakkuk Vision

In light of this reading we can better understand the Paul's use of this quotation for setting up the centrifugal intertextual encyclopedia that he is requesting from his readers. The prophet in Habakkuk is depicted as experiencing exile (Hab. 3.17-18), and despite this he has faith in the faithfulness of God to bring about the vision depicted in his hymn (Hab. 3). The specific faithfulness of God in this context is to his restoration promise that he will indeed bring about a new exodus, in a way similar but yet much greater than the first exodus. God will punish the idolatrous nations, but the text also claims that the nations and all peoples will celebrate the triumph that will nullify all idols (2.5-20), and he will remember mercy as he brings salvation to Israel (3.2-19). It is in this light that Paul's letter to the

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[728] Bruce, "Habakkuk," 882-84. Cf. Ex 15; Ps. 74.12-14; 89.9-1; Isa 51.9-10. The hymn purposefully contrasts the preceding destruction of the Chaldeans with the future salvific violence of God. Thus the hymn uses the traditional language and form of victory hymns to establish a theocentric climax. See James W. Watts, "Psalmody in Prophecy Habakkuk 3 in Context," in *Forming Prophetic Literature: Essays on Isaiah and the Twelve in Honor of John D. W. Watts*, ed. J.W. Watts and P.R. House (JSOTSup 235; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1986), 213.

[729] Bruce, "Habakkuk," 886; Dempsey, *The Prophets*, 84; Newsome, *The Hebrew Prophets*, 97.

[730] Fishbane, *Text and Texture*, 135-6, states that the battle is drawn with bold and graphic colors (vv.8-15) so as to contrast the forces of order and creation with those of chaos and destruction precisely to make the point that: He who created the world is also the god of Israel's historical salvation.

[731] Dempsey, *The Prophets*, 847.

Romans enters into dialogue with Habakkuk. Paul uses a thematic text that declares the mysterious ways of YHWH, a text that offers the readers an opportunity to question their own horizon of expectations, a text which disrupts in order that the audience might see the precariousness of the threshold and still enter in.[732]

It is thus in response to the question of the inclusion of the nations into the people of God, his destruction of the idols, and God's vindicating restoration that the issue of faith in faithfulness arises as a description of the good news. While Paul may be tipping his hand by signaling Habakkuk's own reflection on the ineffectiveness of the Law, it is clear that he understands the problematic implications of his good news. Paul had the advantage of seeing the power of the good news first hand through his missional activities, but regardless of this he does not marshal his personal experience here as proof, instead he echoes Habakkuk, and ends his exordium by claiming that salvation is to be found by acknowledging that the Jewish God is faithful to his promises, faithfulness which includes the surprising eschatological revelation of YHWH's saving power, specifically for the nations.[733]

The message of the Pauline good news is thus set within the context of the Habakkuk vision, it is the coming to fruition of this vision through God's servant son, in fulfillment of the prophets, to redeem his people from their bondage, to vindicate his own name, and with it all his people, as Lord. He sends this good news because it is the power to make this people what they were created all along to be—his obedient children, heirs of his world. Equipped with the good news, the nations now know the true God. That is, they have received the great blessing promised by Isaiah throughout chapters 40-55: the one true God has revealed himself in saving them, routing the idols of the nations in doing so.[734] The message of good news of the kingship of Jesus reminds those who, abandoning their various idolatries, have given their allegiance to Jesus as the cosmic Lord, and that this very allegiance is the only distinguishing mark by which the renewed and united family of Abraham is to be known.[735] That is why it challenges the powers. That is why to retain, or to embrace, symbols and praxis which speak of other loyalties and other allegiances is to imply that other powers are still being invoked. And that is to deny the truth of the good news.[736]

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[732] That Paul had a narrative mentality of his own spirituality which he modeled as an example, see Stephen E. Fowl, *The Story of Christ in the Ethics of Paul: An Analysis of the Function of the Hymnic Material in the Pauline Corpus* (JSNTSup 36; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990); Gorman, *Cruciformity*.

[733] Watts, "For I Am Not Ashamed of the Gospel," 4. Habakkuk's voicing of the hymn is not uniquely strong among laments, but rather it makes his experience paradigmatic for all the faithful who wait for Yahweh's deliverance. In this way the resulting characterization describes not a unique individual but rather a universal experience which is available to all; see Watts, "Psalmody in Prophecy Habakkuk 3 in Context," 216-17.

Conclusion

The centrifugal intertextual encyclopedia that Paul crafts to help create the model readers of this text is contained in the prophets of the exile, the quotation from Habakkuk, works as a synecdoche to metonymically fill in the narrative context of the Habakkuk work as a whole, which is a further synecdoche for the restoration part of the narrative of exile and return.[737] Through this complex intertextuality, which summons the exodus, and thus the general pattern of the salvation history of Israel by introducing themes of exodus, exile, and return, Paul gives a nod to the intertextual functioning of the beginning, and sets the milieu with which the text must be interpreted. Paul's centrifugal intertextual encyclopedia, is molded around the matrix of exilic restoration, and the good news has to be interpreted within the light of Isaiah and the prophets of exile specifically, if not through a loosely held exile and return matrix in general. That being said, there is nothing implicit about Paul's use of the Habakkuk quotations here that justifies a normative theory of how Paul uses scripture elsewhere. The intent of this reading is not to uncover a Pauline

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[734] Wright, "Gospel and Theology in Galatians," 230. By incorporating the enemies into the people of God, they then logically no longer exist.

[735] Wright, "Gospel and Theology in Galatians," 236.

[736] Wright, "Gospel and Theology in Galatians," 236; Hays, "Paul's Reading of Isaiah", 223.

[737] In a similar manner Wagner indicates that when Paul quotes from a particular text, he often hears members of the larger scriptural voices singing about the same thing, thus even though a particular text is cited, it is just one voice that lends weight to Paul's cumulative argument. See Wagner, *Heralds of the Good News*, 352-59.

theory of reading, nor a general theory of how quotations work in the New Testament, rather it is our suggestion that in this case, the use of the Habakkuk text as a syndoche, for the deleted narrative context, pragmatically works because the ensuing chapters in Habakkuk fit with close contiguity the matrix of the text. This is not to imply that Paul used this quote as a proof text, but rather Paul as a reader of Habakkuk, and the exile and return narrative which the text evoked, played a cumulative role in shaping Paul's own understanding of the good news, especially in respect to his obligations to the nations.

CHAPTER EIGHT
THE DOUBLE CHARACTER OF ROMANS: THE POLITICAL POLEMICS OF PAUL

The audience of the letter to the Romans is one of a number of contentious issues in the interpretation and study of Paul's letter. Since the monumental study of W.G. Kümmel, interpreters have been forced to deal with the letter's perceived double character. For Kümmel this double character consists of a letter which advances the notion that it was written to Gentiles, but whose content is such that Jewish believers would receive the most benefit from it. Kümmel viewed the argument of Romans as a debate between the Pauline good news and Judaism and so concluded that there must be a Jewish presence in the Roman community.[738] While great lengths have been gone to offer a corrective concerning the 'tangled web of unwarranted assumptions' within this view, the task of definitively showing who Paul's intended audience was is still no closer to being resolved.[739] While we place significant weight upon the rhetorical statements that seem to identify Paul's intended audience as being primarily the nations, we do readily admit that there is much within this letter that would seem to imply more than a basic understanding of the Scriptures of Israel.[740] Intriguing as Kümmel's double character thesis is for understanding Paul's perspective of the Jew/Gentile relationship, and for subsequent avenues in understanding other elements of Paul's thought, it is our contention that the Jew/Gentile relationship might not be the only significant double character in the text of Romans.

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[738] W. G. Kümmel, *Introduction to the New Testament* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1975), 309-10. See also the arguments of Anthony J. Guerra, "Romans: Paul's Purpose and Audience with Special Attention to Romans 9-11," *Revue Biblique* 97 (1990): 221-25, 37; Steve Mason, "Paul, Classical Anti-Jewish Polemic, and the Letter to the Romans," in *Self-Definition and Self-Discovery in Early Christianity: A Study in Changing Horizons: Essays in Appreciation of Ben F. Meyer* ed. Ben F. Meyer, David J. Hawkin, and Thomas A. Robinson (Studies in the Bible and Early Christianity 26; Lewiston: Mellen Press, 1990), 210-11.

[739] Gager, *Reinventing Paul*, 106. For the view that the audience was exclusively made up of Gentiles see the discussion in A. Andrew Das, *Solving the Romans Debate* (Minneapolis: Fortress 2007), 54-69.

[740] This would include the extensive quotations and allusions to the Jewish Scriptures, the focus of the Jewish people in God's plan, and the discussions including Abraham, the Mosaic Law, and the blessings of Israel. However, we argue that these topics are brought up for heuristic purposes rather than necessarily evidence of common shared knowledge.

Although this is not a new or novel approach to Pauline Studies, it is our contention that the very context described in chapter five of this thesis is important to understanding the meaning of Paul's letter to the seat of imperial power. When we begin to see that the key terminology Paul uses not only reflects his desire to communicate the good news to his audience but also echoes that of Roman political and ideological language, it leads us to wonder if Paul's letter to the nations possesses a new double character – a letter addressed to the nations but prejudiced by polemics against the Roman imperial order. As detailed in preceding chapters, part of Paul's proclamation of the good news was that the end of exile was being inaugurated and the nations were now being incorporated into the people of God, yet these same proclamations are embedded with the polemics that insist Jesus is the true Lord and that Caesar is not.[741] It is in this chapter that we will explore the perceived double character of Paul's polemical language.

Paul's Letter to the Romans as Political Polemics

In the previous chapters our discussion of Paul's letter to the Romans has emphasized the role of Paul's use of the second exodus motifs as a centrifugal intertextual encyclopedia which explained the necessary information needed in order for his audience to become the model, or ideal reader. This discussion revealed Paul as a thoroughly Jewish thinker, albeit by developing the contentious idea that through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the restoration from exile, promised in the scriptures of Israel, was now over. Paul's confidence of this was initially seen in his commissioning experience on the road to Damascus, where a former persecutor of those who followed Jesus as the Christ, began his mission to bring about the obedience of faith to all nations and include them in the worship of the one true God.[742] It was through this re-evaluation of the scriptures of Israel that Paul most likely noticed that the scriptural texts which call for the inclusion of the nations also allude to polemics against the gods of those nations and the idols which they worshiped. If Paul's proclamation of the good news is that Jesus is the Messiah and thus the appointed incomparable cosmic overlord of the world, then it would naturally follow that any competing counter claim must be false.

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[741] Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*, 344, notes that unless Paul and his fellow believers went through the world blindfolded, then the words and terms that made up everyday language in the Roman imperial order must make up the backdrop against which Paul's good news was formulated.

When we place Paul's good news in the cultural context created by Augustus and carried forth through the time of Nero and beyond, we see that Paul used terms already pregnant with meaning. The good news was not about the god of Israel, or who the god of Israel appointed as the cosmic overlord; rather in the seat of Imperial power, the good news was about the victory of the emperor who brought peace and security, and the return of the idyllic 'Golden Age'; it was in short about a ruler born, come of age, and subsequently enthroned.[743] It is not surprising then to find out that Paul might find this assertion rather troubling, and that his response might be rather polemical, especially when we take into account that the Jewish belief in one God was always a polemical doctrine over against pagan gods and idolatry.[744]

The narrative of the exodus not only tells of YHWH's victory over the divine figure of the pharaoh of Egypt, but was a parody of the whole Ancient Near Eastern cycle of the divine warrior, declaring in the end that YHWH alone was the incomparable god. Likewise, in the text of Second Isaiah, the Babylonian gods who seemingly defeated YHWH at the last battle are subsequently shown to be inferior, precisely because the Babylonian gods could never predict the defeat of their own people, yet YHWH not only forecasted the defeat and exile of his own people, but also foretold of their return. The narrative of the Isaianic new exodus and its transformation of the first exodus, with the polemical and cosmic themes of disputations and the incomparable YHWH, are subtly evoked within this new cultural context. This form of intertextuality, relying upon genres as a way of continuing the story of old texts within new contexts allows the reader a window into this socially normative discourse, connecting circuits of meaning and meaningfulness into this new context.

