

ROBERT B. FOSTER

# Renaming Abraham's Children

*Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen  
zum Neuen Testament 2. Reihe*

421

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**Mohr Siebeck**

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Robert B. Foster

# Renaming Abraham's Children

Election, Ethnicity, and the Interpretation  
of Scripture in Romans 9

Mohr Siebeck

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## Preface

The road which led me from my entry into doctoral work to the production of this dissertation and finally to its present revision has been long, circuitous, and filled with unexpected – and sometimes unpleasant – surprises. I could never have made the journey without support from many people.

I entered Marquette to study under Dr. Carol Stockhausen. I did not then know that I was to have the unfortunate privilege of being among her final students. I was not particularly familiar with her work when I arrived, but I soon learned that she possesses a powerful capacity to expose the intricacies of ancient texts. Her ability to follow the logic of Paul's argument and trace its scriptural roots left me breathless. When she entered into semi-retirement, Marquette's loss became my fortune. It provided me with an unparalleled opportunity to pour over Pauline texts with her for hours in sessions that sometimes left me dazed. She became a model scholar, and I hope to honor her here not by repeating her views, but by aspiring to hear Paul at work the way she does.

When Dr. Stockhausen's health finally proved too great an obstacle for her continued involvement, the responsibility for overseeing my dissertation fell to Dr. Julian Hills. He was not content to push me through the finish line and be rid of an unexpected burden. To the contrary, he assumed and went far beyond an advisor's full obligations. His keen editorial skills delivered me – and the reader – from many stylistic infelicities and his academic professionalism had a salutary effect on my sometimes intemperate mode of expression. His admonition that I write in a prose that “invites the reader into the argument” gave me an ideal to which I will aspire throughout my career.

To put it succinctly, if in this study I have presented anything worth *saying* (and that is for the reader to decide), I owe it to Dr. Stockhausen. If I have produced anything worth *reading* (also a judgment for the reader to make), I owe it to Dr. Hills. If I have failed on either account (or both!), the fault lies solely with myself.

A special word of thanks is due to my professors, especially those willing to serve on my dissertation board: Dr. Deirdre Dempsey, Fr. William Kurz, Dr. Mickey Mattox, and Dr. Andrei Orlov. I truly appreciate their time offered as readers of this dissertation, as well as their guidance as professors, examiners, and mentors at an earlier stage of my studies.

Several colleagues and teachers provided feedback on various chapters and sections: Mary Anderson, Raanan Eichler, Mark A. Jennings, Todd Murphy, Dr. Sharon Pace, Dr. J. Brian Tucker and Dr. Claus-Jürgen Thornton. Their time, comments, and encouragement are greatly appreciated. Brian Tucker in particular offered generous feedback on ch. 2, despite disagreement between us on fundamental issues in Pauline interpretation. Todd Murphy read the manuscript in its entirety and made numerous suggestions of great help.

The generosity of Marquette University provided me with a three-year teaching assistantship and a dissertation fellowship, making my studies possible.

Many friends in Milwaukee opened to me their homes and their tables. They made the long commutes, first from Minnesota and then from Michigan, and the otherwise lonely visits to campus not only bearable but joyful.

When I could not avail myself of the resources provided by the Marquette Raynor Memorial Library, I was fortunate to have access to other venues. The librarians of the G. H. Cachiaras Memorial Library at Crossroads College, formerly known as Minnesota Bible College, made their modest collection freely available to me for no reason other than Christian charity. The staff at the Hatcher Graduate Library of the University of Michigan also kindly allowed me to borrow from their stacks, even after they should have cancelled my borrowing privileges when my wife finished her residency program there. The library of Madonna University provided much resource material. I thank all these institutions deeply.

The longing for intellectual stimulation as I worked far from my teachers and colleagues was met in part by Dr. Gabriele Boccaccini, who allowed me to participate in two of his graduate seminars at the University of Michigan.

I am deeply grateful to Dr. Jörg Frey and Dr. Henning Ziebritzki of Mohr Siebeck for including this monograph in the WUNT 2 series and also to the reviewer who recommended it. The editors at Mohr Siebeck proved immeasurably helpful in preparing the final draft.

The following people provided childcare that enabled me to complete my work in (relative!) peace, whether during coursework, exam preparation, the writing of my dissertation, or its present revision: Stephania Dumbravanu, Angie Foster, Gloria Foster, Jerry Foster Sr., Jerry Foster, Helen Geary, Joshua Grilly, Joyce Ham, Connie Yody, and Amy Young. My mother-in-law Stephania left her home in Romania for months at a time to live in a country where she could not speak the language in order to ease the burdens of childcare. My mother Gloria sacrificed time and money, though she counted it all joy, to assist in numerous ways. Without help from them and the others named, I would still be trying to complete the course work in my doctoral program.

I have received persistent encouragement and unconditional love from my immediate and extended family throughout the time of my graduate work and beyond.

