



## PAUL AND THE OLD TESTAMENT – HIS LEGACY AND OURS

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### Abstract

The legacy that Paul received was the Jewish scriptures that he quoted extensively in Greek from the Septuagint. This was a legacy not widely appreciated, for various theological reasons, until relatively recently. However, a count of Paul's citations, quotations from and allusions to scripture comes to over 250. Paul's thinking was framed by his re-reading of scripture and emphasises how Jewish was his historical context and theological frame of reference. How this affects our interpretation of Paul's theology is illustrated by four examples from Wisdom, the Psalms in general, Ps 78 in particular, and Paul's rewriting of the Shema Israel in 1 Cor 8.6. There are some brief comments on the difficulties that Paul's use of scripture leaves us with.

### Keywords

Paul, Old Testament, scripture, citations, hermeneutics

Paul, to state the obvious, was a biblical writer and as such has left a legacy to us who read the NT. He was also a biblical interpreter and inherited a legacy of his own, what I shall call, for the sake of convenience, this being a Christian audience, the Old Testament – though there was a problem in Paul's time, even more than in our own, of what exactly counted as what we now call the OT: its language and the extent of its canon. That Paul was immersed in Jewish scripture is not surprising. He tells us himself that he was trained as a Pharisee (Phil 3.5) and came under the influence of Gamaliel (Acts 22.3). Martin Hengel has speculated about what this would have involved and he has supposed that he would have studied the traditional rabbinic techniques for interpreting scripture, almost certainly in Jerusalem and probably at a Hellenistic synagogue there.<sup>1</sup> We can see evidence of this in the way he uses biblical texts in his letters. As a Jew of his time, he engaged in reading and understanding these

<sup>1</sup> M.Hengel, *The Pre-Christian Paul* (London: SCM Press, 1991).

texts through disputations with his fellow Pharisaic students. He was part of a shared culture found in Jerusalem's intellectual life. He was also part of a Hellenic culture but that is a subject for another paper.

Although all serious students of Paul have been aware that he quotes Jewish scripture extensively, the importance of this fact largely escaped attention for many centuries. In the first couple of centuries of the church's history when some of the early Fathers were engaged in disputes with Jews – Justin and Trypho, Origen and Celsus, Irenaeus – Paul's 'Christian' reading of scripture could have been valuable, though we don't know enough about how extensively Paul was used in the second and third centuries. Once the church lost its interest in holding a conversation or even a polite argument with the synagogue, it lost much of its interest in how Paul made a positive use of scripture. Perhaps some became suspicious of Paul by association after Marcion had been rejected, though I find it incomprehensible how Marcion could combine an enthusiasm for Paul with a detestation of all things Jewish. There were a number of other reasons for ignoring Paul's use of scripture. Paul was seen as being anti-Jewish. In his polemic against the law, the Torah, he wrote that 'Christ is the end of the law' and it was assumed that this meant that for a Christian the law was at an end – despite various forms of legalism creeping into an increasingly institutionalised church that was forgetful of Paul. This view was hardened after the Reformation when Lutheran theology emphasised salvation by 'faith alone' and not works of the law, and by Luther's own radical opposition between law and gospel. So Paul was against the law and the enemy of Judaism. He was, after all, the apostle to the gentiles, a position confirmed as early as AD 48 at the apostolic council in Jerusalem (Acts 15, Gal 2). Certainly Jews don't like him, even those who might be sympathetic to Jesus as a Jewish teacher. Some even think him anti-Semitic. At any rate, in this context Paul is a problem.<sup>2</sup>

First let us set the context to avoid basic misunderstandings. Paul was thoroughly Jewish all his life. It is a mistake to think of him as a Christian arguing against Jewish religion while converting pagan and God-fearing gentiles to a new religion, because there was no independent religion known as Christianity at this stage. Although you could argue that the seed had been sown with the conversion of Cornelius (Acts 10) and the decision of the Jerusalem council to baptise gentiles without first requiring circumcision and the adoption of other Mosaic requirements. Still, any 'parting of the ways' came later than Paul. When was Christianity first recognised as a religion distinguishable from Jewish religion? Hardly before Nero's persecution, and Paul was dead by then (or at least he had finished

<sup>2</sup> We note that there are now some distinguished Jewish scholars who take a lively and sympathetic interest in Paul.

writing). No, Paul's arguments are internal Jewish arguments. He does not argue for the church and against Israel. His dispute (like Matthew's) is about *who* is the true Israel. He thinks the true Israel is made up of those Jews who are faithful to Jesus Christ, and membership is now open to gentiles too, even when they don't observe Torah, so long as they remain faithful to Christ. In no sense was Paul anti-Jewish, though temple/synagogue Judaism regarded Paul and his fellow Christ-believing Jews as heretics, mainly, one supposes, because of their criticism and non-observance of the law. It was, however, Paul's christology that was the basis for his criticism of the law.

