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Edited by
FLORIAN WILK and
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FRANK SCHLERITT

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Explorations in the Interpretation of Romans 9–11

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Florian Wilk and J. Ross Wagner

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Preface

Most of the essays in this volume originated in an international and interdisciplinary symposium, *Römer 9–11 im Spannungsfeld zwischen „New Perspective on Paul" und christlich-jüdischem Gespräch (Romans 9–11 at the Interface between the "New Perspective on Paul" and Jewish-Christian Dialogue)*, held May 1–4, 2008, near Göttingen. The editors' purpose in convening this colloquy was to bring together specialists in Biblical Studies, Judaic Studies, Systematic Theology and Practical Theology for a concentrated period of collaborative study and conversation centered on Romans 9–11. At the same time, in gathering a group of scholars from Germany, the UK and the USA, we sought to bring together perspectives and approaches that have been shaped by the ongoing discussions in English- and in German-language scholarship that often proceed in relative isolation from one another. The lively and fruitful conversations during the symposium prompted us to ask the participants to expand their papers into essays that could be made available to a wider scholarly audience. All readily consented to do so. Subsequently, William S. Campbell and Frank Schleritt kindly agreed to contribute two additional essays that round out our exploration of Rom 9–11.

The editors owe a great debt of gratitude to the many individuals and institutions that have supported the work of the symposium and the publication of this volume of essays. We thank the Ländliche Heimvolkshochschule Mariaspring, whose warm hospitality provided an ideal setting for sustained academic exchange, and the St. Johannis Kirche in Göttingen, who kindly hosted our public lectures. We gratefully acknowledge the generous financial support provided by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft and its Graduiertenkolleg "Götterbilder – Gottesbilder – Weltbilder," the Niedersächsische Ministerium für Wissenschaft und Kultur, the Universitätsbund Göttingen e. V., the Hanns-Lilje Stiftung, the Buber-Rosenzweig Stiftung and Princeton Theological Seminary. The Alexander von Humboldt Stiftung fostered the initial conception and planning of this conference through providing a Research Fellowship to the second-named editor, who was privileged to enjoy the kind hospitality of Prof. Dr. Hermann Spieckermann, then Dean of the Theological Faculty, Prof. Dr. Florian Wilk and their colleagues during his stay at the Georg-August-Universität Göttingen in 2006–2007. Sincere thanks are due as well to Johanna Löber and Ina Schmidt, who helped with logistics and ensured

that everything ran smoothly during the conference; to David Beary and, again, Johanna Löber for editorial assistance in Princeton and Göttingen respectively; to Krystyna-Maria Redeker, who took part in the process of proof-reading; and above all to Dr. Frank Schleritt, who shouldered much of the burden of preparing the manuscript for publication. In addition to producing camera-ready copy, he prepared the indexes, managed correspondence with the contributors and assisted with the tasks of editing the individual essays and summarizing their contents for the Introduction. Last but not least, we are grateful to Mr. Henning Ziebritzki for his early enthusiasm and continuing support for this project and to the staff at Mohr Siebeck for their skillful guidance throughout the process of publication.

Göttingen and Florian Wilk
Princeton, May 2010 Ross Wagner

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Introduction

It would be difficult to exaggerate the significance of the wide-ranging scholarly reappraisal of early Judaism and, concomitantly, of Christian origins that specialists in Jewish Studies, Classics and Biblical Studies have pursued with increasing vigor during the past half century. Over the last several decades, this broad movement has taken shape in Pauline studies in a number of approaches commonly, if somewhat sweepingly, grouped together under the label "the New Perspective."[1] To some extent, the impetus for this critical reassessment of Second-Temple and Rabbinic Judaism derives from Jewish and Christian reflection on the horrific events of the Shoah and its tangled nexus of causes, among which must be included the longstanding patterns of anti-Judaism to be found not only in Christian theological traditions but also within the guild of critical biblical scholarship.[2] Within Christian circles, recognition of and repentance for this tragic history has led to earnest theological debates over the identity and mission of the Church in relation to God's elect people Israel that have challenged venerable traditions of anti-Jewish exegesis, theology and preaching.[3] This, in turn, has opened new paths for conversations between Jewish and Christian communities, at many different levels, that show hopeful signs of bearing lasting fruit.[4]

These larger developments have precipitated a striking shift in perspective, both within critical scholarship and within the Church, with regard to the meaning and significance of Rom 9–11. Long considered tangential to the principal argument of the letter, these chapters have increasingly come to be viewed as dealing with matters of vital concern to the apostle as he addresses the situation of the churches in Rome. At the same time, Rom 9–

[1] See further N. T. Wright, "Romans 9–11 and the 'New Perspective'," in this volume.

[2] See, for example, A. Gerdmar, *Roots of Theological Anti-Semitism: German Biblical Interpretation and the Jews, from Herder and Semler to Kittel and Bultmann* (Studies in Jewish History and Culture 20; Leiden: Brill, 2009). Although Gerdmar focuses on German Protestant scholarship, modern biblical exegesis in other Christian traditions and in other contexts has been beset by similar problems.

[3] Crucial contributions to this inner-Christian debate have, of course, come from outside the Church as well, particularly from Jewish interlocutors. For a recent example, see *Christianity in Jewish Terms* (ed. T. Frymer-Kensky et al.; Radical Traditions; Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2000).

[4] See further B. Schaller, "Die Rolle des Paulus im Verhältnis zwischen Christen und Juden," in this volume.

11 has quite naturally assumed a central place in post-Holocaust Christian deliberation concerning the relationship of Church and Israel. Without doubt, these chapters represent Paul's most rigorous and sustained attempt to hold together two fundamental convictions that, in light of the refusal of many of his kinspeople to embrace the good news concerning Jesus Christ, appear to stand hopelessly in conflict: that the gospel he proclaims is "the power of God for salvation for all who trust, for the Jew first and likewise for the Greek" (1:16), and that this same God remains irrevocably committed to the promises graciously made to God's own elect people, Israel (e. g., 9:1–5; 11:1, 28–29).