Concerning the woman who provided me with unfailing support at every step, and without whom I would have quite literally fallen out of academia years ago (I refer to my wife Carmen, though Gale Prusinski, secretary extraordinaire of the Marquette Theology Department, nearly fits that description!), I cannot provide an acknowledgement sufficient to discharge the debt I owe.

This study does not address modern theological issues. It is my prayer, however, that God may use it in some way however modest to further the proclamation of the gospel and to edify the church.

Richmond, VA, December 2015

Robert B. Foster





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## List of Abbreviations

AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	<i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i>
ABR	<i>Australian Biblical Review</i>
AJA	<i>American Journal of Archaeology</i>
AJEC	Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity
AnBib	Analecta Biblica
ANRW	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt</i> , ed. Hildegard Temporini and Wolfgang Haase
AzTh	Arbeiten zur Theologie
BA	<i>Biblical Archaeologist</i>
BASOR	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
BBR	<i>Bulletin for Biblical Research</i>
BDAG	<i>Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> , ed. Frederick W. Danker, Walter Bauer, William F. Arndt, and F. Wilbur Gingrich
BDB	<i>A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> , ed. Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs
BDF	<i>A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> , ed. Friedrich Blass, Albert Debrunner, and Robert W. Funk
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
BHT	Beiträge zur historischen Theologie
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
<i>BibInt</i>	<i>Biblical Interpretation</i>
BibOr	Biblica et Orientalia
<i>BibSac</i>	<i>Bibliotheca Sacra</i>
BIOSCS	<i>Bulletin of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies</i>
<i>BJRL</i>	<i>Bulletin of the John Rylands Library</i>
BJS	Brown Judaic Studies
BNTC	Black's New Testament Commentaries
BRS	Biblical Resource Series
<i>BTB</i>	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CBQMS	Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series
<i>CBR</i>	<i>Currents in Biblical Research</i>
CC	Continental Commentary
<i>CR:BS</i>	<i>Currents in Research: Biblical Studies</i>
<i>CRBR</i>	<i>Critical Review of Books in Religion</i>



<i>CTM</i>	<i>Concordia Theological Monthly</i>
<i>CTQ</i>	<i>Concordia Theological Quarterly</i>
DCH	<i>Dictionary of Classical Hebrew</i> , ed. David J. A. Clines
DCLSL	Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature Studies
DJD	Discoveries in the Judaean Desert
<i>DPL</i>	<i>Dictionary of Paul and His Letters</i>
<i>DSD</i>	<i>Dead Sea Discoveries</i>
EdF	Erträge der Forschung
EKK	Evangelisch-katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
ESEC	Emory Studies in Early Christianity
<i>ETR</i>	<i>Etudes théologiques et religieuses</i>
<i>ExAud</i>	<i>Ex Auditu</i>
<i>ExpTim</i>	<i>Expository Times</i>
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
FOTL	Forms of the Old Testament Literature
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
GAP	Guides to the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha
GBS	Guides to Biblical Scholarship
<i>GTJ</i>	<i>Grace Theological Journal</i>
<i>HBT</i>	<i>Horizons in Biblical Theology</i>
HCS	Hellenistic Culture and Society
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>HUCA</i>	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
<i>HvTSt</i>	<i>Hervormde teologiese studies</i>
ICC	International Critical Commentary
<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JBQ</i>	<i>Jewish Bible Quarterly</i>
<i>JJS</i>	<i>Journal of Jewish Studies</i>
<i>JQR</i>	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
<i>JR</i>	<i>Journal of Religion</i>
JSJSup	Journal for the Study of Judaism Supplement Series
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
JSPSup	Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha Supplement Series
<i>JSS</i>	<i>Journal of Semitic Studies</i>
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
<i>Jud</i>	<i>Judaica</i>
KEK	Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament
LEC	Library of Early Christianity
LNTS	Library of New Testament Studies
LSJ	<i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> , ed. Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, and Henry Stuart Jones
LXX	Septuagint
MHUC	Monographs of the Hebrew Union College
<i>NIB</i>	<i>New Interpreter's Bible</i>

NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
<i>NIDB</i>	<i>New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible</i>
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NovTSup	Supplements to Novum Testamentum
NTAbh nF	Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen Neue Folge
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
OBT	Overtures to Biblical Theology
<i>OCCC</i>	<i>Oxford Companion to Classical Civilization</i> , ed. Simon Hornblower and Antony Spawforth
OG	Old Greek
OTP	Old Testament Pseudepigrapha
OTR	Old Testament Readings
<i>PRSt</i>	<i>Perspectives in Religious Studies</i>
PSBSup	Princeton Seminary Bulletin Supplement
<i>RB</i>	<i>Revue biblique</i>
<i>RBL</i>	<i>Review of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>ResQ</i>	<i>Restoration Quarterly</i>
<i>RevExp</i>	<i>Review and Expositor</i>
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLEJL	Society of Biblical Literature Early Judaism and Its Literature
SBLSCS	Society of Biblical Literature Septuagint and Cognate Studies
SBL SemeiaSt	Society of Biblical Literature Semeia Studies
SBLSP	Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers
SBLTT	Society of Biblical Literature Texts and Translations
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
<i>SCJR</i>	<i>Studies in Christian-Jewish Relations</i>
SDSSRL	Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature
SEG	Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum
<i>SJT</i>	<i>Scottish Journal of Theology</i>
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
SP	Sacra Pagina
SSEJC	Studies in Scripture and Early Judaism and Christianity
STDJ	Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah
<i>TDOT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</i> , ed. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren
THKNT	Theologischer Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament
TSAJ	Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum
<i>TTE</i>	<i>The Theological Educator</i>
<i>TynBul</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
VTSup	Supplements to Vetus Testamentum
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
<i>WTJ</i>	<i>Westminster Theological Journal</i>
WUNT	Westwissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
WW	<i>Word and World</i>
ZAW	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
ZNW	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche</i>

