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# Citing the Scriptures in Paul's Letter to the Romans

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## INTRODUCTION

Even a cursory reading of Romans confirms the importance of the Jewish Scriptures as the authoritative basis and, to a large degree, the conceptual framework for the arguments set out by Paul in his letter. The text flows, in all but three of its sixteen chapters,[1] with the constant support of one explicit citation after another. Indeed, depending on how rigidly one applies certain criteria for identifying quotations, Paul's scriptural 'footprint' in Romans ranges from around fifty to seventy quotations,[2] amounting to around twice the number of scriptural citations recorded in all of his other undisputed letters put together. Most of the quotations in Romans are, moreover, drawn from the same cluster of scriptural texts that feature prominently in other New Testament writings: Genesis,

[1] The exceptions are Romans 5–6 and 16.

[2] The number of quotations in Romans is more likely to be at the lower end of this spectrum (between 50–55 quotations) if one applies the following two criteria, ideally (though see Rom 10:13; 11:34–35; 12:20) in combination with each other: a) readers/listeners are alerted to the presence of a quotation by the author's use of a citation formula; and b) one must search for evidence of the use of word combinations in a manner clearly recognizable from their occurrence in an antecedent text (or texts).

Deuteronomy, Psalms and Isaiah. This selection, with the addition of Exodus, also dominates the more indirect modes of scriptural reference within the letter, including numerous—often intricate—verbal and/or thematic allusions to specific scriptural verses and passages as well as direct references to events and figures from Israel's past, all of which provide attestation of Paul's detailed knowledge of and profound indebtedness to Scripture.

From the outset of the letter, Paul is eager to explain to his listeners and readers how the Jewish Scriptures are inextricably tied, and provide the interpretative key, to his understanding of the gospel. Already in the opening verses Paul describes the 'gospel of God' (εὐαγγέλιον θεοῦ), for which he has been set apart to proclaim (1:1), as 'promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures' (ὃ προεπηγγείλατο διὰ τῶν προφητῶν αὐτοῦ ἐν γραφαῖς ἁγίαις), the gospel concerning his Son (1:2–3). Here he makes use of the rarely attested verb προεπαγγέλλω ('promise [or announce][3] in advance') to accentuate the close relationship between God's past promises, as testified and proclaimed in the Scriptures, and their realization in the gospel in the present (eschatological) age. Paul's use of the phrase 'through his prophets' (1:2) does not necessarily denote specific prophetic writings, that is, 'the prophets' in distinction from the Torah (cf. Rom 3:21), but rather, more broadly, the character of the 'holy scriptures' as providing prophetic testimony to the gospel as understood and preached by Paul.[4] Consequently, the scriptural figures who are explicitly named in the letter are to be counted among 'the prophets' whose words point forward to the Christ-event and

[3] Although most English translations and commentaries render the verb προεπαγγέλλω as 'to promise beforehand' (cf. *BAGD* 705), Brendan Byrne, *Romans,* Sacra Pagina 6 (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1996), 43, suggests that the rendering 'announce beforehand' (cf. *LSJ* 1478) captures more effectively Paul's sense of Scripture as an 'anticipatory proclamation' of the gospel instead of 'the prophets' simply promising good news that will take place in the future.

[4] As emphasized by Jens Schröter, 'Israel's Scriptures in Romans', in Matthias Henze and David Lincicum (eds), *Israel's Scriptures in Early Christian Writings: The Use of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans, 2023), 340.

continue to 'speak' in the present.[5] This hermeneutical focus on the Scripture as foreshadowing the gospel of Christ is also given clear expression in the letter's penultimate chapter, where Paul states that whatever was written previously (προεγράφη) was written 'for our instruction' (εἰς τὴν ἡμετέραν διδασκαλίαν), 'so that by the steadfastness and by the encouragement of the Scriptures (καὶ διὰ τῆς παρακλήσεως τῶν γραφῶν) we might have hope' (15:4).