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[742] Cf. Acts 9.1-19, 22.6-11, 26.9-18; Gal 1.13-16. See also Paul Barnett, *The Birth of Christianity: The First Twenty Years* (After Jesus 1; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 65; Martin Hengel and Anna Maria Schwemer, *Paul between Damascus and Antioch: The Unknown Years* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 47-54; Gerd Lüdemann, *Heretics: The Other Side of Early Christianity* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 74-76.

[743] See Plutarch *Demetrius*, 17; *Sertorius*, 11, *Artaxerxes*, 14, *De Fortuna Romanorum*, 6.

[744] See, e.g. Isa 40.18-20; 42.17; 44.9-17; 45.20; 46.1-7)

However, what we have here is not a mere continuation or remembrance of such traditions, for what was traditionally conceived of as the Jewish belief in the election of Israel, namely YHWH's choosing of a people for himself, took place over against the pagan nations and their gods. And in this subsequent tradition, the dominant belief in the coming vindication of Israel was conceived of in terms of YHWH's ultimate defeat of the pagans; and the bringing forth of this saving justice was conceived of as taking place over against the gods of the nations.[745] Paul's incorporation of the nations in God's saving justice, while not without precedent, on the one hand, shows Paul's creative struggle with his own tradition, while on the other hand places his apocalyptic proclamation of Jesus Christ as Lord firmly within a Jewish framework, which consequently in the context of empire, certainly leads one to suspect polemical overtones.[746]

What we find here is an example of what I term a narrative intertextuality, an intertextuality that explores the juxtaposition of the various cultural and historic voices that are woven into the fabric of each text. In this sense the stories told in and around the texts are intertextual in their composition, containing a horizontal dimension which incorporates the historicity of texts and the sociolect that both precedes and is anticipated with in the intertextual system, and a vertical dimension that consists of both its immediate and distant contexts. This narrative intertextuality looks at the social and cultural activities in and around a text, and results in a texts dialogical character.[747] Thus the interlace of these intertextual systems itself results in a dynamic set of cultural intertextualities, that the author seeks to exploit in order to marginalize and develop certain voices for the ideological purposes important to the author. These intertextualities are by nature plural, and susceptible to being misread and misunderstood as discussed in previous chapters. Again what drives the interpretation of these imperial social narratives is Paul's overarching strategy of wrestling free the imaginations of the Roman's so that they can embrace the good news, and ultimately live in cruciform communities over against the Roman imperial order. Thus here we see Paul use the intertextual fabric of the culture in an attempt to interpret it over against his own vision of the good news. The narrative sociolect of Imperial ideology is thus Paul's focused pretext, and is used as a foil throughout this letter. Paul's text betrays this contextual evidence, by incorporating the textual language and imagery of Rome's imperial rhetoric into the letters themselves. Paul frequently uses the vocabulary and imagery of the empire and does so in a way that provides a challenge to the empire. That such terminology should be cited in a letter addressed to the seat of Roman power is at least reason for further inquiry. For the purposes of this overview, I will point out a few of the imperial echoes and images while briefly indicating their rhetorical function within the letter to the Romans.

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[745] Wright, "Paul and Caesar," 178-9. See, e.g., Georgi, *Theocracy in Paul's Praxis and Theology*; Helmut Koester, " Imperial Ideology and Paul's Eschatology in 1 Thessalonians," in Horsely ed., Paul and Empire (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International 1997),158-66. For other texts of the Second Temple period addressing the rulers of the world with the news that Israel's God is the true God who not only gives wisdom to rulers, but will vindicate his people against pagan oppression, see Wright, "Paul and Caesar," 186.

[746] It is also conceivable that Paul's blatant diatribe against the principalities and powers might be directed at the concrete and tangible targets of the blasphemous emperor-cult and the Roman imperial order. See Wright, "Paul and Caesar," 186; G. B. Caird, *Principalities and Powers: A Study in Pauline Theology* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1967), 16. Also on subversive themes within Jewish mystical literature, see Philip S. Alexander, "The Family of Caesar and the Family of God," in *Images of Empire*, ed. Loveday Alexander (JSOTSup 122; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991), 276-97.

The Recasting of the Honor and Shame Matrix as Polemics

Slavery in the Honor/Shame Matrix

As mentioned before Paul writes this letter amid a culture that determines value through the structures of honor and shame.[748] Slave societies in antiquity were notorious for developing strong honor and shame codes creating a spectrum that treated the slave as a person without honor or standing and treated the ruler as the pinnacle of admiration and honor.[749] Everyone in antiquity would have agreed that being a slave was the worst imaginable existence possible, where everything hinged upon ones standing with one's master.[750] As mentioned briefly in chapter six, the shame culture of the Roman Empire was implicit to the maintenance of power; it was one of the many givens in Roman society. However, Paul interestingly starts his letter to the Romans by declaring unabashedly that he is a slave of Jesus Christ (Rom 1.1), and further reveals that it is precisely this Jesus Christ who is the true cosmic Lord, precisely because of his crucifixion (1.4). While Paul here could conceivably be comparing his status in Christ to that of the status of a slave of Caesar, and thus leaving the matrix of shame and honor firmly intact, it seems entirely unlikely when coupled with the fact that Paul considered himself a slave of one recently crucified.[751]

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[747] Julia Kristeva, *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*. Ed Leon S. Roudiez. European Perspectives, New York: Columbia University Press, 1980, 78.

[748] Howard Clark Kee, "The Linguistic Background of 'Shame' in the New Testament," in *On Language, Culture, and Religion: Essays in Honor of Eugene A. Nida*, ed. M. Black and W.A. Smalley (The

Crucifixion in the Honor/Shame Matrix

While Paul declaring himself a slave would have caused his audience a certain amount of perplexity, they very well may have glossed over it, had Paul not continued with his declaration that Jesus received his power through the spirit of holiness as confirmed through the resurrection (1.4). Paul uses the phrase ἐξ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν as a metonymy for the polyvalent narrative of the passion,

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Hague: Mouton, 1974), 141-3, demonstrates that where categories of shame are used in the New Testament they usually relate to public humiliation, the efficacy of promises, and eschatological vindication, while only a small group of passages refer to shameful behavior.

[749] Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), 88-92. There are some exceptions to this, the primary one being the ability of imperial freedmen (*familia Caesaris*) to receive status.

[750] Christopher Bryan, *A Preface to Romans: Notes on the Epistle in Its Literary and Cultural Setting* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 57-8.

[751] So Wayne A. Meeks, *The Origins of Christian Morality: The First Two Centuries* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 169. Even if this was the case, which I do not believe it to be, it would still pit Christ over against Caesar.

where the crucifixion of Jesus plays an important role.[752] But in Roman society the cross was the ultimate marker of social shame. Crucifixion was not only the preferred means of capital punishment for heinous crimes, and the most severe Roman penalty, but it was also the most shameful – almost always reserved for those who made up the lower classes.[753] The chief reason for crucifixion was 'its allegedly supreme efficacy as a deterrent.' The Romans practiced crucifixion above all on 'groups whose development had to be suppressed by all possible means to safeguard law and order in the state.'[754] Crucifixion as such served as a means of waging war and securing peace, of wearing down rebellious cities under siege, of breaking the will of conquered peoples and of bringing mutinous troops or unruly provinces under control.[755] For Paul to take this symbol of Roman power, a symbol that to the rebel, declared that Rome had won, that insurrection always ended in the cross; and to turn it on its ear to declare that it was in fact Jesus who had won, and that because of this victory, Jesus is Son of God, Lord, Savior, Faithful and brings about peace and justice, would have certainly been viewed as polemics against the Roman imperial order.

Power in the Honor/Shame Matrix

Yet, because of the subsequent Christian belief, due in large part to Paul, the cross became the central symbol for believers. Paul's whole-hearted embrace of the cross (and its inescapable Pauline connection with resurrection) necessitated a fundamental critique of its culturally associated shame. In what may almost be considered defiance, Paul declares himself not ashamed of the good news that centers on the cross (1.16), that ultimate object of social disgrace.[756] Paul is not ashamed because it is the good news that is the power of God that results in salvation, for the Jew yes, but especially for the Greek. Thus for Paul the crucifixion of Jesus is not simply an instance of official misconduct, a miscarriage of Roman justice, but an apocalyptic event filled with power. It reveals to 'the rulers of this age,' indeed every ruler and authority, whether powerful procurators, kings, or emperors as well as the supernatural 'powers' who stand behind them, that anyone intractably hostile to this God is doomed, for Jesus is deemed incomparable by God. Jesus' crucifixion is the crux of God's plan for unmasking and dethroning all the powers of this world.[757]

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[752] Gorman, *Cruciformity*, 82-88; Richard B. Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament: Community, Cross, New Creation: A Contemporary Introduction to New Testament Ethics* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1996), 27; Raymond Pickett, *The Cross in Corinth: The Social Significance of the Death of Jesus* (JSNTSup 143; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 1-24.

[753] Martin Hengel, *Crucifixion in the Ancient World and the Folly of the Message of the Cross* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), 33-45.

[754] Hengel, *Crucifixion in the Ancient World*, 89. See Donald G. Kyle, *Spectacles of Death in Ancient Rome* (London: Routledge, 2001), 53-55.

[755] Croix, *Class Struggle*, 138-42.

For while the Roman emperor found the language of the imperial cult useful as a description of his power and used it to accentuate the relationship between ruler and his subjects, Rome's truest expression of power was in its military and the traditional sense of its destiny to bring civilization to the corners of the world.[758] The emperor was firmly placed as the pinnacle of Roman society, and his power was now conceived of as being the will of the gods.[759] It is in Paul's insistence of the power of the good news that we get a real glimpse of Paul's revaluing of the currency of shame and honor. For Paul power is no longer reckoned on one's achieved or inherited status; honor is not a product of one's endless and energetic efforts to enhance one's standing through manipulation of the system, through social mobility. Honor, Paul deems, is simply and profoundly bestowed by God. It is reckoned on God's terms. It is allocated as God pleases.

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[756] J. Paul Sampley, "Introduction: Paul in the Greco-Roman World," in *Paul in the Greco-Roman World: A Handbook*, ed. J. Paul Sampley (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2003), 12. Cf. 2 Cor 10:8; Phil 1:20.

[757] Neil Elliott, "The Anti-Imperial Message of the Cross," in *Paul and Empire: Religion and Power in Roman Imperial Society*, ed. Richard Horsley (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1997), 176.

[758] Georgi, *Theocracy in Paul's Praxis and Theology*, 86.

[759] Duncan Fishwick, *The Imperial Cult in the Latin West: Studies in the Ruler Cult of the Western Provinces of the Roman Empire*, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1987), 92, 97-149; Antonio Santosuosso, *Storming the Heavens: Soldiers, Emperors, and Civilians in the Roman Empire* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2001), 226-28.