## A Note on Translations

Unless otherwise noted, English translations of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament, the New Testament, and the Apocrypha are taken from the RSV. English translations of the LXX are taken from the NETS. However, in using this translation I have taken the liberty of writing all proper names according to their normal anglicized form. When the discussion presumes language-specific texts, I have followed the verse numbers for the Hebrew or alternatively the Greek text, though I supply the corresponding references as they appear in English versions. The index refers to standard English versification.

Standard translations and critical editions were consulted for non-biblical works. These are listed in the Bibliography.

## Introduction

In the musical *A Fiddler on the Roof*, the experience of a Jewish Ashkenazi community in pre-revolutionary Russia is conveyed through its milkman Reb Tevye. As Tevye delivers his products to distant neighbors, he passes the time talking with God. These conversations articulate the religious and folk traditions by which Tevye maintains his balance (“Like a fiddler on the roof!” he says) in an increasingly hostile and intrusive world. At the conclusion of one discussion, Tevye whimsically bemoans the unique privilege of Jewish election. “I know, I know,” he ruminates, “we are your chosen people – but once in a while, can’t you choose someone else?”

Absent from many discussions of Rom 9, particularly among those pointing to it as a robust affirmation of Israel’s priority asserted against Gentile presumption, is Tevye’s wry insight that election is anything but a straightforward blessing. One does not have to read very far in the Bible before encountering traces of a less than harmonious accord between God and his chosen covenantal partner. Indeed, the relationship between them seems characterized as often as not by betrayal (on the part of Israel), indifference (on the part of God), and mutual recrimination.<sup>1</sup> The divinely imposed privilege of election brings in its wake not only benefits but also injuries. The Israel who prevails against God may win a blessing, but walks the rest of his life with a limp.

In this study, I argue that in Rom 9 Paul reconfigures Abraham’s family on the basis of a specific understanding of election that he derives from Genesis – an understanding that resonates with Tevye’s comment. Paul finds in the patriarchal stories not a charter for chosen-nation hubris, but the ironic portrayal of election through negation. The divine appointment of one man and his successive descendants as the progenitors of God’s chosen people initiates a series of reversals. A younger brother is repeatedly assigned the status of firstborn, but he receives his inheritance only after suffering the rejection his elevation imposed on the elder son. It is this dialectic of election, displacement, and reversal that gives Rom 9 its much sought-after exegetical founda-

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<sup>1</sup> A few examples will illustrate the point: in Judg 2 among other passages God plays the part of the scorned lover; God’s indifference is lamented in many Psalms (e.g., Pss 10, 13, 22, 44, 69, 74, 83, 89, 139); very near to the surface of Deutero-Isaiah’s confident rhetoric lies his community’s own embittered cynicism (evident, *inter alia*, in Isa 40:27 and 49:14–15); and Israel’s rebellion is assailed in prophetic texts too numerous to list.

tion. The fate of Jews and Gentiles in the messianic era recapitulates the reversals endured by the chosen and rejected sons.

I seek to establish this claim over the course of eight chapters. Chapter 1 presents the method followed in this study. My attempt to reconstruct Paul's pre-epistolary exegesis of Genesis relies, in part, on the exegetical adaptations Paul makes to his biblical quotations. Therefore I must justify a reading of Paul that (1) probes behind his epistolary argument to an interpreted narrative supporting it; and (2) acknowledges the textual diversity present in early Judaism.

In ch. 2, I appropriate Anthony D. Smith's model of ethno-symbolism. This approach to ethnic identity elucidates how stories, especially myths of origin, express a collective self-understanding. I then show that Jewish interpreters in the Persian and Greco-Roman periods relied on stories of Abraham (and less frequently, of his children) as a cipher for ideal Jewishness. However, I devote the majority of this chapter to Paul's use of the Abrahamic stories. He draws on these to legitimate the incorporation of uncircumcised Gentiles, first into Israel itself (Gal, 1 Cor, Phil, Rom 2), and then alongside Israel as a distinct line of descent within Abraham's family (Rom 4). It is this latter perspective that he carries into Rom 9.