### Citations, Quotations and Allusions

Now for some statistics to show just how extensive was Paul's use of scripture in his arguments to support his gospel. Writers in English tend to begin from Earle Ellis with his catalogue of 87 quotations from scripture in Paul's letters – excluding six from Ephesians and the Pastoral Letters.<sup>3</sup> Dietrich-Alex Koch gives 89<sup>4</sup> and Otto Michel 83.<sup>5</sup> Christopher Stanley explains that the differing numbers depend on the criteria adopted for identifying a citation.<sup>6</sup> There is also the problem that in three places (1 Cor 2.9; 9.10; 2 Cor 4.6, plus a fourth in Ephesians [5.14]) Paul says he is quoting scripture but it is impossible to identify where the quotations come from – the first may be a very free adaptation of Is 64.4. Stanley himself adopts three quite strict criteria and gets the overall count down into the 70s<sup>7</sup>, though that is still a lot. But while Stanley in his dissertation gives an account of how citations were used in Roman and other Jewish literature, my consultant on classical matters assures me that citations were generally given more freely and less explicitly in the ancient world than Stanley demands. I think a more generous count can be made.

In addition to his 87 quotations, Earle Ellis adds a list of 86 'allusions and parallels'. The UBS edition of the NT in its footnotes suggests almost 300 connections with OT texts. So I have done my own count to see how many places there are where Paul probably

<sup>3</sup> E.Ellis, *Paul's Use of the Old Testament* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1957). He says 87 on p.11 but the count in Appendix A 1 (A) seems to be 88.

<sup>4</sup> D-A.Koch, *Die Schrift als Zeuge des Evangeliums: Untersuchungen zur Verwendung und zum Verständnis der Schrift bei Paulus* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1986).

<sup>5</sup> O.Michel, *Paulus und seine Bibel* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1972, originally 1929).

<sup>6</sup> C.Stanley, *Paul and the Language of Scripture: Citation Technique in the Pauline Epistles and Contemporary Literature* (Cambridge: CUP, 1992).

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37.

had an OT text in mind, as opposed to where there is probably just an accidental word connection. Now, judgment is involved in these cases so it would be virtually impossible to get scholars to agree on an exact count. In fact it can seem that almost every time one consults a new commentary there are fresh suggestions of some OT influence. Sometimes they are fanciful or at any rate unconvincing, sometimes they are convincing. To give one example: in the second half of Romans 1, Paul's account of the appalling behaviour of gentiles and how they are going to get the wrath of God because they should know better parallels the criticism of pagan idolatry in Wisdom 13 and 14, but there is no cross reference to Wisdom in the UBS text.

In my own by no means definitive count I have used three categories: (i) those cases where Paul quotes the words of scripture and says he is quoting scripture or where it is clear to the reader that this is what he is doing – this I call a citation; (ii) those cases where Paul quotes scripture but does not say he is quoting, so we would not normally know it – this I call a quotation; and (iii) those cases where Paul uses a word or words from an OT text, which does not amount to a quotation because it is too short or where perhaps he has changed the grammatical form of the words, or where Paul clearly reflects the substance of the OT text without using the same words – I call this an allusion. Anything less than this and I reckon the connection to be accidental or coincidental. This count led to some remarkable figures.

In Romans I have found (though this includes some double-counting, where the words can be found in more than one place in the OT, though Paul may only have had one in mind): 57 citations, 18 quotations and 42 allusions to the OT;

- in 1 Corinthians: 14 citations, 8 quotations and 45 allusions;
- in 2 Corinthians: 11 citations, 7 quotations and 21 allusions;
- in Galatians: 11 citations, 2 or maybe 3 quotations and 7 allusions;
- in Philippians: 0 citations, 4 quotations and 2 allusions;
- in Philemon: none;
- in 1 Thessalonians: just 3 quotations and 2 allusions;
- in 2 Thessalonians: only 2 possible allusions, otherwise nothing.