Central to Paul's concept of power is again reflected in the themes that resonate in the narrative of the Isaianic new exodus, especially those found in the forth Servant Song. While Paul does not directly quote Isaiah 53 here, the text elsewhere is associated both with the gospel and with Paul's own sense of vocation.[760] The same 'topsy-turvy world' that turns the conventional wisdom of the status quo in the text of Isaiah is at work here in Paul's text.[761] The idea that social norms of power are not supposed to count for Paul's addresses, and that for them power is to be practiced in conformity to the crucified Christ. Accordingly, as Paul continues in this letter, it is clear he wants these communities to no longer calculate human relations on what they can get out of the engagements, but instead they are to ask what love requires in this and that circumstance. Radically and even subversively, they seek the advantage of the other; they seek what builds up or edifies the neighbor. And most surprisingly, and requiring an incredible amount of trust in God, they come to realize that their own self-interests are cared for not by securing themselves first but by honoring their neighbors in love.[762] It is because the good news is God's power which triumphs over the power of the Empire that the terms Paul uses here would have had deep reverberations for anyone familiar with the rhetoric of Roman Imperial power, and are at the very least clues that Paul might be trying to subvert the honor and shame codes employed by Rome.

The Polemical Nature of the Good News of Jesus Christ

The Roman view of nature is implicit rather than explicit, it is a totalizing system, a patchwork of interrelated forms of exploitation, its discourse was not open to interpretation, and to counter that discourse with a rival interpretation would obviously be seen as polemical. Thus in working through the implications of Paul's formulation of the good news against the backdrop of the imperial context, we need to keep in mind how the Roman cult touted piety and conquest as the means whereby the 'Golden Age' was restored: it used the designation 'son of god' for Caesar, it was in this context that κύριος became a descriptive term used for the emperor, it was Caesar who offered 'salvation', a salvation which brought the barbarians into submission causing the Pax Romana, it was Caesar who promoted and demanded 'faithfulness', it was through the restoration of ethical reforms that Caesar promoted self-mastery, and through all of this Justice was finally brought to Rome.[763]

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[760] See Wagner, "Heralds of Isaiah and the Mission of Paul," 178-80.

[761] Clines, *Literary Approach to Isaiah 53*, 61.

[762] Sampley, "Introduction: Paul in the Greco-Roman World," 14-15.

Paul's letter rejects this description of Rome's status quo and touts an alternative power of the good news which is able to bring about God's saving justice to the world.[764] In Romans we find a critical counterpart to the central institution of the Roman Empire, an institution that purported to hold the world together and represented a worldwide society. This exploration will attempt to demonstrate how the context of many of these key political terms that Paul used reverberated not only with the Scriptures of Israel, but also provided a challenge to the dominant imperial ideology that surrounded the early followers of Jesus.[765]

The use of Κύριος as Polemical

While it is true that not all of the Emperors around the time of Paul preferred to use the term κύριος as a self designation of their own power, the sources do betray an interesting progression, that as the monarchy became stronger and more power was being centralized into the emperor as the person in control of the world, the title not only became more prevalent but also acquired divine connotations. In the Roman Empire the succession of the emperors were often accompanied with proclamations of good news; good news that the return of the 'Golden Age' was imminent and that the in-breaking of the idyllic world of peace and harmony was near. This is seen in Horace's description of Augustus, 'O father and guardian of the human race, thou son of Saturn, to thee by fate has been entrusted the charge of mighty Caesar; mayst thou be *lord of all*, with Caesar next in power...'[766] Here the emperor was defined as the κύριος, the lord of the world, the one who claimed the allegiance and loyalty of subjects throughout the empire.[767] While the term κύριος took a while to be incorporated into the imperial style, and the use of the term fluctuated in degree to which emperors either assigned divine honors to themselves or allowed them to be assigned, after the reigns of Nero and Domitian, which marked a climax in the title κύριος, the use of this title became common.[768]

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[763] See Christopher Bryan, *Render to Caesar: Jesus, the Early Church, and the Roman Superpower* (Oxford Oxford University Press, 2005), 82.

[764] Robert Jewett, "The Corruption and Redemption of Creation: Reading Romans 8.18-23 within the Imperial Context," in *Paul and the Roman Imperial Order*, ed. Richard A. Horsley (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2004), 31.

[765] See Sylvia C. Keesmaat, "In the Face of the Empire: Paul's Use of Scripture in the Shorter Epistles," in *Hearing the Old Testament in the New Testament*, ed. Stanley E. Porter (McMaster New Testament Studies; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 183.

Bearing in mind this context, it was not an innocent thing for an itinerate preacher in the Roman world to proclaim the good news that the crucified Jesus was the true Lord of the world, and as a consequence Caesar was not.[769] Neither was it innocent to form alternative communities loyal to this 'other' Lord. But knowing that this is what Paul did leads us to ask how he envisioned the early Christian communities were to understand this phrase, especially those formed in the seat of imperial power.

As an early confession 'Jesus as Lord' certainly was meant to echo the Scriptures of Israel that spoke of YHWH in terms of κύριος (cf. Isa 45.23 in Phil 2.10f.), and while the phrase certainly came to signify Jesus' own divinity, it also came to provide the followers of Jesus a semiotic space with which to resist the power of imperial propaganda.[770] In the realm of competing political ideologies there can only be one ultimate authority, and the basic missionary proclamation that 'Jesus is Lord' came to mean for these early communities that all other powers and rulers were subordinate to the reign of this Jesus.[771] So either Paul decided to underscore his use of the title κύριος as a polemic that offered help in resisting the Roman imperial order, or he was completely naïve of the political developments and the use of κύριος within the empire.[772]

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[766] Horace, *Odes* 1.12.49-52.

[767] On the inscription evidence for κύριος as applied to the empower Nero see Wilcken's Ostraka (henceforth, OWilck) 1040, 1041 (58 CE); OWilck 15 [second hand, 59 CE] OWilck 410 (59 CE); OWilck 16 (60/61 CE); and Deissman's Ostraka (henceforth, ODeiss) 22, 23, 36a 39 (62 CE); OWilck 413, 414, 1623 (63 CE); ODeiss 24 (63 CE); OWilck 415(64 CE); OWilck 418; OWilck 1325, 1394 (64/65 CE); OWilck 416 (65 CE); OWilck 17, 771 (65/66 CE); POxy 246.30 [66 CE]; OWilck 18, 419, 1395, 1397, 1400 (66/67 CE); OWilck 417, 1396, 1398 (67 CE); ODeiss 37 (67 CE); SIG3 814.30-31 [67 CE]; OWilck 19, 420,1399 (67/68); OWilck 422 (68 CE). ODeiss 25, 76 (68 CE).

[768] Gottfried Quell and Werner Foerster, "Kurios," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, Gerhard Friedrich, Geoffrey William Bromiley, and Ronald E. Pitkin (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 3:1055.

[769] *Contra* Bryan, *Render to Caesar*, 92, who believes because Greco-Roman religion did not have a set doctrine that the two religions ought not be compared.

When we combine the notion that Paul is developing a semiotic space for resistance within the early Christian communities with Paul's idea that in the Scriptures of Israel the name of God and the divine title κύριος are 'terms of experience' which find their signification in God's history with Israel, we get a clear expression that the resistance is to be found with in the story of Israel as retold through the story of Jesus.[773]

The use of Power as Polemical

Power as signified by the Roman imperial order, like all power, is created and exercised predominately through the process of representation. This representation of power is itself a form of communication that relies on placing limits both on its creation and reception. Thus one of the ways to limit those who possess power is to limit the means of the creation, dissemination, and reception of communication. In antiquity this can be done rather easily by making impossible unauthorized participation in the political, social, and economic life through the restriction of linguistic, artistic, and architecture media. For the Emperor these forms of representation were as important to the continuance of his rule as were the passing of laws and the commanding of his armies. As discussed in preceding chapters, this maintenance of power took the form of exaggerated myth, statues, frescos, temples, and written communications. However, no matter how closely this communication was controlled, by its very nature communication is always a two-way process, and thus there is always space for dissent.[774] It was within this space that Paul developed a critique of Roman imperial order that insisted upon 'the voluntary downward plunge of the divine.'[775] Paul's understanding of the story of Jesus hinged upon his crucifixion and resurrection which Paul himself participates through, in the ethics of cruciformity. For Paul the Roman imperial order's representation of the matrix of power as being negotiated by the Emperor through the rhetoric of violence and coming from the Emperor himself is called into question.

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[770] Georgi, *Theocracy in Paul's Praxis and Theology*, 87. See also the discussion of the pre-Pauline hymn of Philippians 2.6-11 in Ernst Lohmeyer, *Kyrios Jesus. Eine Untersuchung zu Phil. 2.5-11* (Heidelberg: Winter, 1961), 41; Ralph P. Martin, "Carmen Christi Revisited," in *Where Christology Began: Essays on Philippians 2*, ed. Ralph P. Martin and Brian J. Dodd (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998), 1-5; Peter Oakes, "God's Sovereignty over Roman Authorities: A Theme in Philippians," in *Rome in the Bible and the Early Church*, ed. Peter Oakes (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 126-41.

[771] Colin J.D. Greene, "Revisiting Christendom: A Crisis in Legitimization," in *A Royal Priesthood: The Use of the Bible Ethically and Politically*, ed. C. Bartholemew (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2002), 324; Marcus J. Borg, *Reading the Bible Again for the First Time: Taking the Bible Seriously but Not Literally* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2002), 245 James D. G. Dunn, *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament: An Inquiry into the Character of Earliest Christianity* (London: S.C.M. Press, 1977), 50, notes that the phrase 'Jesus is Lord' was the principal confession of faith for both Paul and for his churches.

[772] Joerg Rieger, *Christ & Empire: From Paul to Postcolonial Times* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 39.

[773] Rieger, *Christ & Empire*, 40.

Key to this was Paul's metonymic use of the narrative of the cross, and his subsequent declaration that the good news is the power of God resulting in salvation is all part of Paul's rhetorical strategy to show that Jesus the Christ is the worlds true Lord and has ultimate power, even over death. Paul is deliberately contrasting the power of Caesar and his ability to bring the world under his rule to that of the humbled Messiah who is glorified through God's power.

The power of Caesar was described by Vitruvius in rather grandiose fashion:

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[774] See the helpful discussion in Richard Miles, "Communicating Cluture, Identity and Power," in *Experiencing Rome: Culture, Identity and Power in the Roman Empire*, ed. Janet Huskinson (London: Routledge, 2000), 35-37.

[775] Antoinette Clark Wire, *The Corinthian Women Prophets: A Reconstruction through Paul's Rhetoric* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 69-70.

> When your divine mind and power, Imperator Caesar, put the whole world under its command, your citizens gloried in your triumph and victory: for all their enemies were crushed by your invincible courage and all mankind obeyed your bidding. The Roman people and Senate, liberated from fear, has been guided by your bountiful thoughts and counsels ... Since, however, it was the heavenly counsel to commit him [Julius Caesar] to the regions of immortality and transfer imperial control to your power.[776]

Vitruvius was not alone, for Horace describes Caesar's rule as such, 'Neither civil strife nor death by violence will I fear, while Caesar holds the earth.'[777]

Rome had done — Augustus had done — the sort of thing that only gods could do. By contrast the power Paul speaks of in the crucifixion was to be made manifest in the communities' re-enactment of his death. By showing 'forth the Lord's death until he comes' (1 Cor. 11:26), it was Paul's desire for the followers of Jesus to hold before the public gaze the representation of the Empire's victim as the one whom God had vindicated bodily through the resurrection.[778] Paul, with this simple allusion of the cross and his emphasis on Jesus' resurrection, refuses to surrender the body of Jesus to the competing ideology of the Roman imperial order, insisting that it is because Jesus is Lord that all powers will ultimately be subjected to him.[779]

The use of Peace as Polemics

Implicit in the empire's story of good news was peace and security. If after Actium Augustus had not been able to navigate Roman politics into a period of peace and security, than many of the ethical reforms which he had promoted, and the rapid growth of the imperial cult, would have never been such a success. That Augustus brought peace to the world, giving salvation from chaos, creating a new sense of unity out of previously warring pluralities, helped to foster a certain inevitability about Rome and the emperor as its ruler. The Emperor had above all brought peace to the world, saved the Republic from disintegration, and created a perception of fairness in all matters.[780] This story of salvation and peace only helped perpetuate the notion that Augustus, and the emperors after him, were indeed 'sons of god'. People began to see the emperor as a savior with the power to bring peace and security to the world.[781] As the notion of peace began to proliferate throughout the empire, the emperor was successful in representing this peace through military superiority, politically, economically, legally, and religiously.[782]

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[776] Vitruvius *De architectura* 5.1.7, as quoted in Fergus Millar, *Rome, the Greek World, and the East* (Studies in the History of Greece and Rome; Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 268.