This change in how Paul categorizes Jews and Gentiles within the Abrahamic community bears directly on the causes compelling him to write the Christ-followers in Rome a letter. Chapter 3 explains what these causes are and so provides the interpretive framework for what follows.

I turn to Rom 9:6–13 in ch. 4, where I examine the biblical texts that Paul quotes, their original literary contexts, and the issues that they pose for the Apostle's understanding of election and its traditional insignia, circumcision and Torah observance. I side with those who understand Rom 9:6–13 as a defense of Israel's election, but I qualify this reading in two important ways: first, I contend that Paul's argument does not correspond to his initial claim (v. 6b) nor lead naturally to his conclusion (vv. 25–29); second, I maintain that, because his discourse places the rationale for election entirely on the sovereign choice of God, it thereby renders physical circumcision and obedience to Torah, the epiphenomena of election, superfluous. Precisely because the electing God is absolutely sovereign, he is free to reorganize his elect people on the basis of his call and nothing else.

The subject of ch. 5 is a series of connections that link Genesis (as interpreted by Paul) and the prophetic texts introduced in Rom 9:24 and quoted in Rom 9:25–29. If these connections can be demonstrated, they will support my hypothesis that beneath Rom 9 lie the interpreted narratives of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Chapters 6 and 7 comprise the heart of this study. In them, I attempt to reconstruct Paul's exegesis of Hos 2:1, 2:25 (ch. 6) and Isa 1:9, 10:22–23 (ch. 7) as prophecies that facilitate his application of the patriarchal stories to

the crisis presupposed in 9:6: the widespread Jewish rejection of the gospel and its corresponding acceptance by Gentiles. I seek to confirm this hypothesis by showing its ability to resolve five exegetical difficulties.

I begin in ch. 6 with two challenges set by Rom 9:25–26: (1) What rationale, if any, does Paul have for his use of Hosea to justify the inclusion of Gentile believers, in apparent violation of the text’s natural meaning? and (2) What explanation can account for Paul’s emphasis on the geographic location of their calling?

In ch. 7, I address two problems in Rom 9:27–29: (3) What does Paul’s difficult and shortened quotation from Isa 10:22–23 signify? and (4) What is the origin and purpose of his theology of the remnant? Finally, I close with an interpretive issue posed by my foregoing exegesis: (5) Why does Paul’s argument in Rom 9 appear to lack coherence? I maintain that each of these questions can be answered by appealing to the dialectic of election and rejection embedded in Genesis’s narrative of the chosen son. Paul sees Israel’s *destiny* in the *messianic age* as a recapitulation of its *etiology* in the *patriarchal age*: the chosen and elect son Israel loses to his once displaced brother the privileged status he received by grace, only to receive it back again on the far side of his own exclusion.

In ch. 8, I propose that my hypothesized exegesis can resolve three additional conundrums outside of Rom 9: (1) Why do Rom 9:6b–11:10 (a remnant will be saved) and Rom 11:11–32 (all Israel will be saved) appear to give distinct and not entirely consistent answers to the problem presupposed in Rom 9:6? (2) Why does Paul present the odd argument in Rom 11 that Jewish rejection of the gospel is *necessary* for Gentile salvation? and (3) Why does Paul throughout Romans affirm the priority of the Jewish people *and* insist on their equality with Gentiles? In answering these questions, I seek to demonstrate the logic underlying Paul’s epistolary rhetoric and contribute to the quest for his elusive coherence.

The tortuous train of reasoning Paul lays in Rom 9–11 often leaves scholars anxious for a more straightforward solution to the mystery of Israel’s final destiny. For example, in his commentary for the Sacra Pagina series Brandon Byrne, S.J., wrote the following:

In pursuit of the ultimate inclusion of Israel Paul draws a very long bow indeed. . . . For a long time what is uppermost in the argument is Israel’s rejection rather than her eventual acceptance. Modern readers who look to this section of Romans to find some positive reflection upon the fate of the Jewish people have to wait a long time before receiving satisfaction and even then the relevant passage (11:25–32) is not altogether without ambiguities of its own. Only in the context of the whole does Paul’s basically “eirenic” vision emerge; *on the way to this complete vision several passages, taken by themselves, appear to cast Jews in a far from favorable light*. It is important, when considering individual

elements, always to keep in mind the broader, ultimately “inclusive” vision pursued by Paul.<sup>2</sup>

According to Byrne, the steps that Paul takes towards his ultimate goal frequently appear to lead in the wrong direction, a peculiar way for someone to compose an argument intended to persuade. The same point is perhaps stated even more forcefully by Charles H. Cosgrove:

To eliminate what is provocative [in 9:22ff], by purporting to establish, for example, that Paul is not lumping Israel together with the enemy of Israel, Pharaoh, that he is not suggesting that Israel and Pharaoh might be like two pieces of clay worked up for immolation in a vast display of divine wrath and power – to rule out from deliberation the entertainment of such possibilities is to ignore what Paul’s language *does* here, the way it encourages the reader down a track that, arguably, turns out to be false but is not arguably false except on the basis of a particular interpretation of 11:11–36.<sup>3</sup>

I agree with these assessments. Discrete elements in Rom 9 as well as Rom 10–11 point the reader to the opposite of Paul’s final conclusion. It is the purpose of the present study to answer why this is so.