In view of the difficulty of the matters with which Paul wrestles in these chapters – and given the complexity of his argument – it is not surprising that Rom 9–11 remains a storm center for biblical criticism as well as for Christian theological reflection. While the burgeoning scholarly literature on these chapters has sparked new insights, it has also led to sharply conflicting interpretations and to numerous unresolved questions that remain of immense significance not only for the study of Paul and of early Christianity but also for contemporary attempts to reshape Christian attitudes towards Judaism.

The present volume seeks both to focus and to advance the discussion concerning the meaning and significance of Rom 9–11. While most of the authors would not identify themselves as proponents of the "New Perspective on Paul," all have been acutely interested in the provocative questions this broad and influential movement has posed to the study of early Judaism, and of Paul in particular. Similarly, although the contributors belong to a wide variety of faith communities, they all recognize the ways in which readings of scriptural texts shape, and are shaped by, religious convictions and practices; and all share a concern for fostering deeper understanding between Jewish and Christian communities.

An overarching structure guides the presentation of these essays. In the first section (*Horizons*), two contributions (originally delivered as public lectures) address the broader contemporary concerns that frame our investigation of Rom 9–11: Paul's significance for contemporary Jewish-Christian relations (B. Schaller) and the so-called "New Perspective on Paul" (N. T. Wright). The subsequent pair of essays by K. Haacker and M. Reasoner offer perceptive analyses of the vast oceans of research on Rom 9–11 in recent German and English-language scholarship, respectively.

Berndt Schaller begins his essay on "The Role of Paul in the Relationship between Christians and Jews" with an ambivalent report: On the one hand, Paul – often deemed a renegade by Jews – has fostered Christian

anti-Judaism with his pronouncements in 1 Thess 2:14–16, Gal 4:21–31 and Phil 3:1–8; on the other hand, Paul's statements in Rom 9–11 have been of decisive importance for the revitalization of Christian relations with Jews and Judaism as this renewal (taking up some older discussions) is documented above all in the official ecclesiastical statements issued since 1945. Rom 9–11 is well suited to serve as the central text for a new theology of Israel for two reasons: First, the motif of the steadfast faithfulness of God and the reliability of his word holds the entire section together (including the image of the olive tree in 11:16–24); second, the argument leads inexorably to the proclamation of the eschatological salvation of all Israel, which will be effected neither through their believing acceptance of the gospel nor apart from Christ, but rather through Christ's gracious devotion. This vision, and particularly the paradoxical word of 11:28, can guide contemporary Christians to regard the Jewish "No" to the gospel as an act of faithfulness to the Torah and, to that extent, as a service on their behalf. The definition of the relationship between Israel and the Church suggested by Rom 9–11 thus poses an abiding challenge for the complex interrelationships among Christians and Jews.

In "Romans 9–11 and the 'New Perspective' " N. T. Wright characterizes the so-called "New Perspective on Paul" as a family of different, though related, views united by a common concern to read Paul's letters afresh in the light of recent scholarship on first-century Judaism. Beginning with Rom 10:3, W. exemplifies the manner in which the NP reframes Paul's critique of his fellow Jews. Here, Paul charges that they are ignorant of the way God is faithful to his covenant promises through Jesus the Messiah; moreover, by seeking to confine covenant membership to Jews only, they are guilty of pursuing a "national righteousness." The larger epistolary context provides support for this reading, as in 9:6–29 Paul renarrates the covenant story of God's people in light of its fulfillment in Christ (cf. 10:4). In a bold reworking of Deut 30 in Rom 10:6–11, the apostle argues that, through Christ's death and resurrection, God has renewed the covenant, with the result that Christians are characterized by a "*new covenantal, eschatological, Spirit-driven, fulfilling-Torah fideism.*" Moreover, in fulfilling the covenant promises to Abraham, God has now in Christ established one single believing community that embraces all, Jews and Gentiles alike (10:12–13; 11:11–32). Further extending the insights of the NP will require an even more thoroughgoing rethinking of traditional western Christian categories, leading to deeper insights into Paul's views on salvation, covenant and eschatology.

Klaus Haacker considers "The Theme of Romans 9–11 as a Problem in the History of Interpretation." In contrast to older, inadequate attempts to identify the Theme (i. e., that about which something is communicated) in

terms of dogmatic categories ("Predestination," "Theodicy," "Salvation-History"), more recent research agrees that Paul takes up the theme of "Israel" and treats it as an urgent problem requiring resolution. However, the question concerning just where the predicament lies for Paul finds a variety of answers: text-focused approaches, which investigate the logic of the argument, rely on statements about Israel in previous chapters, on points of contact with Rom 8 and on 9:1–3 or especially 9:6*a*; pragmatic methods of investigation, which begin with the presumed situation of the apostle and/or the addressees, postulate that Paul displays either a critical bias against Israel or (more likely) an apologetic interest in the face of widely held reservations about him. According to H., the theme of Rom 9–11 is accentuated in problematic ways by interpreters who summarize Paul's statements about Israel's lack of faith and need of salvation by means of concepts such as "Hardening," "Rejection," "Downfall," or "Fall," or who dismiss the hope expressed for Israel's redemption as argumentatively and theologically inconsequential. In contrast, a reception of Rom 9–11 as a critique of the Church appears to be both legitimate and necessary in view of the serious errors found in the history of interpretation of these chapters.