[777] Horace, *Odes* 3.14. 14-16.

[778] Although Paul did not establish the Roman communities, it is probable that Paul expected the same praxis from them, which is precisely why he can write to the Romans and expect it to be read.

[779] Neil Elliott, "Strategies of Resistance and Hidden Transcripts in the Pauline Communities," in *Hidden Transcripts and the Arts of Resistance: Applying the Work of James C. Scott to Jesus and Paul*, ed. Richard A. Horsley (Semeia Studies 48; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004), 87.

Paul's frequent use of εἰρήνη suggests that he is looking for critical engagement with this aspect of Roman Ideology. In Romans, the word εἰρήνη appears ten times, the expression 'to have peace' once.[783] Peace for Paul is the result of believing in Jesus Christ the Lord. It has its roots in the *shalom* described in the Scriptures of Israel, which for Paul is ultimately a gift from God. This peace, while a gift, was still to be actualized by living in accord with the statues prescribed in the covenant, which for the nations is summed up by Paul's phrase the obedience of faith. It is within the discussion of the exile and the eschatological restoration that Israel is promised a peace that is to be built in righteousness (Isa 54.13-14), a peace that Paul later echoes in Romans 5.1 and again in Romans 8.6. For Paul, peace has at its base the apocalyptic in-breaking of the good news of God through Jesus Christ. It has an eschatological element that will ultimately shatter the false security that Rome seems so confident in. It is the apocalyptic intervention of God and God's revealed destiny for humanity. For Paul there is no room for the peace of empire, which is a peace built upon the machinations of violence, rather than a peace that has the power to restore relationships not only with God, but also with their fellow human beings. It is here that Paul shows that the ethics of cruciformity are at stake, and it is here that Paul engages the Romans in a battle over imaginations.[784]

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[780] Dieter Georgi, "God Turned Upside Down," in *Paul and Empire: Religion and Power in Roman Imperial Society*, ed. Richard Horsley (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1997), 149-51.

[781] Rieger, *Christ & Empire*, 26.

[782] Klaus Wengst, *Pax Romana: And the Peace of Jesus Christ* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 7-51.

[783] Georgi, "God Turned Upside Down," 150.

The use of Faithfulness as Polemics

Just as πίστις plays a key role in the Paul's apocalyptic good news, it also played an important role in the rhetorics of Roman imperial order. πίστις, or *fides*, the Latin equivalent, was a term that through the burgeoning of empire became to explicitly announce the virtue of Caesar and the Roman people. It came to symbolize the idea that although Rome grew through its vast military might, once the conquered peoples came under Roman control they realized the fundamental benevolence of Rome's rule. Once this fact came to be understood, the conquered peoples entered into a relationship with Rome, which they expressed their gratitude through a sort of symbiotic faithfulness. [785] In the Greek translation of the Acts of Augustus it states, 'under the princes of Augustus many previously unbefriended peoples discovered the πίστις of the Roman people'.[786]

It was during the rule of Augustus that the use of *fides* was reinstituted from the early republic and given weightier dimensions. In fact as Augustus rule grew in its successfulness, *fides* and other key abstractions were deified and given a prominent role in Roman religion.[787] The *Fides* of Rome came to incorporate the sense of loyalty in marriage, faithfulness to treaty obligations, uprightness, truthfulness, honesty, confidence, and conviction, all of which became terms used to describe the Roman Empire. During this time *Fides* begins appearing frequently on coins, specifically signifying the army's faithfulness to the emperor.[788] It was in this way that *Fides* was incorporated as a key component of the ideology of peace in the Roman imperial order, insinuating that all peoples who fell under the umbrella of Roman rule related to one another in mutual loyalty to their Caesar.

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[784] Rollin A. Ramsaran, "Resisting Imperial Domination and Influence: Paul's Apocalyptic Rhetoric in 1 Corinthians," in *Paul and the Roman Imperial Order*, ed. Richard A. Horsley (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2004), 90.

[785] Crossan and Reed, *In Search of Paul*, 60.

[786] Georgi, "God Turned Upside Down," 149.

[787] See the discussion in Harold Lucius Axtell, *The Deification of Abstract Ideas in Roman Literature and Inscriptions* (New Rochelle: Caratzas 1987), 20.

However, on at least one occasion, Paul uses the term to speak of God's loyalty (πίστις) as affirmed and expressed in God's vindicating justice (δικαιοσύνη) with regards to the entire human race. The good news of Jesus refuses to employ threats and the exercise of power and violence – even the law – as instruments of its rulership. Instead Paul's understanding of the σωτηρία offered through Jesus has made loyalty a two-way street (ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν 1:17): it demonstrates and creates loyalty, but demands loyalty as well (1:16-17).[789] For Paul loyalty, or faithfulness, must have as its ultimate object the example of Jesus, who himself was faithful and loyal to Gods plan until the end.

Paul views πίστις as key to his explanation of the good news and as such the key to his ethics of cruciformity.[790] For Paul, faith is the initial and ongoing obedience that is grounded in Jesus' own faithfulness as the Messiah. It has as its roots the Jewish political idiom of loving YHWH found in Deuteronomy 13.1-4 – to pledge ones obedience to the policies of YHWH. Furthermore, as this pledge insinuates, for Paul to declare one's πίστις is to refuse every other authority that laid claim to this sort of ultimate love and loyalty.[791]

The use of Justice as Polemics

The message of the good news of Rome was clear, both justice and peace were a direct result of the divine favor that was bestowed upon Augustus. The *Acts of*

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[788] Georgi, "God Turned Upside Down," 149. On *Fides* used in the arena of marriage see Beth Severy, *Augustus and the Family at the Birth of the Roman Empire* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 11.

[789] Georgi, *Theocracy in Paul's Praxis and Theology*, 88.

[790] Gorman, *Cruciformity*, 95-121.

[791] See the discussion in Walter Brueggemann and Patrick D. Miller, *The Covenanted Self: Explorations in Law and Covenant* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), 50.

Augustus describe the δικαιοσύνη (chap. 34) of Augustus as one of his four attributes and recognized by law. It was decreed by the senate and the popular assembly for all to see. Justice as an attribute was inscribed upon golden plates and presented to the princeps.[792] Rome brought a civilizing force to the known world, and with it a peace that was proclaimed as justice. The imperial propaganda proclaimed that it was Caesar who had brought justice to the world, and as Horace opined, '...second to thee alone shall he with justice, rule the broad earth.'[793]

For Paul justice was both an attribute of God and a characteristic learned from what the Jewish God does.[794] It was God's willingness to bring back the fallen world into the sphere of his legitimate claim.[795] It was God's faithfulness in fulfilling the promises that he had made to the prophets – the fulfillment of the covenant and the restoration of creation. The root δικαι- in the context of empire transcends the realm of the individual into a moral struggle to decide who will define what true justice is.[796] For Paul it was the Jewish God, and only the Jewish God, who had the power to turn the nations from shame and curse so that propriety, honor, and freedom could characterize the rightful relationship this group of people could have with God.[797]

Conclusion: The Significance of the Political Polemics in Paul

It is clear that the propaganda of the Roman imperial order did not necessarily have to be a conscious enterprise in the minds of Paul's Roman audience for its oppressive connotations to be felt, for the very nature of empire is to produce these connotations by default. It is also reasonably clear that the terminology found within Paul's letter to the seat of imperial power was also used in the rhetoric of Roman imperial propaganda, so much so that the good news Paul preached made sense even if the audience did not at first make the connection to the overt allusions to the biblical tradition.[798] But what is not entirely clear are the reasons Paul sought to mimic the terms of imperial rhetoric. Was Paul attempting to head up an anti-imperial international alternative society based in local communities?[799] Did Paul use this rhetoric to be willfully in confrontation with the Empire? These questions ultimately do not have easy answers, and ultimately are matters of definition and degree. What is certain is that Paul used terms that coincided with the imperial cult and Roman imperial propaganda in order to forge distinctions and to foster a polemics of grammar, whether these were implicit or explicit need not matter. For when Paul proclaimed Jesus as Lord, it made relative all earthly rule, including that of the Caesars.[800] The good news that Paul proclaimed was intended for people to make a choice, to encourage them to mutual discernment, to foster their imaginations so that they might be able to understand 'reality', so they might begin to practice the obedience of faith and follow YHWH.[801]

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[792] Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum, 9:581. See also Ovid, *Epistuale ex Ponto* 3.6.23-29, where he described the dedication of a temple to *Iustitia*, by identifying the princeps with *Iustitia* 'long ago already he has enshrined her – justice – in the temple of his mind.' As cited in Georgi, "God Turned Upside Down," 149.

[793] Ovid, *Epistuale ex Ponto* 3.6.25; *Acts of Augustus*, ch. 34, and *OCD*, s.v, *Iustitia* (791). See also Horace, *Odes* 1.12. 58.

[794] Luke Timothy Johnson, *Reading Romans: A Literary and Theological Commentary* (Reading the New Testament Series; Macon: Smyth & Helwys 2001), 163.

[795] Käsemann, *Romans*, 29.

[796] Elliott, *Liberating Paul*, 192.

[797] Khiok-Khng Yeo, *Navigating Romans through Cultures: Challenging Readings by Charting a New Course*, Romans through History and Culture Series. (New York: T & T Clark International, 2004), 14.

> If this is true [that empires seek to monopolize the imagination], then the primal responsibility of Christian proclamation is to empower the community to re-imagine the world as if Christ, and not the powers, were sovereign. If the image of the emperor that is on every coin serves to ensnare the imagination of a domesticated people, then radical Christian proclamation and cultural practice will seek to demythologize the empire and devalue its currency. Such proclamation, such poetry will always be a subversion of the dominant version of reality.[802]

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[798] See for instance Blumenfeld, *The Political Paul.*

[799] Richard A. Horsley, *Jesus and Empire: The Kingdom of God and the New World Disorder* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 133-34.

[800] Peter Oakes, *Philippians: From People to Letter* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 129-74.

[801] Michael J. Gorman, *Apostle of the Crucified Lord: A Theological Introduction to Paul and His Letters* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 109.

[802] Walsh and Keesmaat, *Colossians Remixed*, 84.