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<sup>2</sup> Byrne, *Romans* (SP 6; Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1996), 284; emphasis added).

<sup>3</sup> Cosgrove, “Rhetorical Suspense in Romans 9–11: A Study in Polyvalence and Hermeneutical Election,” *JBL* 115 (1996): 281 (emphasis original).

## Chapter 1

# Story, Text, and Technique: Reading Scripture in Paul

In this study, I attempt to uncover Paul's pre-epistolary exegesis of the patriarchal narratives. This exegesis, I argue, lies beneath and extends far beyond his explicit quotations from Genesis in Rom 9:7, 9, 12. The evidence for this exegesis lies, to a significant degree, in the alterations Paul makes to his texts from Hosea and Isaiah in Rom 9:25–29. Thus three methodological issues are immediately posed. First, on what basis may an interpreter claim to reconstruct Paul's exegesis of narrative texts *behind* his expressed arguments? Second, given the plurality of biblical text-forms in the late Second Temple period, on what basis may an interpreter claim that Paul makes specific changes to his biblical quotations? Finally, what procedures might Paul have used to move from antecedent text to contemporary interpretation? These are distinct issues, requiring separate treatments, but they converge in Rom 9 at the point where Paul's altered prophetic quotations indicate that he has performed exegetical operations on a prior narrative passage.

### 1.1. Paul's Interpretation of Scripture: Story

Paul sometimes construes the meaning of his Scriptures in ways that modern interpreters find cavalier. It is a bold exegete who cites the Torah against circumcision (Gal 3, esp. v. 6, quoting Gen 15:6, and v. 16, quoting a phrase from Gen 12:7; 13:15; 17:7), who sets Moses against himself (Rom 10:5–9, quoting Lev 18:5 and Deut 30:12, 14), who calls upon promises of Jerusalem's restoration to justify the inclusion of Gentile Christ-believers (Gal 4:27, quoting Isa 54:1), and who denies the natural meaning of "Don't muzzle the ox" in favor of a novel application to Christian missionaries (1 Cor 9:9, quoting Deut 25:4). From these examples, some scholars conclude that Paul appropriates Israel's Scriptures arbitrarily, perhaps colonizing their pages with foreign christological significations.<sup>1</sup> Those who claim by contrast that Paul

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<sup>1</sup> E.g., Hans-Joachim Schoeps, *Paul: The Theology of the Apostle in the Light of Jewish Religious History* (trans. Harold Knight; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961), 244; Christopher D. Stanley, *Arguing with Scripture: The Rhetoric of Quotations in the Letters of Paul* (London: T&T Clark, 2004), *passim*.



respected the integrity of his sacred text have been forced to ask what process of extraction might produce these counter-intuitive readings.

To solve these problems, several researchers have posited a now-hidden exegesis located between the quotations in Paul's text and their scriptural source. His interpretive efforts, though not fully emerging in his letters, can sometimes be discerned behind them. A recent development within this approach, already anticipated by C. H. Dodd, combines the hypothesis of Paul's pre-epistolary exegesis with the current interest in *narrative* as constitutive of human thought and discourse. The contributions growing out of this research trajectory contain methodological implications important for the present study.<sup>2</sup>

### 1.1.1. Getting Behind the Text

Before scholars appreciated either textual diversity or interpretive freedom as features of the ancient exegetical landscape, they frequently attributed differences between OT passages and their NT quotations to lapses in memory or, for the pious, direct inspiration of the Spirit. Mediating positions appeared occasionally, suggesting that the NT writers had appropriated Jewish methods of interpretation, or that rabbis had tampered with the Masoretic text for anti-Christian purposes.

Around the turn of the twentieth century, J. Rendel Harris sensed that these avenues had reached a dead end and sought a fresh approach. He began by noting that several biblical quotations in early Christian writings show certain peculiarities. These include variant readings vis-à-vis both the Hebrew and Greek textual traditions and combined texts that appear together across a series of writings. To explain these features, Harris argued that the first generation of Christian missionaries compiled lists of biblical passages, or testi-