With periodic glances at the wider history of Christian interpretation, Mark Reasoner ("Romans 9–11 Moves from Margin to Center, from Rejection to Salvation") analyzes trends in recent English-language exegesis of Rom 9–11 by considering how a select number of commentators treat four important interpretive problems. First, whereas chapters 9–11 were long considered tangential to Paul's main concerns in Romans, since the middle of the twentieth century commentators have increasingly viewed them as playing an integral – even central – role in the argument of the letter as a whole. Second, while the dominant diagnosis of Israel's "problem" as it is portrayed by Paul continues to center on their unbelief, a small number of nineteenth- and twentieth-century interpreters have suggested that Israel's plight also includes their temporal oppression by Roman hegemony. Third, the scholarly debate continues as to whether Paul develops in Rom 9–11 a fairly coherent and focused argument or whether his reasoning is rather plagued (perhaps fatally) by aporias, unresolved tensions and outright self-contradictions. Nevertheless, there is a clear tendency for interpreters to privilege the concluding stages of Paul's argument in Rom 11 as the key for understanding the whole. Fourth, while the identity of "all Israel" in 11:25–27 continues to be disputed, the dominant interpretation at present understands the apostle in some way to be envisioning the future salvation of ethnic Israel.

In the second section (*Contexts*), J. M. G. Barclay and A. Steudel place Paul's exegetical and theological labors in dialogue with other Jewish interpreters of the Second Temple Period, while D. Sänger and S. Eastman examine Paul's argument in Rom 9–11 in light of statements concerning Israel found in his earlier letters. Seeking to construct a profile of the addressees of Romans, W. S. Campbell weighs the available evidence concerning the composition and character of the Roman churches to which Paul writes. Finally, C. Stenschke considers the literary context of Rom 9–11 within the letter as a whole.

Observing that Rom 9–11 participates in a long and complex conversation in early Judaism concerning God, Israel, and the world, John Barclay ("Unnerving Grace") finds an apt dialogue partner for Paul in the first-century Diaspora treatise known as the Wisdom of Solomon. Although both Paul and Wisdom deftly deploy scriptural resources to address the problem of God's justice, power and mercy towards Israel and the nations, close reading of each text reveals a crucial difference. Wisdom defends the justice and propriety of God's actions in the world by situating them in the framework of a stable moral universe devoid of all arbitrariness and injustice. In contrast, Paul maintains that no moral, rational or natural order can comprehend or contain God's gracious determination to show mercy to Jew and Gentile alike. The Christ-event represents for the apostle a divine gift that transcends rational explanation in that it redefines the very meanings of "gift" and "mercy." While "thoroughly Jewish," then, Paul's account of the divine grace-gift in Christ appears profoundly unnerving, challenging deeply held convictions about God and God's ways in the world. Yet it is only by squarely facing the threat posed by these chapters that we can perceive their remarkable promise.

In her essay, "The Qumran Texts as Horizon for Romans 9–11," Annette Steudel sets forth a number of the characteristic features of the so-called "genuine" Qumran texts that prove significant for comparative purposes. The first of these is the use of the term "Israel." This name can not only designate the twelve tribes, the promised land, the northern kingdom, the Jewish people or the Jewish "laity"; above all, the manuscripts document the increasing crystallization of the view that, on the basis of the newly ratified covenant, only the community of the faithful is identical with "Israel." In this connection, the eschatological destiny of non-Jews is portrayed in different ways. Second, the works emerging from the first century B.C.E. onward show that the community defined its own place in God's foreordained plan for history by interpreting biblical texts as referring to their own time – in part through stitching together individual citations from Torah, Prophets and Psalms, in part through a verse-by-verse exegesis of prophetic books. Techniques of citation in these docu-

ments offer some analogies to the use of Scripture in the New Testament, particularly in Rom 9–11. A number of Qumran texts are also thematically related to Rom 9–11 in their authors' conviction that they know the way of salvation, in their speculation concerning those who stand outside their own group and in their attribution of this division within God's people to divine action. In contrast to the authors of these texts, however, Paul does not deny the covenant, the election and the prospect of future salvation to those who do not follow his way.

Dieter Sänger traces the correlation of "Continuity and Change in Paul's Statements concerning Israel." In the correspondence between the Jewish apostle of Christ and his predominantly Gentile addressees, statements about Israel are just as crucial as his reflections concerning the significance of Torah and of Jewish identity-markers. The ambivalence of these pronouncements is evident; indeed, according to many interpreters, there is an outright contradiction between 1 Thess 2:14–16 and Rom 9–11. However, each of these passages constitutes an integral component of its respective letter, and the attempt to privilege one over the other by appealing to development in Paul's thought remains problematic. S. thus seeks to consider the two passages side by side. According to 1 Thess 2:14–16, the Jews put the salvation of the Gentiles at risk through hindering Paul's mission among them – and thereby precipitate their own ruin at the final judgment. In Rom 9–11, Israel's disobedience to the gospel leads ultimately to the salvation of the Gentiles so that Christ, when "the full number of the Gentiles has come in" at his *parousia*, will redeem all Israel as well. Thus, in both passages the soteriological destiny of the Gentiles is linked to the conduct of the Jews with respect to the proclamation of Christ. The development concealed in this consistent claim pertains "only" to the scope of salvation: the soteriological perspective in 1 Thess 2 remains focused on the Gentiles, whereas, in light of God's irrevocable promises, salvation in Rom 9–11 also embraces the Jews who have rejected the gospel.