Ultimately Paul's use of imperial propaganda was a result of his understanding of Jesus as the worlds true Lord. Paul finds in the Isaianic new exodus a surplus of themes that he transforms, bringing to the fore new resolutions in order to see the story of Jesus as a continuation and completion of the exodus narrative. It is within this textual space that the polemics of old are brought to the surface in order to carefully provide a subversive space to those whose imaginations are threatened. It is only in the ethical transformation of the followers of Jesus in conformity of God's will that gives form to Jesus' lordship, a transformation of the world in ways that go against the grain, which run counter to the imperial vision.[803] Paul finds as the cornerstone to his resistance to empire a special form of apocalyptic that proclaimed the death and resurrection of the messiah as the true Lord of the world. It was a message to the nations that God's intervention in the world brought about the fulfillment of his patriarchal promise – judgment of the rulers, delivering of his people, and the vindication of YHWH as the incomparable God. For Paul YHWH has already intervened in the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus the Christ, which inaugurates the deliverance of all peoples.[804] As Crossan and Reed maintain, there was more than just a minor difference between the power of empire and the power of Christ: while the Roman imperial order insisted upon a power that is top down and self glorifying, the good news of salvation Paul proclaimed was a self-empting challenge of someone who received their exaltation in crucifixion.[805] Paul's polemic is precisely that this self-emptying ethic ought to be made manifest in Jesus' own followers, as they form 'colonial outposts of the empire that is to be.'[806] It is precisely this context of self-empting ethics that the whole paraenesis that starts in Romans 12 is at such pains to express; Paul needs these communities to exemplify cruciformity so that his mission to Spain can be successful. For if Jesus the Christ is a different kind of lord, a lord who is not in solidarity with the powerful but with the weak, then this must be lived out among those in the nations who follow this Lord for the good news to have any credence.

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[803] Jon Sobrino, *Jesus in Latin America* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1987), 156.

[804] Richard A. Horsley, "Rhetoric and Empire - and 1 Corinthians," in *Paul and Politics: Ekklesia, Isreal, Imperium, Interpretation*, ed. Richard A. Horsley (Harrisburg: Trinity Press, 1998), 93-97.

[805] Crossan and Reed, *In Search of Paul*, 242.

[806] N. T. Wright, "Paul's Gospel and Caesar's Empire," in *Paul and Politics: Ekklesia, Israel, Imperium, Interpretation*, ed. Richard A. Horsley (Harrisburg: Trinity Press, 1998), 182.

EXCURSUS
A RE-READING OF ROMANS 13.1-7

The Resistance of Radical Love: a Re-reading of Romans 13.1-7

With any attempt at offering a political reading that claims to offer resistance to the Roman imperial order the interpreter must naturally deal with the text of Roman 13.1-7. While this excursus is not meant to further the thesis of Paul's intertextual use of the Scriptures of Israel, but rather it is to offer a possible interpretation to a pericope of scripture that has long been used in an anti-anti imperial interpretation of Paul. The text of Romans 13.1-7 has been used throughout its history of interpretation to offer a conservative rendering of Paul's view of politics. At the same time this text has been used to sanction a litany of terrible offenses in the name of accurate interpretation. In fact it is impossible to read these seven verses and remain unshaken by our own agonizing awareness, that these verses were used to sanction such offenses as the American slave trade, the horrors of Auschwitz, South African apartheid, and the 'disappeared' in Latin America. More pointedly for our purposes how do we reconcile the supposed Pauline plea for the status quo here, and those injustices and crimes against humanity that have hidden and continue to hide behind these verses?[807]

While the answers to these questions are not easy, any examination of such issues must start with a discussion of Pauline ethics. There has seemingly always been at least two ways to read the ethical statements of Paul. The first is to see all the ethical teachings of Paul as God's commandments and thus eternally and universally binding; the second is to see Paul's ethical teaching as primarily outmoded, irrelevant, ridiculous and anachronistic.[808] What this rather simple dichotomy seems to miss is the paramount importance of the ethics of interpretation in any ethical discussion. Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza in her 1987 SBL presidential address called for a re-centering of biblical studies into a more liberating praxis. Schüssler Fiorenza called for biblical scholars to ask such penetrating questions as (1) who is reading the text (whether individual or group) (2) which Bible does the interpretive community hold to, what authority does it grant to the text (that is, what view of the text does the interpretive community hold, what authority does it grant to the text) (3) how does it interpret the texts (which methods are used) and (4) why does the individual or community interpret the text (whose interests are at stake, what does the interpretive community want to achieve with their acts of interpretation)? With these questions, power becomes central to the interpretive task: Whose interests does the interpretation serve? What kind of worlds does the text envision? What roles, duties and values does it advocate? These questions, Schüssler Fiorenza maintains, require a double ethics – an ethics of historical reading and an ethics of accountability.[809] This excursus aims to explore an interpretation of Romans 13.1-7 focusing primarily on two questions: (1) what kind of world does the interpretation of the texts envision, and (2) what might a responsible interpretation, attempting to mitigate the negative effects these seven verses have had throughout the centuries, look like. These two questions are meant to open up the possibility of an interpretation that is both plausible while still allowing for a political critique of the Romans imperial order.

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[807] Winsome Munro, "Romans 13:1-7: Apartheid's Last Biblical Refuge," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 20, no. 4 (1990): 161-68; Stanley E. Porter, "Romans 13.1-7 as Pauline Political Rhetoric," *Filologia Neotestamentaria* 3 (1990): 115-39.

[808] Victor Paul Furnish, *The Moral Teaching of Paul: Selected Issues*, 2nd ed. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1985), 25.

Being mindful of the ethics of interpretation when dealing with a passage as controversial and potentially oppressive as Romans 13.1-7 is important not only because of how this passage has been used in the past not only to tolerate, but also to reinforce oppression, but also because it has been used unwittingly to distort and dismantle the cruciform ethics of Paul. The problem here is twofold: (1) how do we reconcile Paul's words here with what we have come to conclude about the Gospel elsewhere and (2) how do they fit with what we have come to understand about Paul? These questions are again not easily answered; in fact many modern day interpreters would rather disregard this text as inauthentic then to deal with its potentially embarrassing statements.[810] Trying to reconcile what we know of the Roman imperial order and what Paul says here is often difficult, as Joseph Klausner suggests:

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[809] Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, "The Ethics of Interpretation: De-Centering Biblical Scholarship," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 107, no. 1 (1988): 14-15. See also Daniel Patte, *Ethics of Biblical Interpretation: A Reevaluation* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), 1-12.

> When one considers all the shameful deeds of oppression, the murders and extortions, of the Roman government in every place where the hand of its authority reached, and particularly in the lands and provinces where Paul lived and traveled, one cannot escape a feeling of resentment and protest against this recital of praise for the tyranny of Caligula and Nero, or of Gessius Florus. One is forced to see in it flattery of the rulers.[811]

For the modern mind, with our ability to teleologicaly assess the overall justice of past governments, Paul's rhetoric seems at the very least to be over stated, and more likely flat out wrong.[812] One wonders whether Paul had forgotten that it was the Romans who were ultimately responsible for the death of the Christ; could he really believe that governments only punish those who do wrong (Romans 13.4), and could he, a prisoner, come to the honest conclusion that only those who have done wrong have reason to fear? Could Paul really be that deluded about the potential for evil in the Roman imperial order?

Romans 13 has puzzled scholars for ages namely because it seems to offer a defense of the Roman imperial order, while at the same time ignoring what Paul has to say elsewhere about ethics. Many answers have been given to this conundrum as to whether Paul is simply flattering the powers, or is merely an unconcerned proprietor of the status quo, but none seem to make sense of what Paul is doing in the letter to Romans as a whole, much less how it fits in to the *paraenesis*. I hope in this excurses to at least explore an alternative option that might help de-stabilize the sort of conservative readings of Paul so often lauded by those who have a stake in power.

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[810] See the discussion in Leander E. Keck, "What Makes Romans Tick?," in *Pauline Theology Vol. III: Romans*, ed. David M. Hay and E. Elizabeth Johnson (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 3-29. Also c.f. James Kallas, "Rom 13:1-7: An Interpolation," *New Testament Studies*, no. 11: 365-74; J. C. O'Neill, *Paul's Letter to the Romans* (Middlesex: Penguin, 1975), 207-08.

[811] Joseph Klausner, *From Jesus to Paul*, trans. William F. Stinespring (New York: Macmillan, 1943), 565.

[812] One suspects that if Paul himself could be summoned from the grave he would surely rephrase this evaluation of government.

James C. Scott's Hidden Transcripts a Way Forward?

For this task we enlist the methodological frame provided by James C. Scott in his recent study *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts.* Scott's work opens up a new interpretive frame, which allows us to analyze Romans 13.1-7 without succumbing to a 'political realism' which would undermine the cruciform communities which Paul sought to create. Indeed Scott's study allows for the apocalyptic aspects of Paul's gospel to remain in the forefront, calling the community to see that the Roman imperial order is but an illusion, an ideology, and giving them the resources to live differently.

Scott suggests that in any political situation where an elite class dominates segments of the population, you have an implicit or explicit ruling ideology, with differing levels of discourse throughout the population. Like performers in a play, there is an official script which the performers are expected to perform; this script, according to Scott, is managed by the ruling elites, and is made up of the ruling ideology, and is designated the 'public transcript'. Scott likens the 'public transcript' to that of a 'self-portrait', a painting demonstrating how the dominant elites would like the rest of the population to see them.[813] This is contrasted with the 'hidden transcripts' which are the discourses that take place 'offstage,' beyond the intimidating gaze of power holders, and which diverge from the official script.[814] The oppressed group's survival in such a society usually depends on their seeming compliance and obedience to the 'onstage' script, which follows the political play of the elite, hoping to find recourse for their interests within the prevailing ideology without appearing in the least bit seditious.[815] Of course this is not the only recourse for the oppressed; the 'hidden transcripts', while relegated to the 'offstage', beyond the scrutiny of the power holders, offer the oppressed group a 'politics of disguise and anonymity that takes place in public view, but is designed to have a double meaning in order to shield the identity of the actors.'[816]

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[813] James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 18.

[814] Scott, *Hidden Transcripts*, 18.

[815] Scott, *Hidden Transcripts*, 18.

Scott further nuances his discussion of both 'public' and 'hidden' transcripts to include both the elites who have power and the oppressed who reside at the other end of the spectrum. Accordingly, each group manifests to some degree the ability to perform both 'public' and 'hidden' transcripts. Thus, for example, the oppressed in peasant societies may partake in activities such as poaching, pilfering, clandestine tax evasion, and intentionally shabby work for their landlords. All such activities are part and parcel of the hidden transcript. Yet on the other end of the spectrum the dominant elites' hidden transcript might include clandestine luxury and privilege, the covert use of hired thugs, bribery, and tampering with land deeds. These practices, in each case, are in breach of the public transcript of the ruling elites and are, if at all possible, kept offstage and unavowed.[817] Meanwhile the public transcript remains quite stable, albeit taking a good deal of maintenance in order to consistently evoke the ruling ideology through symbols of domination, demonstrations and various enactments of power. According to Scott, 'Every visible, outward use of power, each command, each act of deference, each list and ranking, each ceremonial order, each public punishment, each use of an honorific title or a term of derogation is a symbolic gesture of domination that serves to manifest and reinforce a hierarchical order.'[818] Of course the persistence of any pattern of domination is always problematic, and is always a balance between the amount of resistance there is to the ruling elites and the 'force' required to keep it in place.[819]

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[816] Scott, *Hidden Transcripts*, 19.

[817] Scott, *Hidden Transcripts*, 14.

[818] Scott, *Hidden Transcripts*, 45.

[819] Scott, *Hidden Transcripts*, 45. Scott further states: 'Rituals of subordination are a means of demonstrating that a given system of domination is stable, effective, and here to stay (66).'