And to finish the Pauline corpus, Colossians, which Paul may or may not have written: 4 allusions; Ephesians, which Paul did not write, 5 citations, 3 quotations and 9 allusions; and in all three Pastoral Letters together: 1 citation, 3 quotations and 13 allusions.

That is an astonishing number. In total, down to 2 Thessalonians on the list above: 93 citations, 42 quotations (which are as good as citations) and 121 allusions = 256 connections to Jewish scripture in Paul's authentic letters. This is the framework for his thinking. You cannot understand Paul fully until you have been hit by the influence of the OT in his letters. And what of the language of these

quotations? A beginner might assume that, as a Jew, Paul learnt his Bible in Hebrew and made his own translations. But not so. Paul quotes from the Greek Septuagint or something like it. Often he quotes the LXX exactly, as in Isaiah. But he might have had a text which is not exactly the same as our LXX. We know from Origen's *Hexapla* that there were various Greek translations of the OT; there was no one fixed translation. Or he might often have been working from memory when he dictated his letters and made mistakes. He can hardly have carried a pocket LXX with him on his travels and he might not always have been able to check his quotations in a synagogue or household church. Or – and this is a disturbing possibility – he might have tinkered with the text for his own theological purposes. The problem can be illustrated by looking at how Paul used Psalm 142.3 (LXX) / 143.3 (MT) because he cites this text in two places but differently, in Galatians 2.16 and Romans 3.20. The Psalm says: 'Do not enter into judgment with your servant, because not a living thing [no person] will be justified [will be counted righteous] before you' – in Greek *ou dikaiōthēsetai enōpion sou pas zōn*. In Galatians it becomes *ou dikaiōthēsetai pasa sarx*. In Romans the Psalm quotation is extended to *ou dikaiōthēsetai pasa sarx enōpion autou* where *autou* looks like a stylistic change and where *pasa sarx* may show a faulty memory or may be a deliberate change for a theological emphasis on 'flesh'. Christopher Stanley argues against faulty memory and generally thinks that Paul deliberately but understandably and justifiably altered texts for his own ends.<sup>8</sup>

You can see that the citations are unevenly distributed in Paul. Where there was an audience ignorant of scripture – for example, the recent converts in Thessalonika – or where the issues did not demand it – Philippians perhaps and Philemon – he did not revert to scripture. Paul's letters were written over quite a short period, but it could be argued that his use of scripture increased over time. Romans is shot through with scriptural references and it was in this letter that he revisited themes that he had considered before (e.g. justification/righteousness) to give a mature presentation of his gospel by way of a personal introduction to a community he had not met before. At any rate, Richard Hays is to the point when he says, 'The vocabulary and cadences of scripture – particularly the LXX – are imprinted deeply on Paul's mind' He also notes that 'His practice of citation shows that he was acquainted with virtually the whole body of texts that were later acknowledged as canonical within Judaism'.<sup>9</sup> The range of Paul's knowledge is impressive, though the majority of his quotations come from the Pentateuch, the Psalms and Isaiah.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 359f.

<sup>9</sup> R.B.Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1989), pp. 16 & 30.

Through worship and study, Paul was steeped in such a knowledge of the Bible that he could quote or allude to a huge range of texts from memory.

We should also note that Paul did not use these quotations as proof texts. That is, he did not have independent arguments to which he tacked on OT references to give them authority. His arguments *are* scriptural; his thinking emerges from his knowledge of the texts.<sup>10</sup> Yet his arguments can be eccentric and not at all what was found in the synagogues of his time. He read the Bible christologically and saw things in the text that no other rabbi would have seen. For example, in Galatians 3 he says that God's 'promises were made to Abraham and his offspring [*spermati autou*, quoting words from various chapters in Genesis]. It does not say "And to offsprings [*spermasin*]" referring to many; but referring to one, "And to your offspring", which is Christ.' So Gal 3.16 says that it was *Christ* who was the recipient of God's promises in Genesis, together with Abraham. Similarly in 1 Corinthians 10.4 the rock from which the Israelites drank water in the desert, 'supernatural water', was Christ. These are not natural interpretations and Paul certainly did not see them in his early life in the synagogue. He saw them only after his encounter with the risen Christ on the Damascus road. There is no disinterested reading of the texts here. What is primary is Paul's experience of Christ, his personal encounter. Because of his experience of what God has done and always intended to do, he sees new things in the text. His reading of the text can be odd at times – though not always – but Paul is sure his readings are true. But it is not surprising that he did not convince all his fellow Jews of the truth of his gospel.