In "Israel and Divine Mercy in Galatians and Romans," Susan Eastman considers the relationship between Rom 9–11 and Paul's remarkable reference to "the Israel of God" in Gal 6:16. After sorting out the syntactical problems of this verse, E. challenges the prevailing view (that "the Israel of God" refers to the Church) on three fronts. First, a comparative study of the benedictions in Paul's other letters reveals that in Gal 6:16 the apostle has uncharacteristically added to his standard invocation of "peace" a second prayer for "mercy." Second, a survey of Paul's relatively infrequent references to "mercy" shows that this term functions in a rather narrow way in Paul's letters: it normally describes God's sovereign response to human rebellion, especially the disobedience of God's people

Israel. Third, that Paul nowhere else refers to the Church as "Israel" makes such a reference here improbable at best. Taken together, these three lines of argumentation call into question the dominant interpretation of Gal 6:16 and open the way for an alternate reading, one that finds in the concluding benediction in Galatians an expression of the concern for his fellow Jews that comes fully into view in the apostle's anguished wrestling with the plight of his kinsfolk in Rom 9–11. At the end of a letter that categorically denies that law observance leads to righteousness, Paul's thoughts turn in Gal 6:16 to his fellow Jews who still live under the law. His prayer is that they too will find mercy and thus, like the Gentiles, be saved by God's grace alone.

Affirming the increasingly prevalent view that Romans is an "occasional letter" whose proper interpretation requires consideration of the particular context(s) for which it was written, William S. Campbell sketches a profile of "The Addressees of Paul's Letter to the Romans." His wide-ranging essay correlates historical evidence (literary, inscriptional and archaeological) with close attention to Paul's own rhetoric. C. examines a cluster of interrelated issues, including the founding of the Roman churches and their ethnic composition, their evolving relationships with Jewish communities in the city (including the possible effects of Roman intervention during Claudius' reign), the causes and consequences of the division between the "weak" and the "strong" and Paul's pastoral purposes in soliciting the Romans' collective prayers for the reception of his Gentile churches' collection for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem. The reconstruction proposed allows for a good measure of diversity among the Roman churches, particularly with regard to their degree of ongoing contact with Jewish communities and with respect to their attitudes toward Jews both inside and outside the church. Paul's explicit concern in Romans centers on Gentile arrogance and misunderstanding concerning the role of the Jews in God's purposes. At the same time, Paul addresses Gentile Christ-followers in the full knowledge that Jews, whether Christ-followers or not, will be overhearing the conversation.

Under the heading "Romans 9–11 as Part of the Letter to the Romans," Christoph Stenschke sets out to collect as many thematic links as possible between Rom 9–11 and the chapters that precede and follow. The interlocking references that he finds begin in the letter's prescript with κλητός in 1:1 (cf. 11:29, κλῆσις) and with the reference to the concurrence between Paul's gospel and Scripture in 1:2 (cf. the corresponding citations in Rom 9–11); these links permeate chapters 1–4 and 7–8, as well as 12–15; they end with the mention of Paul's kinsfolk in 16:7, 11, 21 (cf. 9:3) – or, rather, with the reference to the divine "mystery" in 16:25 (cf. 11:25). Such connections indicate that Rom 9–11 addresses important questions that arise from statements made in Rom 1–8. At the same time, these chap-

ters prepare the way for Paul's argument in the paraenetic and closing sections of the letter (Rom 12–16); indeed, there is a particularly strong compositional link with Rom 14:1–15:13. Consequently, it is inappropriate to interpret Rom 9–11 in isolation from the letter as a whole or, conversely, to attempt to understand Rom 1–8 and Rom 12–16 without reference to this section. Rom 9–11 is neither a self-contained tractate nor an excursus, but an integral part of the letter. Thus, the questions treated in Rom 9–11 play a more significant role in Romans and in the apostle's theology than has often been supposed.

The six studies in the third section (*Readings*) systematically investigate Rom 9–11 itself. Following an analysis of the framework (9:1–5; 11:25–36) and overall argumentative structure of these chapters by F. Wilk, other contributors illuminate the discrete stages of the argument: 9:6–29 (B. R. Gaventa); 9:30–33 (F. Schleritt); 10:1–21 (F. Avemarie); 11:1–10 (E. E. Popkes); and 11:11–24 (M. D. Nanos).

In his essay, "The Framework and Structure of Romans 9–11," Florian Wilk delineates the thematic unity and argumentative structure of these three chapters. W. first assembles all of the verbal markers that structure the discourse. Next, following a suggestion of Schleiermacher, he compares the opening and conclusion of Rom 9–11 in order to identify the discourse's principal theme, on the basis of which a hierarchy of the structural markers can be developed. The outer framework of the discourse (8:14–39; 12:1–8) already indicates that Paul discusses his theme on the basis of eschatological confidence and for the purpose of promoting conduct that builds up the community. The core problem of Rom 9–11 lies in what appears to the "apostle to the Gentiles from Israel" as a wrenching contradiction in the very existence of non-Christ-believing Israelites – the contradiction between the promise of salvation that is theirs by virtue of their election and the truth-claims of the gospel (9:1–5). The central theme of this section, then, is the eschatological resolution of this contradiction in the wake of the pilgrimage of the nations to Zion, an idea that rests on a new definition of the relationship the letter's addressees bear to these Israelites (11:25–32). Hence, the flow of thought in these chapters most naturally splits into two main parts: an argumentative section (9:6–10:21), with its fulcrum at 9:30–33, and a paraenetic section (11:1–24) having its center in 11:7–10. With constant reference to his own role, Paul elucidates in each section the respective tasks assigned to Jewish Christians and to Gentile Christians in the history of salvation.

According to Beverly Roberts Gaventa ("On the Calling-Into-Being of Israel"), Paul lays the groundwork in Rom 9 for the climactic stage of his argument in chapter 11. The principal claim that Paul establishes in the first major movement of his discourse (9:6–29) is that Israel exists always

and only as God's sovereign creation; thus, Israel's future, as its past, depends solely on God's saving power. Israel, the apostle argues, is defined not by biology but by God's unconditional promise. God's calling of Israel represents not merely a selection but an act of creation, a calling into being of that which had no prior existence. In Rom 9, then, Paul does not identify a "true" or "spiritual" Israel-within-Israel; rather, he insists that Israel as a whole is created in each generation by God and for God's own purposes. Paul's emphasis on God as the sovereign agent both of mercy and of hardening comes into clearer focus when Rom 9–11 is set in the context of the larger apocalyptic drama depicted in Rom 1–8 and when Israel and the Gentiles alike are seen to be "instruments" in God's conquest of sin and death. Israel, called into being by a sovereign God, exists to serve the plans of its powerful and victorious creator, who employs Israel's rejection of the gospel as the instrument by which to effect the salvation of the Gentiles and, ultimately, of Israel itself.