Scott's detection of the hidden transcript depends largely on the context of domination in the society. Since the hidden transcript is a social product and a result of power relations among the elites of society and their subordinates, he likens it to a type of folk culture; 'the hidden transcript has no reality as pure thought,' he states, 'it exists only to the extent it is practiced, articulated, enacted, and disseminated within these offstage social sites.' [820] It is the detection of this *double entendre* that is especially hard to do in ancient texts, since the texts in question can often be read as being complicit with the official transcript, thus often providing 'convincing' evidence of willing, even enthusiastic participation with the forces which dominate.[821] However, since it is this seeming willingness to contribute to the sanitized official transcript that often allows the oppressed to avoid detection, the reader of ancient texts must carefully look for clues that might tip off 'insiders' that something else is indeed going on.[822] According to Scott the typical way to rebel against the official transcript is to hide under the protective flattery which ensures that once the oppressed come under any scrutiny from above the rebels can claim to be perfect citizens.[823] In fact it is not uncommon for the oppressed to clothe their resistance and defiance in ritualism of subordination that serve both to disguise their purposes and to provide them with a ready route of retreat that may soften the consequences of possible failure.[824] Following Scott's lead we may then consider the dominant discourse as a plastic idiom of dialect that is capable of carrying an enormous variety of meanings, including those that are subversive even while resembling the dominant discourse itself.[825] Scott reminds us that unless the group has completely revolutionary ends the terrain of dominant discourse is the only plausible arena of struggle.[826]

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[820] Scott, *Hidden Transcripts*, 119.

[821] Scott, *Hidden Transcripts*, 86.

[822] Scott, *Hidden Transcripts*, 87.

[823] Scott, *Hidden Transcripts*, 89-90.

[824] Scott, *Hidden Transcripts*, 96.

[825] Scott, *Hidden Transcripts*, 103.

Paul's discourse in Romans 13.1-7 is well suited as an examination for possible hidden transcripts for at least two reasons. First it is the convincing scholarly development of placing the Pauline corpus over against the rhetoric of the Roman imperial order. The second is that it allows Paul's use of apocalyptic language to be something other than mere rhetoric.[827]

The Official Ideology of the Roman Imperial Order: Romans 13.1-7 as The Public Transcript

The logic of Romans 13.1-7 on its surface is that everything has its right place, and is ordered by cosmic law. What ultimately maintains this order is a system of retribution which, on the one hand, sustains life and grants well-being to those who live in harmony with this cosmic law, yet on the other hand, brings punishment and destruction to any violators. Moreover, this order is deemed an element of creation itself, and is enforced by the power of the state and her laws. The world that Rome offers is a 'practical' totality (a totality constituted and characterized by relationships of praxis), a system or structure of prevailing, dominant social actions and relationships, and is described elsewhere in the Pauline corpus as being under the hegemony of evil.[828] In the Roman State it was the religion (esp. the imperial cult) that legitimated its social institutions, patterns and laws, and its festivals and rituals were designed through mythic enactment to sustain the natural and social order.[829]

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[826] Scott, *Hidden Transcripts*, 103.

[827] In using apocalyptic, I prefer Wright's pragmatic definition, that insists that, 'apocalyptic is a way of investing space-time events with theological significance; it is actually a way of affirming the vital importance of the present continuing space-time order,' no matter how bad in 'reality' things had become. Apocalyptic was a way of reclaiming the imagination by denying that evil will have the last word, by opening up a 'reality' that is otherwise closed off, and by calling into account the sustainers of the imperial imagination. See Wright, *People of God*, 280-99.

[828] Enrique Dussel, *Ethics and Community* (New York: Orbis Books, 1988), 29.

[829] See Friesen, *Imperial Cults and the Apocalypse of John*; Gradel, *Emperor Worship and Roman Religion*; Price, *Rituals and Power.*

Conformity to the social rules and obligations of the Roman society was required, while variance from the laws and customs of the prevailing order was labeled as deviant behavior, threatening the well-being of both the individual and the society. Any change was viewed as disruptive and consequently was resisted by both political power and through symbolic rituals.[830]

This paradigm is fortified by appealing to the divine throughout the argumentation in Romans 13:1-7, such as 'every person should submit to God,' 'God punishes those who resist his ordinations,' 'God always does what is good' and 'everything belongs to God'. Through a strategy of transitive argumentation, these values are transposed to the authorities – primarily to warrant the claim that authorities are ordinations of God and should therefore be obeyed by everyone. Accordingly, authorities have a specific place within the Roman society. Indeed their function and authority form part of the cosmic order. The authorities are instrumental in maintaining this order through a system of retribution and punishment. Those who live in harmony with this order, that is, in this specific context, those who submit to the authorities, are characterized as people who 'do good' (13:3). To 'do good' is to conduct oneself in accordance with the divine, 'God always does what is good.' Those who 'do good' receive the authorities' approval and praise (καὶ ἕξεις ἔπαινον ἐξ αὐτῆς, 13:3), and their life and well-being are assured. This approval or bestowing of praise from the authorities is specifically grounded with a reference to the function of the authorities in terms of their divine ordination: θεοῦ γὰρ διάκονος ἐστιν σοὶ εἰς τὸ ἀγαθόν (the authority is a servant of God for your good, 13:4). Note that what the 'good' consists of is never expanded upon, rather it is an unspoken assumption that everyone knows what the good is (and inversely what the bad is). This general and unspoken assumption is a further example of an all pervasive ideology.

Those who violate this ideology which nature itself attest too, in this case by resisting the authorities, will be punished: they will incur judgment (οἱ δὲ ἀνθεστηκότες ἑαυτοῖς κπίμα λήμψονται,13:2). The punishment is explicated with the reference to the 'sword' being carried and used by the authorities (οὐ γὰρ εἰκῇ τὴν μάχαιραν φορεῖ, 13:4). The implication of this reference is clear, namely, the punishment consists of the fact that the authorities will execute those who do 'bad.' This may also be taken as an assumption presupposing a cosmic order of harmony and order. Again, because everyone knows what is bad, to resist the authorities is one specific example of 'bad' conduct. To resist the authorities, therefore, endangers the harmony of the divinely ordained cosmic order sustained by the divinely ordained authorities. Therefore, 'bad' behavior should be rooted out to ensure the continued harmonious existence of the cosmic order.[831] Representing the ruling elite's ideology, the moral exhortation of Romans 13:1-7 is a powerful means of ideological control in order to enforce submission to its authoritarian rule and its conception of 'law and order.'

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[830] Leo G. Perdue, "The Social Character of Paraenesis and Paraenetic Literature," *Semeia* 50 (1990): 6-7.

It seems that at face value Paul is in collusion with the ruling elites, and that he is making sure that his communities will be safeguarded against any imperial backlash. But it is my contention that what Paul is doing is identifying how the Roman government wants to co-opt its subjects into good servants of the state.[832] Paul offers an exaggerated public transcript which on the one hand warns his communities that there are real dangers to standing up to those in power, but on the other hand reminds the Christians at Rome of the importance of acknowledging the ideological system which they live, because it is only by being cognizant of the system that they can refrain from being subjected by it.[833] What Paul offers his communities is the freedom that comes only with reflection, a freedom that Monya

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[831] Jan Botha, *Subject to Whose Authority?: Multiple Readings of Romans 13* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994), 204-05.

[832] Paul in effect recognizes the power of the ideology of the Roman imperial order, its cultural norms, institutions, and traditions, to mold patterns of individual behavior. So Dunn, *Romans*, 712.

[833] Monya A. Stubbs, "Subjection, Reflection, Resistance: An African American Reading of the Three-Dimensional Process of Empowerment in Romans 13 and the Free-Market Economy," in *Navigating Romans through Cultures: Challenging Readings by Charting a New Course*, ed. Khiok-Khng Yeo (Romans through history and culture series; New York: T & T Clark International, 2004), 186. Wright notes that what Paul is saying is that 'preaching and living the gospel must always be announcing and following Jesus, rather than Caesar, as the true Lord. But the eschatological balance must be kept. The church must live as a sign of the coming complete kingdom of Jesus Christ; but since that kingdom is characterized by "righteousness, peace, and Joy in the Holy Spirit," it cannot be inaugurated in the present by chaos, violence, and hatred [cf. 14:17]. The methods of the Messiah himself (12:14-21) must be used in living out his kingdom within the present world.' See Wright, "Romans," 720.

Stubbs remarks, 'involves participation in the governing structure with the discerning awareness that it represents *one* but not the absolute way of being in the world'.[834]

The Role of Apocalyptic as a Means of Subversion to the Official Ideology

One of the lenses which Paul offers his communities to see things differently is that of apocalyptic discourse. Leo Perdue argues that paraenetic literature often functions as a method of subversion. Paraenetic literature is subversive because it offers an alternative system of ethics which appeal to nature, the gods, and tradition in order to support its own ideology. Moral exhortations are a powerful means of ideological control in the process of group formation. By offering a different totalizing system of ethics, the *paraenesis* starting in Romans 12 challenges the state ideology, even if in praxis it varies very little from it, namely because it calls into question the ideologies claim that it is the absolute way of being in the world.[835] Any insubordination to a totalizing system, even if it is a relatively small insurgency within the public transcript, is nevertheless a means of subversion simply because it attacks the symbolic Achilles heel of the state.[836]

The apocalyptic nature of the *paraenesis* is intended to turn the world the Romans live in upside down. Romans 12 starts with a call for the Roman Christians to have their minds 'renewed' rather than be 'conformed to this world' so that they might 'prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect' (12:2), instead of asserting their rights regardless of the impact on the 'weak'. The

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[834] Stubbs, "Subjection, Reflection, Resistance," 183.

[835] Perdue, "The Social Character of Paraenesis and Paraenetic Literature," 6-9. Perdue's view is similar to that of Wright who argues that, 'If the gospel of Jesus, God's Son, the King who will rule the nations (1:3-4; 15:12) does indeed reveal God's justice and salvation, which put to shame the similar claims of Caesar (1:16-17; Phil 2:5-11; 3:19-21); if it is true that those who accept this gospel will themselves exercise a royal reign (5:17); and if Paul suspects that his audience in Rome are getting this message-then it is all the more important to make it clear that this does not mean a holy anarchy in the present, an over realized eschatology which the rule of Christ has already abolished all earthly governments and magistrates. Precisely because Paul is holding out for the day when all creation will be renewed (8:1- 27), when every knee shall bow at the name of Jesus (Phil 2:10-11), it is vital that the excitable little groups of Christians should not take the law into their own hands in advance.' So Wright, "Romans," 718-9.

[836] Scott, *Hidden Transcripts*, 106.

Roman Christians' positive response to Paul's exhortation will mean nothing less than a 'fore-taste' of the eschatological worship which Israel and the nations are to be joined (15:7-12); further, it will fulfill his sacred service by guaranteeing the sanctity of his 'offering of the nations' (15:14-16).[837] Gordon Zerbe concurs that the wider context of Romans 12 and 13 involves the theme of nonrivalrous love (ἀγάπη ἀνυπόκπιτος, 12:9) and 'the apocalyptic conflict between the aeons of good and evil' (12:19-20; 13:11-13).[838] Walter Wink writes, 'discernment does not entail esoteric knowledge, but rather the gift of seeing reality as it really is. Nothing is more rare, or more truly revolutionary, than an accurate description of reality.'[839] Indeed the gift of Paul's hidden transcript is not to be immune to invasion by the empire's ideology, but to be able to discern the internalized ideology, name it, and then externalize it.[840] The paraenesis, at least at the level of thought, creates an imaginative breathing space which the normal categories of order and hierarchy are less than completely inevitable.[841] Paul understands that there are real obstacles to resistance, but he wants to make sure that the inability of the Christians in Rome to imagine a counterfactual social order is not one of them.[842] Paul's hope is to empower the Christians at Rome to break through the idolatries of 'worldly' structures and build a community and an ideological stance grounded in offering their minds and bodies to the worship of God through the voluntary indebtedness (love of neighbor) and the only way this can be achieved is for them to be able to see reality as it really is.[843]

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[837] Neil Elliott, "Romans 13.1-7 in the Context of Imperial Propaganda," in *Paul and Empire: Religion and Power in Roman Imperial Society*, ed. Richard A. Horsley (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1997), 195. The flip side of this is that Paul's exhortation is an attempt to wrest from the empire the right to declare where justice is to be discerned; see Elliott, *Liberating Paul*, 215.