### Wisdom 13–14

Let me give some examples to try to show how an appreciation of the scriptural background might affect our understanding of what Paul wrote. Let me take a case I have already alluded to. The Wisdom of Solomon is in the LXX but, because it was written in Greek, it is relegated to the Apocrypha of the Jewish Bible. Its date of composition is uncertain but was possibly the end of the first-century BC. Here are some extracts from chapters 13 & 14.

Equally hateful to God are the ungodly and their ungodliness;  
for what was done will be punished together with the one who did it.  
(14.9–10)

<sup>10</sup> Francis Watson makes this point repeatedly, for example where he says, "Paul's doctrine of righteousness by faith is an exercise in scriptural interpretation, and intends itself to be understood as such", *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith* (London: T & T Clark International, 2004), p. 53.

For all people who were ignorant of God were foolish by nature; and they were unable from the good things that are seen to know the one who exists. (13.1a)

For from the greatness and beauty of created things comes a corresponding perception of their Creator. (13.5)

... they are not to be excused;

for if they had the power to know so much that they could investigate the world, how did they fail to find the Lord of these things? (13.8–9)

Nor did they recognise the artisan while paying heed to his works; but they supposed that either fire or wind or swift air,

or the circle of the stars, or turbulent water, or the luminaries of heaven were the gods that rule the world.

If through delight in the beauty of these things people assumed them to be gods,

let them know how much better than these is their Lord, for the author of beauty created them.

And if people were amazed at their power and working, let them perceive from them

how much more powerful is the one who formed them. (13.1b-4)

For the idea of making idols was the beginning of fornication, and the invention of them was the corruption of life;

for they did not exist from the beginning, nor will they exist for ever.

For through human vanity they entered the world, and therefore their speedy end has been planned. (14.12–14)

It was not enough for them to err about the knowledge of God, but through living in great strife due to ignorance, they call such great evils peace.

For whether they kill children in their initiations, or celebrate secret mysteries,

or hold frenzied revels with strange customs,

they no longer keep either their lives or their marriages pure,

but they either treacherously kill one another, or grieve one another by adultery,

and all is a raging riot of blood and murder, theft and deceit, corruption, faithlessness, tumult, perjury,

confusion over what is good, forgetfulness of favours, defiling of souls, sexual perversion,

disorder in marriages, adultery and debauchery.

For the worship of idols not to be named is the beginning and cause and end of every evil.

But just penalties will overtake them... the just penalty for those who sin,

that always pursues the transgression of the unrighteous. (14.22–27, 30–1)

Now consider Paul's re-write of this condemnation of idolatry and its consequences.

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of those who by their wickedness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them.

Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made.

So they are without excuse, for though they knew God, they did not honour him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their senseless minds were darkened.

Claiming to be wise they became fools; and they exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling a mortal human being or birds or four-footed animals or reptiles.

Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the degrading of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator [who is blessed for ever! Amen].

For this reason God gave them up to degrading passions. Their women exchanged natural intercourse for unnatural, and in the same way also men . . . .

Since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind and to things that should not be done.

They were filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, covetousness, malice. Full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, craftiness, they are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, rebellious towards parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. They know God's decree, that those who practise such things deserve to die – yet they not only do them but even applaud others who practise them. (Romans 1.18–32)

I used to think that Paul was laying it on a bit thick here. Were the pagans of his world really that bad? But now I see that he was reflecting a more widespread Jewish revulsion against idolatry that predated Paul.<sup>11</sup> This section of Romans together with the next chapter that condemns Jewish lawlessness and hypocrisy has caused Lutheran commentators a lot of trouble. They cannot reconcile Paul's assurance of the wrath of God on those who behave badly with Luther's understanding of justification by faith alone apart from works of the law that Luther developed from this same letter. In the light of chapters 3–8 of Romans, what are we to do with chapters 1 and 2? Some have suggested that Paul is not here expressing his own views but is parodying some fictive Jewish teacher whose teaching he is about to demolish from 3.21.<sup>12</sup> But there is no hint in the text that it is

<sup>11</sup> Francis Watson discusses this text in *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith* pp. 405–9 and makes the point that Paul turns the next chapter, Wisdom 15, which praises pious Jews, against Jewish readers by alleging that they fail to keep the law.