Frank Schleritt offers a reading of Rom 9:30–33 in an essay entitled "The Law of Righteousness." Given the wide variety of (often contradictory) interpretative suggestions, readers should consistently take their bearings from the meaning of the terms Paul chooses, from the logic of the sentences he constructs and from the particular features of the metaphors he employs. Approaching the text in this way, interpreters ought to construe 9:30–31 as a statement that Paul has intentionally formulated in a tension-ridden and incongruous manner: apart from any effort of their own, Gentiles have attained the righteousness from faith (i. e., a right relationship to God); in contrast, Israel, despite its best efforts, has not attained the *Law* of righteousness. This latter claim is substantiated by the statement that Israel pursued this Law not from faith but (futilely) from works (9:32*b*). The clarification in 9:32*c*–33, appended asyndetically, then shows how this situation has come about: in their encounter with the gospel, Israel, rather than coming to faith in Christ, has stumbled over Christ as the stone of stumbling; as a result, Israel has been handicapped in their pursuit so that they necessarily fall short of their goal. So understood, this text, like 3:21 and 10:4–5, also speaks of the Law in a paradoxical manner: the Law, to the extent that it makes righteousness based on Law-observance possible, has always lain in Israel's possession; viewed as that which points to the righteousness of God, however, the Law is attained only by those who approach it in the way marked out by faith in Christ.

Friedrich Avemarie next interprets Rom 10, in connection with 9:30–33, as a unit of thought in which Paul reflects *sub specie hominis* on "Israel's Puzzling Disobedience." From this perspective, Israel's disobedience with respect to the preaching of Christ appears as a riddle, both because Israel has a genuine zeal for God and because it has heard the gospel. However,

in the context of chapters 9 and 11, which are so heavily predestinarian in orientation, Israel should not be assigned the blame for this turn of events. Admittedly, the reference to "their own" righteousness (10:3) anticipates the augustinian-existentialist assessment that human self-determination represents the root of all sin. But as the absence of concepts such as "sin," "judgment" and "penalty" already indicates, Paul intends to demonstrate clearly in chapter 10 that human standards of measure cannot account for this disobedience. Consequently, the sole explanation remains the divine hardening of Israel that emerges as the theme of chapter 11. Against this background, the sentence in 10:4 is best understood in its context as a statement concerning the "goal," rather than the "end," of the Law. Subsequently, the citation of Lev 18:5 (in Rom 10:5) speaks of "doing the commandments," not from the perspective of soteriology, but simply as a description of a way of life. In the end, by leaving the question, μὴ Ἰσραὴλ οὐκ ἔγνω; unanswered, Paul allows the search for the root cause of Israel's disobedience to turn up empty. With the following citations of Scripture (10:19–21), Paul once more makes God's sovereign dealings in salvation the principal theme of his discourse.

Investigating Rom 11:1–10, a section replete with references to Scripture, Enno Edzard Popkes's essay, "And David Says," focuses on the final citation of Ps 68[69]:23–24. An analysis of the text's structure demonstrates that Paul's argument culminates in the claim that God has hardened Israel (Rom 11:7). Among the three Scriptural citations that follow, it is the prayer of David that prepares the way for the subsequent exposition of Israel's "stumbling." That Paul here appropriates Ps 68[69] can be explained in part by his predilection for Psalms citations and by his familiarity with early Christian use of this Psalm. His principal reason for citing this particular psalm, however, derives from its distinctive character. David's lament over his alienation from his social community, his polemic against his opponents, his hope that God's righteousness will prevail and his expectation of future salvation for Zion and Judah – all find analogs in Rom 11. The citation in 11:9–10 thus supports the thesis that Paul reflects carefully on the context of the Scriptural passages he cites. In that case, however, one must seriously consider whether Paul has also taken into account – on the analogy of the concept of "Psalter exegesis" that has emerged in recent research – the location of Ps 68[69] in the so-called second Davidic Psalter (Pss 41[42]–71[72]); for this collection, insofar as it culminates in the promise of the universal worship of God (Ps 71[72]:8, 11, 18), also corresponds structurally to Rom 11.

Mark Nanos places Paul's metaphor of the olive tree (Rom 11:17–24) under the microscope in his essay, " 'Broken Branches': A Pauline Metaphor Gone Awry?" Reading Paul's extended figure in the light of ancient

writers on agriculture, N. argues that Paul turns contemporary oleicultural practice on its head in order to challenge the arrogance of his Gentile audience, who imagine themselves to be of greater value in God's sight than non-Christ-believing Israelites. In highlighting the precariousness of their state as a "wild branch" dependent on the cultivated root into which God has mercifully grafted them, Paul calls the Gentiles to live in a manner faithful to their new covenant relationship with God in Christ, particularly by showing empathy toward Israelites, who, though "broken branches," remain ever loved by God. Eventually, however, Paul's complex metaphor goes awry. Although in his earlier metaphor of the race (11:11–15) Paul emphatically denies that "the rest" of Israel have "stumbled" so as to "fall" (11:11), in 11:22 he contradicts himself by speaking of Israelite branches as having indeed "fallen"; moreover, while he has thus far referred to branches being "broken" rather than severed from the tree, in v. 22 he clearly implies that these Israelites have been "cut off." Through this failure to maintain the consistency of his imagery, Paul ends up subverting his own message concerning the future restoration of these Israelites (11:25–27), as the subsequent history of Christian (mis-)interpretation of the olive tree allegory vividly illustrates.