[838] Gordon Zerbe, "Paul's Ethic of Non-Retaliation and Peace," in *The Love of Enemy and Nonretaliation in the New Testament.*, ed. W. Swartley (Studies in Peace and Scripture 3; Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox, 1992), 177-222.

[839] Walter Wink, *Engaging the Powers: Discernment and Resistance in a World of Domination* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 89.

[840] Wink, *Engaging the Powers*, 89.

[841] Scott, *Hidden Transcripts*, 168. In using the term imagination, I use Brueggemann's definition as, 'very simply the human capacity to picture, portray receive, and practice the world in ways other than it appears to be at first glance when seen through a dominant, habitual, unexamined lens. More succinctly, imagination as the quintessential human act is a valid way of knowing,' so Walter Brueggemann, *Biblical Perspectives on Evangelism: Living in a Three-Storied Universe* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1993), 13.

[842] Scott, *Hidden Transcripts*, 81.

The Radical Use of Hidden Transcripts in Romans 13.1-7

The first clue that Paul is up to something other than presenting a first century version of 'political realism' in Romans 13.1-7 is the consequences such rhetoric would have on the gospel Paul proclaims.[844] According to Käsemann the notions expressed in Romans 13.1-7, 'that the authorities constantly seek to be God's servants, is obviously exaggerated if not wholly incredible'; the 'proof' Paul offers for his exhortation is 'forced' and lacking in persuasiveness.[845] Forced, because one is left wondering how a community tempted to rebellion (13:2) by the exorbitant abuses of tax gatherers really would have had their minds changed by platitudes about magistrates serving the good and punishing only the bad (13:3, 4).[846] Even more troubling are the discrepancies within the immediate context of Romans 12-13. First, while the context of 12.1 is apocalyptic, there is a lapse of this in 13:1-7 while it reappears again in 13:11-12. Second, is the assignment of vengeance as God's prerogative to avenge wrong-doing (cf. 12:19-20), which in Romans 13.4 is given to the government authorities. Finally, Paul in 12.2 seems to imply that what is good, acceptable and perfect is tied up in the gospel, the vindication of the crucified Lord, yet in 13:3 'traditional' social values of 'good' and 'bad' are accepted without qualification, even though in the surrounding context Paul anticipates that Christians will suffer unjust persecution from their neighbors (12:17-21), and exhorts Christians to 'cast off the works of darkness' that characterize the present evil age (13:11-13). These discrepancies are clues to the Christians at Rome that something more is happening than meets the eye. Paul, I believe, is extolling an exaggerated public transcript, in an effort to challenge his readers to see the Roman state ideology for what it is, an idolatrous ideology that cannot coexist with the gospel which Paul proclaims.[847]

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[843] Stubbs, "Subjection, Reflection, Resistance," 190.

[844] If in Romans 13:1-7 Paul was in fact addressing the subject of the Christians responsibility towards the government, then it would be the only significant treatment of the issue in the whole Pauline corpus. Cf, Elliott, "Imperial Propaganda," 184-5.

[845] Käsemann, *Romans*, 357-59.

[846] Elliott, *Liberating Paul*, 219-20.

Thus Paul's exaggerated public transcript in 13.1-7 cannot be properly interpreted without special attention to how Paul frames the text. Before Paul talks about the government he exhorts the Roman Christians to 'not be conformed to this world, but to rather be transformed by a renewed imagination' (12.2). This call relativizes and at the same time contextualizes the statements of 13:1-7. The Christians of Rome are reminded that their primary commitment is not to any other authority, but rather to God. Paul calls them to distance themselves by remembering the ethics of the cross, and to avoid any straightforward identification with the Roman imperial system.[848] Paul continues by exhorting the Roman Christians toward an ethic of non-retaliation, summoning them to repay evil with good (12.16-21). Paul seeks to remind them of the enormous breakthrough achieved by Jesus in his teaching and death; that to suffer innocently and not to retort or retaliate is to win a far greater victory than can ever be achieved by hitting back. It is to win a victory over evil itself.[849] Paul is thus calling for nothing less than the imagination to live a life that is governed by Cruciformity, or as Theissen has so aptly put it, 'the renunciation of status and the love for the "other". This is exactly what the essence of primitive Christianity was all about, the symbiotic relationship between revolutionary love of the other, and the renunciation of status, as exemplified in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.[850] In fact the list of practices that are delineated starting in chapter 12 are all implications of and follow from the apocalyptic vindication of Jesus Christ on the cross.

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[847] I use the term 'exaggerated' because of Elliott's study of the contemporary discussions of the maintenance of public order and the political rhetoric of peace used by the Roman Emperors of this time to discount the use of the sword. Elliott claims that this is evidence of polemic by Paul directly contrasting the Empires wishes to be seen as peaceful and ruling through benevolence. See Elliott, *Liberating Paul*, 129-220; Elliott, "Strategies of Resistance and Hidden Transcripts," 97-102.

[848] Kathy Ehrensperger, "A Subversive Reading of Paul: A Response to Stubbs, "Subjection, Reflection, Resistance"," in *Navigating Romans through Cultures: Challenging Readings by Charting a New Course*, ed. Khiok-Khng Yeo (Romans through history and culture series; New York: T & T Clark International, 2004), 199.

[849] Wright, "Romans," 723. According to Wright, 'What Paul wants here is not to stop the Christians in Rome from taking to the streets, but rather he wants to keep them from private resentments and from the calculation of one's just deserts, for these are the spiritual roots of scapegoating violence.' It is impossible to be caught up in scapegoating and to live the ethic of mutual compassion and striving for the common good. Cf. Elliott, *Liberating Paul*, 223. It also may be noted that Paul was not advocating that the Roman Christians live peaceably among all in order to 'effect a change in the abuser' or achieve 'the conversion and reconciliation of opponents.' But rather Paul maintains that for those who believe in the vindication of God, this is how the community participates in the defeating of evil itself. Cf. Zerbe, "Paul's Ethic of Non-Retaliation and Peace," 177-222.

Just as the remarks immediately preceding Romans13.1-7 help to elucidate the text, of equal importance for framing the purposes of Paul's text are the verses that immediately follow. Paul concludes the section dealing with the governing authorities with the language of debt. In fact in Romans 13.7 Paul says to 'Pay to all what is due them. . .' This language is not only an admonition to give to the authorities what they require, but as Kathy Ehrensperger perceptively notes, is 'also an inherent hint not to give anything more than that.'[851] In verse 8 Paul returns to the language of debt, stating that despite what has just been previously stated, the Roman Christians are required to 'Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law.' Paul's juxtaposition of dept language (ὀφειλάς/ὀφείλετε) and love (ἀγαπᾶν/ἀγαπῶν) again challenges the Roman social structure as an absolute authority and offers the concept of a 'debt of love' as an alternative system of authority, as a measuring stick which gauges the actions and intentions of both individuals and governing institutions. Paul moves beyond the traditional ideas of indebtedness and challenges the community to understand their debt to humanity as the logical consequence of love.[852]

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[850] This point is made explicit in ethics section of Theissen, *A Theory of Primitive Christian Religion*. For a philosophical treatment of the 'other' see Emmanuel Lévinas, *Otherwise Than Being, or, Beyond Essence* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1998), Ch. 4. On the importance of the crucified Lord in Paul's thought see Gorman, *Cruciformity*.

[851] Ehrensperger, "A Subversive Reading of Paul," 200. Interestingly enough the subtle acknowledgment that the 'ministers' power is not established by their own will, but only by the will of God, is a clear limitation and thus a relativising of any absolute power claim.

[852] Stubbs, "Subjection, Reflection, Resistance," 188. See also the comments by Ehrensperger, "A Subversive Reading of Paul," 199.

The revolutionary nature of the 'hidden transcripts' found in Romans 13.1-7 is that they do not conform to the regular nature of hidden transcripts themselves. Paul's aim is not for the Christians of Rome to do clandestine things 'offstage' that might subvert the Roman Empire. Rather Paul is calling for the Christians at Rome to practice what Garrett Green calls the 'Copula of Imagination'.[853] The copula of imagination is when Paul desires to reorganize and reshape the imaginations of the Roman Christians, he often uses the language of 'as.' The 'as' that Paul proclaims is not the 'as' of empire, it is not the 'as' founded in the reality of the hear and now, but it is the 'as' that looks forward, it is the 'as' grounded in the apocalyptic vision of the cross, the 'as' of a new reality made possible by the vindication of the Lord Jesus Christ.[854] Paul offers the 'as' of the paraenesis over against the 'as' of the empire by encouraging the community of believers to act in a manner that gives priority to personhood in God, not to the judicial or legalistic prescriptions of the law or the hierarchal and exploitive social relations of the Roman state.[855] For Paul the 'hidden transcript' must be made the public transcript of love. A radical transcript that is not merely for ones own neighbors, but also for ones enemies, a transcript that does not only seek out vengeance when wrong but allows for the final saving justice of God in Christ Jesus.[856]

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[853] Garrett Green, *Imagining God: Theology and the Religious Imagination* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1989), 137-45.

[854] Walter Brueggemann, *Texts under Negotiation: The Bible and Postmodern Imagination* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 14.

[855] Stubbs, "Subjection, Reflection, Resistance," 189-90.

[856] Elliott, *Liberating Paul*, 226.

Conclusion

The God Paul worshiped wanted it all. 'Render unto God the things that are God's and unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's' is not what Caesar wants to hear. Caesar also wants it all too.[857]

We find Paul, writing a letter to the nations in Rome itself, introducing himself as the accredited messenger of the one true God. He brings the good news, the εὐαγγέλιον, as Paul's reading of the Psalms insist, is the Lord, the κύριος, of the whole world. Paul's task is to bring all the nations, into loyal allegiance — ὑπαχοή πίστεος, the obedience of faith — to this universal Lord. He is eager to announce this εὐαγγέλιον in Rome, without shame, because this message is the power of God which creates salvation for all who are loyal to it, Jew and Greek alike. Why is this? Because in this message (this 'good news of the son of God'), the justice of God, the δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ, is unveiled. [858]

What then I propose in Romans is at least in part is discursive speech that is leveled against the gods of Rome, and more particularly Caesar as god, and lord of this world, much in the same vain as the speech of Isaiah was polemic against the idols, and exodus event was a polemic against the pharaoh. Paul crafts this letter to be at least in part polemic using the very language of empire and inverting Caesar's claims and applying them more importantly to Jesus as the Cosmic Lord. Paul does this specifically by appropriating the language of empire in a new and subversive way. For Paul this was a way of reclaiming the imagination by denying that evil has the last word, by showing us what we are not seeing, by calling into account the sustainers of status quo, by denying empires the thing they desire most, the imaginations of their subjects.[859] The Jewish belief in one God is an example of the resistant imagination, and was always a polemical doctrine over against pagan idolatry. In some of greatest narratives, in the scriptures of Israel, this opposition is explicit: the exodus was God's victory over the gods of Egypt, and the revelation of God's saving righteousness in Isaiah 40-55 meant that at the very least, the overthrow of the Babylonian gods.[860] Paul's genealogy of sin in Romans 1.18-32 and his proclamation that Greco-Roman society at large was full of fornication, itself was a critique of both emperor and Empire. To argue that the emperor had failed and that Christ was the true answer to sin again suggests an anti-imperial stance.[861]

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[857] Stanley Hauerwas, *Wilderness Wanderings: Probing Twentieth-Century Theology and Philosophy* (Radical Traditions; Boulder: Westview Press, 1997), 117.