<sup>12</sup> D.A.Campbell, *The Quest for Paul's Gospel* (London: T & T Clark International, 2005), ch.11 'Reading Romans 1.18–3.20', pp. 233–261.



a parody and it seems a rather desperate strategy. Maybe there is another way to deal with it.

### Psalms and Romans

As you know ‘justification by faith’ is a central theme – maybe the central theme – in Paul, and how to understand it has been at the centre of the so-called ‘new Paul’ since Ed Sanders challenged the traditional Lutheran understanding thirty-years ago.<sup>13</sup> Justification is first mentioned in Galatians, gets a brief airing in Philippians and gets a longer, mature presentation in Romans. Romans uses more OT quotations than any of his other letters: 53 according to Earle Ellis but in my calculation – 57 citations, 18 quotations, 42 allusions and 8 possibilities that I am not sure about (these involve some double-counting). Of these Isaiah has most citations (18) mainly at the end when Paul is concerned with his ‘Jewish problem’ (why most Jews do not believe in Jesus as the messiah), but overall Psalms has most references, mainly early in the letter when the law and justification are prominent themes: 13 citations, 8 quotations and 3 allusions, plus a number of extra possibilities that I am not at the moment convinced by. These are all taken from the LXX, of course. What has struck me is that all the concepts and the vocabulary of Paul’s theology of justification can be found in the Greek Psalms: righteousness/justification, trust/faith/faithfulness, sin, wrath, law, redemption.

The Book of Psalms as a whole has a doctrine of righteousness.<sup>14</sup> *Dikaiōsunē* turns up all over the place in the LXX Psalms. In the first place this affirms the righteousness of God: ‘For the Lord is righteous and loves righteousness’ (Ps 10/11.8). He is a righteous judge, where this is partly a matter of status – he is righteous because he *is* the judge of the world regardless of the nature of his judgments – and also because the character of his judgments are just, especially where his righteousness is linked with mercy (114/116.5), love (145/146.8), and truth (83/84.11; 88/89).

Mercy and truth are met together,  
righteousness and peace have kissed each other.  
Truth has sprung out of the earth,  
and righteousness has looked down from heaven. (84/85.10f.)

And so on. In some Psalms this divine righteousness is devolved to the king (71/72), to the priests (131/132.9) and eventually to the whole people of God, who are in their turn seen to be righteous.

<sup>13</sup> E.P.Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (London: SCM Press, 1977).

<sup>14</sup> A detailed exposition of these ideas will appear sometime in the future in the *Scottish Journal of Theology* under the title ‘The Righteousness of God in Psalms and Romans’.

The issue for the Israelite was how is one to be counted as one of the righteous ones of God? The first part of the answer in the Psalms is: to be part of the people with whom God has a covenant. Here being righteous is a matter of status and it normally means being born a Jew. But Jews can fall away from keeping the covenant, as the prophets remind us repeatedly, so the second part of the answer to how to be counted righteous is: avoid idolatry and keep God's law. Now Paul produced several citations from the Psalms in Romans 3 to show that no one can succeed in keeping the law, but this is not the general view of the Psalms which says that 'The Lord will recompense the one who behaves righteously' (17/18.20). However both Paul and the Psalmist agree that,

The salvation of the righteous is from the Lord,  
 he is their defender in the time of affliction.  
 The Lord will help them and deliver them,  
 and he will rescue them from sinners,  
 and save them because they have trusted (*elpisan*) in him (36/37.39f.)