The fourth section (*Themes*) comprises five essays that take up central theological concerns of the passage. R. Feldmeier and A. K. Grieb consider the characterization of God in Romans, particularly in chapters 9–11. Approaching the text from different, yet complementary, angles of vision, the following three contributors (W. Reinbold; J. R. Wagner; K.-W. Niebuhr) probe the ways in which God's electing grace reconfigures the identity, not just of Israel, but of all humanity.

Reinhard Feldmeier ("Father and Potter?") asks how far the God of invincible love attested in the first part of Romans can be identical, for Paul, with the God of seemingly unbridled capriciousness who appears in Rom 9. As a synchronic analysis of Rom 1–8 shows, Paul's discourse concerning the benefits of God that have come to lost humankind in Christ reaches its climax in the invocation of God as Father, the one who adopts believers as children, makes them his heirs and in so doing actualizes his own identity. Viewed against the background of early Jewish reticence to employ the Father metaphor and seen in the context of the developing tendency, perceptible in the New Testament, ever more decisively to conceptualize God – in strict relationship to Christ – as Father, the particular profile of Paul's phraseology comes clearly into focus: God's power is defined as the power of the one who, in Christ (and so in freedom) binds himself to believers and thenceforth determines their existence. This portrait of the loving Father may be reconciled with the picture of God as the

sovereign potter to the extent that one may not confuse the freedom of God emphasized by the potter metaphor with capriciousness. In particular, the hardening of Israel by no means represents their predestination to damnation; rather, in a hidden way it serves the outworking of a universal salvific purpose – the purpose of God who overcomes all enmity.

Examining "Paul's Theological Preoccupation in Romans 9–11," Katherine Grieb interprets Paul's discourse as the lament of a "God-intoxicated" apostle struggling to maintain his trust in God's righteousness – that is, God's faithfulness and integrity – in the face of the apparent miscarriage of God's promises to Israel. G. finds the key to Paul's argument in his emphasis, both at the beginning and at the end of Rom 9–11, on the mercy of God that is poured out on Israel as well as on the nations. Rom 9:6–29, with its twists and turns of scriptural reasoning, can be fruitfully understood as an unfolding disputation with God in which Paul comes to understand that, far from being frustrated by Israel's unfaithfulness, God freely acts to show himself gracious and merciful. As Paul's argument reaches its climax in the "mystery" of God's merciful redemption of Israel and the nations in Rom 11, the apostle concludes with the glad confession of God's unsearchable wisdom and unshakable faithfulness. In view of the divisions that continue to separate Christians from Jews (as well as Christians from Christians), Rom 9–11 sounds a call to contemporary followers of Christ not only to confess their own complicity with evil but also to set their hope fully on God, whose merciful embrace makes it possible to recognize others as children of the same loving Father who has graciously adopted them as his own.

Next, Wolfgang Reinbold investigates "The Meaning of the Term 'Israel' in Romans 9–11." In view of several enigmatic statements and the perplexing overall picture that Paul presents, R. attempts to clarify on the basis of context exactly to whom "Israel" refers in each instance. Approached in this manner, a number of passages prove relatively unambiguous: the expressions, "the number of the sons of Israel" (9:27*b*) and "all from Israel" (9:6*bα*) refer to Israel's progenitor Jacob, while the Scriptural citations in 9:27*a* and 11:2 are concerned with biblical Israel. However, in 9:27*a* the apostle simultaneously speaks of the Jewish people of his own time as well, and this referent comes back into view in 11:25–26. In 11:7 and 9:31, he uses the all-inclusive term "Israel," although his primary concern in these passages is clearly with non-Christ-believing Jews. Such Jews are, in fact, the exclusive referent in 10:21. In addition, Paul pushes beyond the term's traditional semantic boundaries to include Christ-believing non-Jews within the scope of "Israel" (10:19–20). Accordingly, "Israel" in 10:19*a* refers to the people of God in a wider sense that embraces both the Jewish people and all those who trust in Christ. This same

sense is evident in the controverted passage 9:6*bβ*, insofar as it signifies that one becomes a member of "Israel" not through birth but by God's calling. Thus, in light of the Christ event, Paul adds new dimensions of significance to this honorific title without thereby denying the term – or the prospect of salvation that is bound up with it – to the Jewish people.

In his essay, " 'Not from the Jews Only,' " Ross Wagner elucidates Paul's portrayal of his Gentile listeners in Rom 9–11 as aliens to God's people, as recipients of Israel's benefactions and, above all, as debtors to divine mercy. The contrast between Jew and Gentile, so prominent in Romans 1–4, gives way in chapters 5–8 to an inclusive "we"; yet the Jew/Gentile distinction suddenly reemerges in 9:1, and throughout Rom 9–11 Paul's impassioned profession of solidarity with his kinspeople distances the apostle rhetorically from his Gentile audience. As he explores God's mysterious ways with Israel, Paul further marginalizes these Gentiles, deftly employing scriptural citations and echoes to fashion for them an identity as outsiders and enemies of God's elect people. Successively depicting his Gentile listeners in the guise of Esau, Pharaoh and, most scandalously, of disobedient and disinherited Israel, the apostle portrays them as the most unlikely recipients of the mercy God has showered on the remnant of his people Israel. But whereas grace has overflowed to the Gentiles through the partial hardening of Israel, in the divine economy of mercy Gentiles do not, in turn, assume the role of Israel's benefactors. Their part remains that of instruments in the hand of God, who alone will effect Israel's full restoration. In so representing his Gentile listeners, Paul seeks to form in them a mindset of humility and gratitude that befits their status as outsiders surprised by God's mercy in Christ.