[858] Wright, "Paul and Caesar," 176.

[859] I am aware of the scholarly approaches and definitions of Apocalyptic and its cognates. My use of 'Apocalyptic' is, of course, in comparison rather basic and pragmatically suited to fit my discussion, and thus simply another construct. Precise definitions have still eluded scholars and continue to attract debate. See the informed discussion in R. Barry Matlock, *Unveiling the Apocalyptic Paul: Paul's Interpreters and the Rhetoric of Criticism* (JSNTSup 127; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press,

Paul wants the communities to see that they are not really subjects of the empire until their imaginations have been taken captive. As long as they continue to cultivate the memories of life before exile, and as long as they harbor dreams of a social reality alternative to the empire, they are a threat to the empire. Their liberated imaginations keep them free even in the face of violent military repression. And until that imagination is broken, domesticated and reshaped in the image of the empire, the people are still free.[862] Once Paul became convinced that in Christ's crucifixion and exaltation God had inaugurated the fulfillment of history, the delivery of the promises to Abraham, the return from exile, he understood his own role to be not simply the preaching of the 'good news' of that fulfillment. But also the organizing of communities of people in anticipation of the imminent advent of direct divine rule. Paul's project was revolutionary in scope, building an alternative society built upon a revolutionary ethic of the crucified Lord.[863]

1996).. I like the notion of Paul's apocalyptic vision being akin to Edward Said's notion of 'decolonizing cultural resistance,' an alternative way of conceiving human history Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 216. Important also to note John Howard Yoder's insistence that, 'Apocalyptic literature is written by and for the others.' John Howard Yoder. " Twenty Years Later: Translation of the Italian Epilogue in the Politics of Jesus.". (Place Published, 1991), http://www.nd.edu/~theo/research/jhy_2/writings/christology/italepilog.htm.

[860] Wright, "Paul and Caesar," 185.

[861] This might be why following his description of the inclusivity of the good news, and before his description of the genealogy of sin, Paul declares that he is not ashamed of the good news; certainly to Roman ears this might have sounded like fighting words directed at the Emperor. See Wright, "Paul's Gospel and Caesar's Empire," 160-83.

[862] Walsh and Keesmaat, *Colossians Remixed*, 82.

[863] Horsley, "Imperial Biblical Studies," 165.

CHAPTER NINE
CONCLUSIONS

This thesis has attempted to show the potential impact that an intertextual reading has to offer in an interpretation of Paul's letter to the Romans. By examining the programmatic introduction of Romans as a threshold we have claimed that it was the proverbial key to unlocking the text, that it revealed the necessary information in order to create the model readers, and that it offered a challenge to the Roman imperial order. An intertextual reading has led to a reading attuned to the potentialities within a text focusing on the meaning that is evoked by the transformation of earlier signifying systems. This text's own assertion that the Scriptures of Israel are essential to its decoding (Rom 1.2-4), and the fact that this threshold text is framed at the beginning and end with a text that, when juxtaposed within its original context, looks forward to the end of exile (Rom 1.17, Hab 3), suggests that these aspects were designed to point the reader to the intertextual encyclopedia, and to Paul's aim in creating a very specialized kind of reader. When this is coupled with Paul's extensive use of Isaiah 40-55 throughout the letter, we begin to get the inclination that one of the subtexts to the letter to the Romans might in fact be bound up in a narrative of the second exodus and the motifs of exile and return. While it was our intention early on in framing this thesis to explore these possibilities and their implications throughout Paul's letter to the Romans, we ultimately had to focus on the beginning of the letter and the impact it necessarily has on the letter as a whole. How this proposal could affect the reading of the rest of the letter will ultimately have to remain for a latter time.

Looking at the exodus motif and the themes embedded in it as a potential intertext in Romans allowed us two constructive avenues in the study of Romans. First it allowed us to maintain what interpreters have long held to be the circumstances of the Second Temple period, namely that it was a period when those who read the Scriptures did so to understand what was happening to them in their present experience.[864] Paul, as a reader of Scriptures read, at least after the Damascus event, through the peculiar lenses of Jesus as Israel's faithful Messiah. It was through his experience that he no doubt sought to reread the Scriptures of Israel through this new reality and to understand them anew in light of his vocation as the called 'apostle to the nations'.[865] It is not surprising then that Paul might focus on a narrative that throughout its history of interpretation has allowed space for the nations to have a part in Israel's own restoration. In this sense our reading of Romans does not revolve around the traditional setting of a crisis between Judean and non-Judean Christians. Rather, Paul without excluding Judeans is able to argue very effectively and very passionately that the inclusion of the nations was indeed always the goal of the prophets.[866]

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[864] Sanders, "Intertextuality and Dialogue," 42.

The second avenue of exploration that an intertextual reading has opened up is that the narrative of the exodus (and exile and return) and its re-use throughout the Scriptures of Israel has always betrayed a polemic against the gods of the nations. When we examine this closer we see that Paul probably intentionally used language that when understood within the social milieu of the Roman imperial order would have no doubt been viewed as unappreciated polemics by the ruling elites. Paul did this in continuity with the exodus narrative to convince his readers, who were being persuaded by the good news of Rome that the Jewish God, as described in the Scriptures of Israel, was indeed the incomparable God and that allegiance and worship was due to this God alone.

In order to get to these conclusions we first examined the narrative of the exodus and argued that it had become one of Israel's formative texts. It became formative namely because it came to answer the question of who YHWH was, and what YHWH did. Reminiscent of the ANE literature YHWH was to the early Hebrews the superior and the incomparable deity, because YHWH defeated the Egyptian deities on the shores of the Re(e)d Sea. To the early Hebrews the stories of YHWH's power began to permeate their conciseness and to determine how their subsequent histories would be written.

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[865] For how this plays out in the later portions of the text of Romans, see Wagner, *Heralds of the Good News*, 353-59.

[866] See Gaston, *Paul and the Torah*, 134.

These 'power-of- YHWH' stories were called into question by the narrative of Israel's captivity by the Babylonians. It was here that the exodus narrative was reworked in order to give hope to a people that were once again brought under the yoke of slavery. When it seemed that YHWH had lost the final battle to the superior Babylonian gods, the old power-of-YHWH stories could no longer inspire confidence or hope. This gave way to a reworking of the exodus traditions into a prophecy of a new exodus, when YHWH would once again act on behalf of Israel and rescue them from oppression. It was the narrative of this new exodus that however took on new and unexpected twists, revealing a tendency towards the inclusion of the nations into the people of god.

This examination of the exodus motif and its narrative substructure within the Scriptures of Israel was intended to stress the various themes contained within this motif, highlighting how these themes evolved and were transformed from the texts of Exodus 1-15 to the texts of Isaiah 40-55. This section was designed to give a literary account of these themes in order for our readers to understand how the motif might work as a pretext, as a consequence this reading was not characterized in terms of its historical contexts (although we were mindful of them), but rather it has been characterized ultimately in order to discover the ways Paul might have appropriated these themes, and how *his* appropriation ultimately affected his readership.

The next two chapters were intended to set forth both the cultural and historical setting for the ensuing reading of Romans. In chapter 4, we start by examining the exodus motif in the texts of the Second Temple period, to see what effect(s) the Babylonian return from exile had on its latter use and re-use. Here we claim that even though in many ways the return could have been deemed over, there were a number of texts, and for that matter a number of Judaism(s), that still the found the (re)use of this motif useful for their various purposes. Our aim in this chapter was not to prove that the narrative of exile and return was the controlling narrative of these various Judaism(s), nor that there was even any normative use of such a narrative, but rather our point was to show that it was a powerful narrative used by various Judaism(s), in order to not only claim that their form of Judaism had continuity with the Scriptures of Israel, but also to set their very future within the narrative of the past.

In the next chapter (5), we briefly surveyed the context of the Roman imperial order, in an effort to compare this cultural context to our interpretation of the threshold of Romans. We examined the rhetoric of the Roman imperial order in the first century as one of the cultural narratives that would have resonated all over the Empire in general, and Rome in particular. This chapter is used as the basis for our later argument (chapter 8 and 9) that the rhetoric of the Roman imperial order was brought to the fore within the context of the exodus motif's polemics against the gods of the nations, in order for Paul to challenge the strategy of containment so effectively ingrained in the Roman imperial order. Paul was determined to take this internally coherent system and open up enough space to allow for the very unimaginable possibilities which for Paul lay just beyond the boundaries.

It was our objective for both of these chapters to ground our reading of the beginning of Romans in such a way that these embedded cultural and historical pretexts helped explain Paul's letter to Rome. When we characterize the text of Romans in this way we are naturally exploring the cultural contexts of Rome, a context which provides a backdrop necessary to explore the appropriation of Paul's intertextuality. In this way the very textuality and modes of reading we employ are understood as historically embedded, and as much as we are interested in the first century reader's reception of Paul's letter to the Romans, we are constructing a history.

With this necessary ground work laid we were now able to examine how Paul's intertextual use of the Scriptures of Israel, especially the prophets, were designed to frame the text, and guide his readers/hearers into the proper interpretation of his text. Paul's use of the prophets as a pretext was not meant as a random set of proof texts designed to mystify his audience or to add the weight of Scripture to his message, but were rather carefully selected texts that encompassed the larger themes and motifs of the exodus and exile. The appropriations of the exile served the double purpose of signaling to the believing nations at Rome that the exile was now over, and that through Jesus as the Messiah, the very restoration promises of old were now taking place through the power of his death and resurrection. This appropriation of the end of exile also signaled the ingathering of the nations, and allowed Paul to fulfill his calling as the apostle to the nations. Both of these appropriations were no doubt violations of the audience's horizon of expectations, and as such the prophets were invoked as a means to guide Paul's readers into this unexpected but 'correct' interpretation –thus the centrifugal intertextual encyclopedia. It is through this intertextual inquiry that Paul's message of good news to the nations reflects a dynamic interplay between the Scriptures of Israel and Paul's own message, an interplay that included his Damascus calling, his readings of scripture, his missionary experiences, and his cultural and historical contexts (especially Empire). It is precisely the social location of these texts in relation to Empire that allows Paul to use the themes found within the Isaianic second exodus to challenge the imaginations of the nations who were residing in Rome. And it is through this complex interplay that Paul's appropriation of the prophets is designed to help construct the very letter he wrote.

As hinted at above Paul used the exodus and exile motifs unlike any other Judaism(s) of the period, namely because of his conviction that we was in the beginnings of the 'restoration' period. Paul took a narrative that throughout the Scriptures of Israel and the Second Temple period was used in times of trouble and uncertainty in order to remind the faithful that whatever their present circumstances, hope was indeed certain, even if it was yet future; and completed it. For many of the Judaism(s), exile and restoration became a paradigm to make sense out of their present circumstance, for Paul however, it was an open narrative that needed closure, closure which he offered in the story of Jesus the Messiah.

Our interpretation of the programmatic threshold of Romans using intertextuality is meant to open up new avenues and possibly new interpretations of the text of Romans. It was Paul's unexpected interpretation of the past that makes the intertextual encyclopedia so important to the interpretation of the letter, both past and present. However, our claim is not to dismiss other interpretations as wrong, or even inferior, but rather to explore the possible signification of earlier texts imbedded with what has become one of the central texts in the Pauline corpus, to see where they might lead.

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