The big problem for the Psalmist is why God's righteous ones are suffering (usually at the hands of 'the nations'); have they ceased to be righteous, or does unjust suffering disprove God's righteousness? Will God prove his righteousness by vindicating his righteous ones and ending their suffering? (88/89.46; 70/71.2; 34/35.23f.; 50/51). In Psalms 77/78, 104/105 and 105/106 the Psalmist looks to God's actions in the past and trusts that he will do something similar in the future. This can involve slaughtering the unrighteous (57/58.10f.). This introduces the idea of God's wrath (*orgē* or *thumos*) that reappears in Romans 1–2. Although God's wrath is often tempered with mercy (102/103.6–14)

So how are we to gain God's mercy and avoid his wrath, which is the fate of sinners? The answer of the Psalms is: faithfulness. Faithfulness to God by being in the covenant and staying in it by avoiding idolatry and keeping the law – by being faithful and behaving righteously. God in turn proves his righteousness by being faithful to his covenant and vindicating his righteous, faithful ones. So what we have in the Psalms is a doctrine of righteousness through faithfulness, *dikaiōsunē dia pisteōs*. Paul took this doctrine as he found it in Psalms and applied it in Romans 1 to gentiles who don't have the law but should know God through creation, yet who behave appallingly and will receive the wrath of God; and in Romans 2 he applied it to the Jews who have the law but don't keep it. He has then produced a series of OT quotations, mainly from the Psalms, at the beginning of ch.3 to show that no one in practice can succeed in fulfilling the law. This is what Luther would call 'works righteousness' but where everyone is destined to fail. It seems unJewish but Paul believes his view is scriptural. Then Paul changes everything at 3.21. Paul

has christologised the Psalmist's doctrine. We still become righteous through faithfulness (a better expression than justification by faith) but now faithfulness is not to the law but to Christ – righteousness through faithfulness to Christ.

But now the righteousness of God has appeared apart from the law, but is attested by the law and prophets, the righteousness of God through the faithfulness of Jesus Christ to all who are faithful. (Rom 3.21f.)

This reading involves taking *pistis* as faithfulness, and it involves reading *dia pisteōs Iēsou Christou* as a subjective genitive to mean not faith in Jesus but the faith or faithfulness of Jesus (this also in a *locus classicus* at Galatians 2.16).<sup>15</sup> There are strong arguments for this but there isn't space to go into them here.<sup>16</sup> My point is to emphasise Paul's inheritance from scripture and to show how he has transformed it by making a simple but profound change, by here christologising what he found in the Psalms. Faithfulness to the Lord, *kyrios*, is now faithfulness to our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus is now the righteous one who was faithful to the end; the one who has changed everything and has become the model for our own faithfulness. This is a much less cerebral understanding of justification and faith than you find in Lutheran theology or in some Roman theology that insists that Jesus did not have faith and, a fortiori, that God does not have faith. In the Christian Bible, faith in the sense of faithfulness is clearly and explicitly a characteristic of God and Jesus.

## Psalm 78

In 1 Corinthians 10 Paul tells us that,

I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors [note who is speaking to whom: our ancestors] were all under a cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptised into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock was Christ. Nevertheless, God was not pleased with them, and they were struck down in the wilderness. Now these things occurred as examples for us, so that we might not desire evil as they did. (1 Cor 10.1–6)

<sup>15</sup> See D.A.Campbell, *Op. cit.*, pp. 178–207, 'The Meaning of "Faith" in Paul's Gospel' for a detailed argument for consistently translating *pistis* as faithfulness or, alternatively, as trust or loyalty.

<sup>16</sup> For the subjective genitive, the faith or faithfulness of Christ, see R.B.Hays 'PISTIS and Pauline Christology' in *Looking Back, Pressing On*, ed. By E.E.Johnson and D.M.Hay, Vol 4 of *Pauline Theology* (Atlanta 1997), pp. 35–60, or the more recent D.A.Campbell, *Op. cit.*, pp. 208–232; and for the objective genitive, faith in Christ, see J. D. G. Dunn, 'Once More: Pistis Christou' in the same volume edited by Johnson and Hay, pp. 61–81, or more briefly in the more accessible *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998), pp. 379–385.

Paul is clearly using and adapting scripture, and cross references are usually given to passages in Exodus and Numbers, but the one text that refers to all these items together is Psalm 78 – in verses 14, 15, 24–9 and 31. Ps 78 is one of the three great historical psalms, with 105 and 106, and it recounts the wonders God has done for the Israelites, how they repeatedly proved unfaithful, but how God was repeatedly faithful and merciful to them. So it seems that Paul knew and used Ps 78. Is there anywhere else where Paul might have used Ps 78? I suggest that Ps 78 is where Paul might have got his historical schema that underpins his discussion in Romans 9–11 of how the Jews might be saved despite their recurrent unfaithfulness.