Karl-Wilhelm Niebuhr advances the thesis that the relationship of Paul's argument concerning justification in Romans to his discourse about Israel emerges with particular clarity when one considers "Romans 9–11 as Witness to Paul's Anthropology." In order to exhibit God's sovereignty in fulfilling his redemptive promise to Israel (9:6*a*), Paul takes up the task of bringing together the two poles of the semantic opposition in 9:6*b* – a portion of Israel versus Israel's totality. He accomplishes this by developing a new definition of Israel that grows out of the union of Israel with the nations in the confession of Christ (10:11–13; 11:26). As a result, in Rom 9–11 the individual human – despite all anthropological distinctions – is revealed as the addressee of God's calling and, thus, as one called to account before the Christ event. This perspective, which integrates Jew and Gentile while differentiating between believer and unbeliever, shapes the entire letter. That Paul here appropriates fundamental aspects of biblical and Judaic conceptions of the human becomes evident from a comparison

of Rom 9–11 with selected early Jewish texts that take up prophetic traditions about Israel and the nations in the last days (*Sib. Or. III;* Josephus, *J.W.*), that appropriate wisdom traditions concerning the relationship of Creator to creation (*Wis*.; *4 Ezra*) or that adopt the deuteronomic vision of history (*T. 12 Patr*.; *2 Macc*). Consideration of the conception of the human developed in Rom 9–11 has important consequences for understanding Paul's theology, its place in a theology of the New Testament and its relationship to the legacy of Jesus.

The essays in the final section (*Perspectives*) explore the significance of Romans 9–11 for Christian-Jewish relations. N. Slenczka addresses the controversial question of the identity of "Israel," while K. Sonderegger contemplates Paul's doctrine of election. Weaving together insights from the social sciences and from theology, M. Rothgangel considers how Rom 9–11 may guide religious education in the task of defining Christian identity. Finally, R. K. Soulen and W. Kraus reflect on the ways in which Paul's argument in Rom 9–11 should shape Christian engagement with Judaism.

With the help of Rom 9–11, Notger Slenczka explores "The Question of Israel's Identity." S. interprets Paul's position, as it comes to light in these chapters (and elsewhere), in terms of Reformed federal theology, which views the covenant with Abraham itself as a covenant established in Christ and oriented toward faith in Christ. Strictly speaking, the question of a person's identity can be addressed only by telling the story of his life. For this reason, a person possesses an identity in no other way than through an interpretive – and so variable and contestable – appropriation of her own past. The prototype for such self-understanding is found in Paul's handling of his Damascus-road experience; according to Gal 2, Paul conceives this interruption of his life story as the end of an existence determined by the Law, and he views his life henceforth as a manifestation of the cross of Christ. In a similar manner, in Rom 9–11 Paul makes faith in the promise (of Christ) the hermeneutical key to Israel's identity: since the time of Abraham, the true Israel has always been the community of those who trust in Christ. For just this reason, Gentiles too can be reckoned part of this same people of God. Rom 9–11 thus brings to light the fundamental problem in the relationship of the Church to Israel: both communities claim descent from the same lineage, but they interpret this family history by means of mutually exclusive hermeneutical keys – yet without ever being able, in fact, to separate themselves one from the other.

Approaching Paul from the perspective of Systematic Theology, Katherine Sonderegger incisively analyzes "The Doctrine of Election in Romans 9–11." S. argues that the difficulty with Paul's teaching lies in the surprising way in which God's sovereign and free election of Israel has

actually played out in history. "The failed mission to Israel" remains "a deep enigma" precisely because, rather than claiming that God's covenant with Israel has been revoked, Paul maintains the counterfactual claim that "it could in fact have been, and can be, *otherwise* than it has historically turned out." By insisting both on the abiding election of Israel and on Israel's failure to believe, Paul crafts a doctrine of election in which God's sovereign actions are realized in fully contingent historical circumstances. The epistemic solution to this paradox favored by Calvin – the explanation that God's eternal will only appears to be contingent from the limited perspective of humanity – fails to maintain the tensions inherent in Paul's teaching. In contrast, Paul's insistence that God embraces Gentiles *as Gentiles per se* leads S. to find in Paul's thought a pattern of God's relation to creation that is grounded in the Incarnation and expressed in the Lord's Supper: "God acts in and with creatures in and as their own natures, creaturehood *per se.* Divine power … upholds [creatures] in their particularity." In just this way, God's sovereign and merciful redemption of the cosmos takes place within the contingent unfolding of history.

In an essay entitled, "Christian Identity Without an Anti-Jewish Foil," Martin Rothgangel shows how Rom 9–11 offers a suitable starting point for processes of education in relation to Judaism. Since its emergence from its "Mother-religion," Christianity has tended to define itself in distinction from Judaism; for this purpose it has, in the course of its history, established evaluative paradigms based on antithesis (Judaism *versus* Christianity) that have fostered hatred of Jews, paradigms that persist in contemporary religious education. In principle, such patterns of valuation can be attributed to "natural" ways of perceiving and thinking: on the one hand, distinctive characteristics of the Other are often emphasized, and eventually exaggerated, in order to cope with a complex outside world; on the other hand, the particular identity of one's own group over against competing groups can be secured by using those same patterns. Hence, one best counters such prejudices by highlighting the over-arching commonalities shared by all people involved, despite their differences, and by demonstrating that discrimination against the Other necessarily diminishes one's own identity. Just this strategy is evident in the olive-tree parable (Rom 11:17–24) that ties together fundamental ideas of Rom 9–11: it acknowledges distinctions with respect to faith in Christ, but most of all it calls to mind the common root and the shared future hope – and it warns the Gentile Christians of the negative consequences of anti-Jewish arrogance. Rom 9–11 thus shows a way to define Christian identity apart from anti-Judaism.