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<sup>2</sup> Broader summaries of the OT in Paul than that pursued here can be found in the following: E. Earle Ellis, *Paul's Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957); C. Kingsley Barrett, "The Interpretation of the Old Testament in the New," in *From the Beginnings to Jerome* (vol. 1 of *The Cambridge History of the Bible*; ed. P. R. Ackroyd and C. F. Evans; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), 377–411; D. Moody Smith Jr., "The Use of the Old Testament in the New," in *The Use of the Old Testament in the New and Other Essays: Studies in Honor of William Franklin Stinespring* (ed. James M. Efird; Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1972), 3–65; Anthony T. Hanson, *The New Testament Interpretation of Scripture* (London: SPCK, 1980); Kenneth D. Litwak, "Echoes of Scripture? A Critical Survey of Recent Works on Paul's Use of the Old Testament," *CR:BS* 6 (1998): 260–88; Richard N. Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period* (2d ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999); Craig A. Evans, "The Old Testament in the New," in *The Face of New Testament Studies: A Survey of Recent Research* (ed. Scot McKnight and Grant R. Osborne; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 130–45; Matthew W. Bates, *The Hermeneutics of the Apostolic Proclamation: The Center of Paul's Method of Scriptural Interpretation* (Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press, 2013).

monies, for use in the proclamation and defense of the gospel.<sup>3</sup> Although no direct evidence for such compilations exists until Cyprian's *Ad Quirinum* (ca. 248), Harris inferred their early existence from the traces they allegedly left in the biblical quotations of the first Christians. This testimony hypothesis, he hoped, would not only account for the peculiar characteristics of OT quotations. It would also open a window into the development of early Christian literature in general.

Harris's theory caused more of a splash than a sea change, but it soon found considerable support (albeit in modified form) in the work of C. H. Dodd. In his *According to the Scriptures: The Sub-structure of New Testament Theology*, Dodd moved the discussion away from a written collection or collections. Instead, he postulated an oral tradition of biblical interpretation, explicating the early kerygma and ultimately rooted in Jesus' own understanding that his ministry was the fulfillment of Scripture.<sup>4</sup> Dodd made two significant observations concerning the original contexts of various OT proofs. First, many of them contain material frequently alluded to elsewhere in the NT. Second, these passages largely coalesce around three topics: apocalyptic and eschatological expectations, the new Israel, and the suffering servant/righteous one. Dodd labeled this material "the sub-structure of New Testament theology." Beneath the NT documents lay an organized program for understanding and announcing the significant events that had brought the church into existence. In its claim to fulfill the Scriptures, the church found a mandate for biblical research.<sup>5</sup>

Dodd's programmatic suggestions contain three implications important for the present study. First, early Christian exegetes actively searched the OT to support and explain evangelistic proclamation.<sup>6</sup> Second, a quoted verse might serve to recall its larger context, which, in turn, may have affected an entire NT passage beyond the specific quotation.<sup>7</sup> Third, the biblical passages that attracted these early readers and therefore shaped their literary products were characterized by a *narrative pattern*.<sup>8</sup> Relevant passages from Isaiah, Jeremiah, the Minor Prophets, and the Psalms shared an explicit or implied "plot"

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<sup>3</sup> Harris, *Testimonies* (2 vols.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1916–1920). See also Martin C. Abl, "And Scripture Cannot Be Broken": *The Form and Function of the Early Christian Testimonia Collections* (NovTSup 96; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 7–69; David Lincicum, "Paul and the *Testimonia*: *Quo Vademus?*" *JETS* 51 (2008): 297–308.

<sup>4</sup> Dodd, *According to the Scriptures: The Sub-structure of New Testament Theology* (London: Nisbet, 1952).

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 14–15.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 111–25.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 60, 126.

<sup>8</sup> Dodd developed an analogous proposal for understanding the early Christian proclamation in *The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1936), 17, 21–24.

that seemed to illuminate the death of Christ and the origins of the church.<sup>9</sup> Long before *narrative* came into vogue, Dodd discerned that the appropriation of Israel's Scriptures by early Christians could only be understood with reference to the *story* or *stories* found in them.

A critical appreciation of Dodd's proposals set in and various research projects began in their wake. The most sustained attempt to pursue his thesis in greater depth and exegetical grounding is perhaps Barnabas Lindars's *New Testament Apologetic*.<sup>10</sup> Although Lindars shifted the impetus for biblical interpretation from kerygmatic explication to apologetic necessity, he carried further Dodd's attempt to recover the earliest Christian readings of Scripture. Less indebted to Dodd was Donald Juel, whose *Messianic Exegesis: Christological Interpretation of the Old Testament in Early Christianity* denied the significance of narrative patterns and placed more weight than Dodd on Jewish comparative materials.<sup>11</sup> Yet in different ways, Dodd, Lindars, and Juel showed that any attempt to understand the developing theological beliefs of the first Christians must probe behind the canonical documents to reconstruct the exegetical labors that preceded them. The NT writings are the product of an interpretive effort and in many cases reflect not the fountainhead but the delta of exegetical reflection. Recent scholarship has extended this line of research.<sup>12</sup>

### 1.1.2. Locating a Pre-Epistolary Story

Dodd found the substructure of NT theology in the narrative shape of early Christian exegesis. In time this approach to biblical interpretation intersected with a burgeoning interest in *narrative* itself, both as a fundamental element of Paul's conception of reality and a scholarly tool for interpreting his texts.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Dodd, *Sub-structure*, 72, 98, 102, 109, 128–29.