In Romans 9 Paul says that his ‘own people’, his ‘kindred according to the flesh...are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises; to them belong the patriarchs, and from them, according to the flesh, comes the Messiah’ (9.3–5). Their unbelief, as Paul sees it, does not mean that the word of God has failed ‘For not all Israelites truly belong to Israel, and not all of Abraham’s children are his true descendants’ (9.6f.). We then have references to Abraham, Isaac, Rebecca, Jacob and Esau, Moses, Hosea, Isaiah and the remnant whom God would save despite the repeated faithlessness of the Israelites. Paul understands the remnant to be those Jews (and maybe now gentiles too) who have been counted righteous because of their faithfulness to Jesus the Messiah, the Christ. God’s latest attempt to save the Jews who do not believe is to cut them off for a time (in the metaphor of the olive tree), to call the gentiles in so that unbelieving Jews might be made jealous and eventually return so that all Israel might be saved. The three chapters 9–11, here abbreviated to a few lines, I suggest, are Paul’s re-reading of Ps 78 in the light of his experience of Christ, his mission to the gentiles and the obstinacy, as he sees it, of the unbelieving Jews.

## 1 Corinthians 8.6

Finally and briefly, let us note Paul’s rewrite of the Shema. Each day a good Jew will recite,

Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one, and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. (Deut 6.4f.)

Paul adapted this for Christian use in 1 Cor 8.6. He holds a sort of binitarianism which includes God the father and his son Jesus Christ. While bringing the Father and Son together, Paul has maintained a consistent distinction throughout his letters by calling God the father

*theos*, and his son Jesus he calls *christos* and *kyrios*. In 1 Cor 8.6 he refers to each in parallel lines in an adaptation the Deuteronomy text, while maintaining that there is one God. And he has distinguished this confession of faith from the Shema by saying it is ‘for us’. So he writes,

For us there is one God the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist;  
And one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.

As Gordon Fee says, ‘What Paul has done seems plain enough. He has kept the “one” intact, but he has divided the Shema into two parts, with θεος (God) now referring to the Father, and κυριος (Lord) referring to Jesus Christ the Son’.<sup>17</sup> We depend in different respects on each for our existence; each is our creator. In one respect the two are one, and in another respect the two are different. Here in one brilliant verse is the mystery of the incarnation.

### Paul’s Hermeneutic and Ours

I will conclude with a few brief comments on Paul’s hermeneutic, on how he read and used scripture.<sup>18</sup> To us Paul’s hermeneutic now seems very odd. His mind was steeped in scripture in a way that our minds are not but it was steeped in a text that we hardly use. In many respects the LXX is a very unsatisfactory translation, so there has been an on-going problem of whether the LXX as a translation of the Hebrew can qualify as ‘inspired literature’. Paul was very loose in his use of scripture, often misremembering or manipulating texts to suit his own convictions, convictions which had been derived from elsewhere. He understood scripture through his experience of the risen Christ, but since Schleiermacher I, for one, am very suspicious of experience as a basis for belief. Paul was very free in his interpretations on some occasions, while on others he depended on the minutiae of a text to support his argument, as when he talks about ‘seed’ not ‘seeds’ in Galatians. There is little that is historical or critical about his hermeneutic. Nor is he open-minded; he selects some texts and fails to use others. But he didn’t ride rough-shod over scripture either. He knew it better than we ever shall, he construed a radical new reading of a large body of texts and he was certain, with some justification you might think, that his beliefs were true and also faithful to scripture – true

<sup>17</sup> G.D.Fee, *Pauline Christology* (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 2007), p. 90.

<sup>18</sup> These brief comments were meant to provoke discussion at the conference. For a fuller discussion see Richard Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, final chapter, pp. 154–192 and Francis Watson, *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith*.

*because* they were faithful to scripture, the word of God to the Jewish people.

Paul's hermeneutic was a product of his age and it is not our age. It has been suggested that Paul's method of interpreting scripture cannot be used by us. Yes, but it is not as simple as that. If the Church has canonised Paul's letters, it has in some sense canonised his theology and his way of understanding scriptural texts. If you throw out his hermeneutic, you also throw out much of his theology and the best part of his theology. Where would that leave us? I don't know. For cultural reasons we cannot copy what Paul did, but how far can we go in criticising him and refusing to accept that his methods are legitimate?

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