As Kendall Soulen notes, interpretation of Rom 9–11 has played a central role in the ecumenical churches' many attempts to reassess and

rearticulate the relationship between Church and Israel in the wake of the Shoah. These chapters make four crucial contributions to shaping a Christian self-understanding in relation to Israel that holds promise for Christian-Jewish relations. First, the present-tense affirmations of God's love for Israel that bracket Paul's discourse force Christians to recognize that Israel's election belongs not simply to the past or to the eschatological future, but "*also* and *above all* in the abiding *now* of covenant history." Second, Paul affirms both that Israel's "No" to the gospel serves God's redemptive purposes and that Israel's salvation is the direct work of God in Christ, quite apart from the Church and its kerygma. Consequently, the Church witnesses to the Jews indirectly, by seeking to embody the gospel in a faithful and winsome manner. Third, Rom 9–11 mercifully de-centers the Church from the story of redemption, insisting that Gentile Christians remain Gentiles and, consequently, that they continue to depend for their existence on God's fidelity to a people other than themselves, the people of Israel. Finally, Paul's discourse reveals to the Church that the meaning of the divine name, YHWH, comes to expression in the twin affirmations, "Jesus is Lord" (10:9) and, "The gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable" (11:29).

Wolfgang Kraus focuses his reflection concerning "The Significance of Romans 9–11 in Christian-Jewish Dialogue" on the process of specifying anew Christian self-understanding in relation to Judaism as it has been initiated in Germany since 1950, not least through a number of declarations and studies of the Protestant Churches. Although the relationship of the Church to God's people Israel is described in the New Testament – indeed, even within the Pauline corpus – in different and, to some extent, divergent ways, Rom 9–11 rightly serves as the principal text of this new orientation. There Paul's final, self-consistent pronouncement on the subject is found, formulated on the basis of the revelation of God's righteousness; it holds just as firmly to the *solus Christus* as to the validity of the divine promises, and in this way it brings the gospel of Christ properly to expression. Consequently, in addressing (still) open questions – the understanding of election, the role of Israel in ecclesiology, the legitimacy of mission to the Jews – Theology and the Church should once again orient themselves by Rom 9–11. Yet this text too has its limits. Paul's imminent expectation of the *parousia* was not fulfilled; Christians have in the course of history allowed Jews to be dishonored, disenfranchised, persecuted and annihilated; the required "theology out of repentance" has only emerged in rudimentary form. What all this means for Theology and the Church is not yet clear.

Collectively, these twenty-six essays bring to light substantial areas of broad consensus among contemporary interpreters of Rom 9–11 even as they reveal important topics that continue to be debated. At the same time, they open up fresh lines of inquiry into a passage that has proved to be of unparalleled significance for the transformation of Christian relations with Jews and Judaism since 1945. The essays are offered here in the hope that they may generate yet further conversations about the historical, theological and practical issues surrounding the interpretation and reception of Rom 9–11 by those who live in the *Spannungsfeld* between trust in the gospel of Jesus Christ and confidence in the abiding election of Israel.[5]

[5] Abbreviations in this volume follow the systems set forth by *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (ed. H. D. Betz et al.; 4th ed.; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998–2005), and *The SBL Handbook of Style* (ed. P. H. Alexander et al.; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1999), with the following additions: BDR = F. Blass / A. Debrunner, *Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Griechisch*, bearbeitet v. F. Rehkopf (18th ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2001); LSJ = H. G. Liddell / R. Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, revised by H. S. Jones & R. McKenzie (9th ed.; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).

Die Rolle des Paulus im Verhältnis zwischen Christen und Juden

Berndt Schaller

Christoph Bizer
† 12. April 2008
dem Kollegen, Genossen und Freund
zum Gedenken

„Das Judentum hat um seines Paulus willen zuviel gelitten … Es kostet Überwindung, seinen Namen ohne Bitterkeit zu nennen, wenn man die namenlose Schmach, das grauenhafte Elend bedenkt, das die von ihm begründete Kirche über uns gebracht hat."

„Fast alles, was ich vom Christentum irgendwie glaube verstehen zu können, lehne ich ab. Die Briefe des Paulus lese ich fast jedes Jahr einmal immer mit wachsendem Erstaunen und Abneigung, und so weit ich mich mit christlicher Theologie in entscheidenden Punkten (Inkarnationslehre, spiritualisierter Messianismus u. a.) zu beschäftigen versucht habe, hat mich wenig daran angezogen, und vieles empört."

Zwei jüdische Stimmen zur Rolle des Paulus im Verhältnis zwischen Christen und Juden. Das erste Votum stammt von dem im tschechisch-böhmischen Prag beheimateten, deutschsprachigen, jüdischen Schriftsteller Max Brod – heutzutage, wenn überhaupt, meist nur noch als Freund und Nachlassverwalter Franz Kafkas bekannt. Es findet sich in seiner als „Bekenntnisbuch" bezeichneten Schrift „Heidentum, Christentum und Judentum", die 1921 in München veröffentlicht wurde.[1] Das zweite Votum stammt von dem in Berlin gebürtigen, seit 1923 in Jerusalem wirkenden und 1982 dort verstorbenen jüdischen Religionshistoriker Gershom Scholem, dem Begründer der modernen Kabbalahforschung. Es begegnet in einem privaten Brief, den er 1955 bei einem Besuch in Oxford an eine Bekannte geschrieben hat, die auf dem Weg war, sich dem Christentum zuzuwenden.[2]

Beide Voten zeigen: Paulus, das ist im Verhältnis zwischen Christen und Juden kein Gegenstand akademischer Glasperlenspiele, das ist ein mit schmerzhaften Erinnerungen belastetes und mit unverhohlener Skepsis, ja

[1] Bd. II, 165.

[2] Briefe II 1948–1970 (hg. v. Th. Sparr), München 1985, 34 f.: Brief Nr. 21, Oxford, Januar 1955, an Beatrice Hirsch-Reich.