<sup>10</sup> Lindars, *New Testament Apologetic* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961).

<sup>11</sup> Juel, *Messianic Exegesis: Christological Interpretation of the Old Testament in Early Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988).

<sup>12</sup> A notable development is the increasingly narrow focus evident in large monographs investigating single NT books. Some of the more important examples include Joel Marcus, *The Way of the Lord: Christological Exegesis of the Old Testament in the Gospel of Mark* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster/John Knox, 1992); Rikki E. Watts, *Isaiah's New Exodus in Mark* (WUNT 2/88; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997); David W. Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus* (WUNT 2/130; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000).

<sup>13</sup> A large number of studies have found Paul's letters congenial to narrative interpretation, including Daniel Patte, *Paul's Faith and the Power of the Gospel: A Structural Introduction to His Letters* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983); Norman R. Petersen, *Rediscovering Paul: Philemon and the Sociology of Paul's Narrative World* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985); Romano Penna, "Narrative Aspects of the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans," in *Jew and Greek Alike* (vol. 1 of *Paul the Apostle*; trans. Thomas P. Wahl; Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1996); Stephen E. Fowl, *The Story of Christ in the Ethics of Paul*:

Three scholars in particular have explored this nexus in groundbreaking ways: Richard B. Hays, Nicholas T. Wright, and Carol K. Stockhausen.<sup>14</sup> Several common motifs make a synoptic view of their work appropriate.

First, they all attempt to go beyond a narrow focus on Paul's explicit citations and approach Paul as a *biblical* theologian, a missionary and thinker who returns again and again to Scripture's attestation that God has acted in the past and its promise that he will do so in the future. Second, they all argue that Paul's hermeneutical horizon is arched by a narrative or set of narratives disclosed in Israel's sacred texts. He strives to understand and interpret *stories*, though whether Paul primarily engages a discrete biblical drama – with its self-contained plot, characters, and resolution – or the meta-story of God's involvement with Israel, the church, and the world varies with each interpreter. Finally, they all maintain that the biblical text has an autonomy which Paul respects. He does not merely exploit it for a series of rhetorically effective quotations, nor does he use it simply as a tool to magnify his own voice. Rather, Paul *reads* it and, to some degree, *learns* from it.

Despite these similarities, each of these interpreters situates *narrative* in a different location within Paul's interpretive practices. Further, although all three see these practices as the link between Israel's Scriptures and Paul's

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*An Analysis of the Function of the Hymnic Material in the Pauline Corpus* (JSNTSup 36; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990); Ben Witherington III, *Paul's Narrative World of Thought: The Tapestry of Tragedy and Triumph* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster/John Knox, 1994); Michael J. Gorman, *Cruciformity: Paul's Narrative Spirituality of the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001); idem, *Inhabiting the Cruciform God: Kenosis, Justification, and Theosis in Paul's Narrative Soteriology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009); A. Katherine Grieb, *The Story of Romans: A Narrative Defense of God's Righteousness* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster/John Knox, 2002); Richard B. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1–4:11* (2d ed.; Biblical Resource Series; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002); Bruce W. Longenecker, ed., *Narrative Dynamics in Paul: A Critical Assessment* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster/John Knox, 2002); James C. Miller, "Paul and Hebrews: A Comparison of Narrative Worlds," in *Hebrews: Contemporary Methods – New Insights* (ed. Gabriella Gelardini; Biblical Interpretation Series 75; Leiden: Brill, 2005), 245–64.

<sup>14</sup> Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1989); Stockhausen, *Moses' Veil and the Glory of the New Covenant* (AnBib 116; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1989); eadem, "2 Corinthians and the Principles of Pauline Exegesis," in *Paul and the Scriptures of Israel* (ed. Craig A. Evans and James A. Sanders; JSNTSup 83; SSEJC 1; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 143–64; Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991); idem, *The New Testament and the People of God* (vol. 1 of *Christian Origins and the Question of God*; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992); idem, *What Saint Paul Really Said* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997); idem, *Paul in Fresh Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005); idem, *Justification: God's Plan and Paul's Vision* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2009); idem, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God* (2 parts; vol. 4 of *Christian Origins and the Question of God*; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013).

gospel, they assess the relative degree of continuity differently. The complex question, What does Paul do with his biblical narratives, and how do these narratives connect to his gospel? is a major issue in the present study. It will therefore provide the framework for the following comparison of these three scholars.

In Hays's monograph, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, what "echoes" through Paul's epistles is not simply the "Scriptures of Israel" but a more specific *story* of God's righteousness as covenantal faithfulness to his people. Hays wants to show that Paul apprehends the scriptural testimony to God's actions in and for the Jewish people as a metaphorical representation of salvation in Christ, yet without violating the integrity of that witness or the divine faithfulness to which it points. In Hays's account, the Scriptures are no palimpsest over which Paul inscribes his own, unrelated set of meanings. Rather, they comprise an account of God's commitment to Israel that can be neither "superseded nor nullified," but rather is "transformed into a witness of the gospel."<sup>15</sup>

Although Hays provides several criteria to identify where in Paul's letters this story reverberates (availability, volume, recurrence, thematic coherence, etc.), he is less interested in applying them to various passages than in exploring how a latent OT signification guides Paul's reading even when he appears to violate it.<sup>16</sup> The gospel of Christ in its world-shattering newness leads Paul to his scandalous habit of reading Scripture consistently against the grain, yet again and again his reading drives him back to the gospel's ultimate foundation in the reliability of the divine promise to Israel. The tensions between the traditions of Israel and the gospel of Christ ultimately dissolve, because they equally testify to God's covenant with Israel.<sup>17</sup> Christ and his spirit bring interpretive freedom, but the contours of the biblical story present an inviolable boundary that Paul can transgress only at the expense of his own proclamation. The story seizes Paul's "strong misreadings" and redeploys them as a sublimated testament to its own unconquerability.<sup>18</sup>

A concrete example, relevant to the present study, is offered by Rom 9:25–26. Here Paul asserts that the promise of *Israel's* restoration in Hos 2:1

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<sup>15</sup> Hays, *Echoes*, 157.

<sup>16</sup> The criteria Hays proposes are discussed in *ibid.*, 29–32.

<sup>17</sup> This motif in *Echoes* emphasizing continuity between Paul's inherited religion and his newly revealed gospel became a major issue in the series of review articles published in *Paul and the Scriptures of Israel*. See especially J. Christiaan Beker's remarks in "Echoes and Intertextuality: On the Role of Scripture in Paul's Theology," in *Paul and the Scriptures*, 68. Hays, in his response to this and other reviewers, demonstrates a greater willingness to acknowledge the rupture in salvation history which Christ precipitated for Paul than was present in *Echoes* ("On the Rebound: A Response to Critiques of *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*," in *Paul and the Scriptures*, 70–96).

<sup>18</sup> Hays, *Echoes*, 66–68.

and 2:25 applies to *Gentile* Christians. Initially, at least, Paul appears to subvert the text's transparent meaning, but, according to Hays, the controlling hermeneutical norm exerted by the story of God's faithfulness eventually pushes itself to the fore. The regulative weight of Israel's sacred story wins the day, reasserting itself against the Pauline trope and finally compelling him to proclaim "all Israel will be saved" (11:26). Thus, the subversive reading of Hosea is itself undone by the agency of God's word. The biblical drama of God's fidelity to Israel in the face of Israel's repeated infidelity retains its autonomy and independence even as Paul reconfigures it into an allusive anticipation of his own gospel.<sup>19</sup>

N. T. Wright shares with Hays an interest in the role of narrative in Paul's hermeneutics, but he goes in a significantly different direction. For Hays, the form of the scriptural story is not any specific biblical text whose details occupy Paul's attention, but an *abstracted, generalized witness* to God's covenantal faithfulness. Although Wright also tends to emphasize an abstracted meta-narrative, he shows greater concern for plot elements such as sequence and resolution than one finds in Hays's approach. Wright is not seeking metaphorical and symbolic possibilities between Scripture and gospel. Rather, he begins with Israel's sacred story of creation, covenant, law, curse, exile, and hoped-for renewal. Paul's unexpected encounter with the risen Messiah disclosed this story's surprising climax.<sup>20</sup> According to Wright, the apostle's biblical interpretation constitutes an effort to reappropriate Scripture in light of its unexpected fulfillment in the crucified and exalted Messiah.<sup>21</sup>

Wright's maximalist understanding of covenant and story as mutually interpreting categories allows him to invoke a range of biblical texts as explanatory frameworks for Paul's biblical exegesis. He fits specific passages from the letters into a sweeping account of creation, covenant, curse, and cross.<sup>22</sup> Wright wants to show that Paul evokes, reinterprets, confirms, or subverts various elements of Israel's meta-story on the basis of his belief in the resurrected Messiah.

Wright's treatment of Gal 3:10–14 provides a convenient example of how his approach cashes out in exegesis. The quotation from Deut 27:26 in Gal 3:10 locates Paul's argument within a specific inscripturated narrative: Deut 27–30 presuppose the entire biblical framework of covenant, disobedience, judgment, exile, and restoration. This is not a typological pattern but a his-

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 177–78.

<sup>20</sup> Wright, *People of God*, 216; idem, *Saint Paul*, 34–35; idem, *Fresh Perspective*, 10 and passim; idem, *Justification*, 59–63; idem, *Faithfulness*, 1:114–39 (a section entitled, "The Continuous Story"), 1:161, 1:175–77.

<sup>21</sup> Idem, *Climax*, 26; idem, *Saint Paul*, 37; idem, *Fresh Perspective*, 53; and frequently in all his writings on Paul.

<sup>22</sup> Wright provides explicit defense for this rather synthetic method in *Faithfulness*, 1:474.