That the gospel's message accords with the Scriptures is further clarified by Paul in what C. K. Barrett has described as 'the "text" of the epistle' (1:16–17),[6] with Paul programmatically defining the gospel as 'the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek' (1:16) because God's righteousness is revealed in the gospel from faith to faith (1:17a). At this point, and for the first time in Romans, Paul uses a scriptural quotation (1:17b) to confirm his own declaration about the power of the gospel. The introductory formula selected for this purpose, 'as it is written' (καθὼς γέγραπται), occurs frequently in the letter,[7] and emphasizes the writtenness, that is, the authoritativeness of Scripture. Specifically, in Romans 1:17, it heightens the pivotal role played by every component of the scriptural quotation that follows (Hab 2:4) in Paul's overall argumentation that God saves Jews and Gentiles by faith in Jesus Christ: 'The one who is righteous by faith will live' (ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται).[8] This scriptural citation

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[5] Moses (Rom 10:5, 19); Isaiah (9:27, 29; 10:16, 20, 21; 15:12); Hosea (9:25); Elijah (11:2); David (4:6; 11:9). The verbs used in these passages to convey the testimony of individual scriptural figures, and indeed elsewhere of 'Scripture', are often in the present tense.

[6] C. K. Barrett, *The Epistle to the Romans,* Black's New Testament Commentaries (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1957), 27.

[7] Cf. also Rom 2:24; 3:4; 3:10; 4:17; 8:36; 9:13; 9:33; 10:15; 11:8; 11:26; 14:11; 15:3; 15:9; 15:21.

[8] This interpretation is favoured by, among others, C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans,* ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1975), 1:101–102; Michael Wolter, *Der Brief an die Römer,* EKKNT 6.1 (Göttingen: Patmos Verlag, 2014), 1:127. The alternative interpretative rendering of the quotation, 'the one

is close to the Septuagintal rendering of Habakkuk 2:4b according to the majority of textual witnesses, but without the possessive pronoun μου after ἐκ πίστεως ('by my [God's] faithfulness'). If this is a deliberate omission on Paul's part, rather than a variation in his underlying source text, it could support the view that he interprets this scriptural reference ('by faith') in terms of human response to God's revealed righteousness. Alternatively, Paul may have phrased the quotation with deliberate ambiguity in order to encourage his audience, at this early juncture in the letter, to consider whether the prophet's reference to ἐκ πίστεως connotes God's faithfulness and/or human faith.[9] This first scriptural quotation in Romans undoubtedly brings to the surface some of the challenges faced by scholars in seeking to identify the actual source(s) of Paul's quotations and also, as will be explored later in this essay, in determining the interpretative import of modifications made to several of those quotations in Romans.

Certainly, in the various ensuing sections of the letter, scriptural quotations are used by Paul to support his central claim that God's righteousness is revealed for all humankind. Thus, the distribution and purpose of the quotations in Romans can, broadly speaking, be mapped out as follows[10]: first, to explain that salvation is available to all who

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who is righteous will live by faith' is supported, e.g., by Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary,* Anchor Bible 33 (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 264–65

[9] See further James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8,* Word Biblical Commentary 38A (Dallas: Word Books, 1988), 44–45. More recently, Beverly Roberts Gaventa, *Romans: A Commentary,* The New Testament Library (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2024), 54, draws attention to the enigmatic character of Paul's quotation from Habakkuk 2:4, particularly as to whether ἐκ πίστεως modifies ὁ δὲ δίκαιος or ζήσεται, suggesting that the cited scriptural words express 'Paul's utter conviction that those whom God makes righteous ("the righteous one[s]") will live (both now and into the future) out of the faith in Jesus Christ that has been given them by Christ himself'.

[10] See further Colin G. Kruse, 'Paul's Use of Scripture in Romans', in Stanley E. Porter and Christopher D. Land (eds), *Paul and Scripture,* Pauline Studies 10 (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 77–92, here 77.

believe, Jews as well as Gentiles; secondly, to highlight the universal sinfulness of humankind and that salvation from sin comes only through Jesus' death (cf. Rom 3:25); thirdly, the particularly dense concentration of scriptural citations in chapters 9–11, to accentuate God's faithfulness in the face of Jewish unbelief, which has consequences for the salvation of God's elect people; and, finally, to offer encouragement and ethical guidance to the recipients of the letter. If indirect modes of scriptural reference have the capacity to disclose much about the significance attributed by Paul to a scriptural passage or to his understanding of figures like Abraham (Rom 4),[11] and belong to Paul's rhetorical strategy of making his audience(s) 'work' as part of the elucidatory process,[12] there is no doubt that the multiple scriptural citations in Romans also shape and even control large sections of his letter; they are indispensable to both its structure and interpretation. Paul does not use quotations simply to support his own statements but as crucial building-blocks in the development of his argument.

What emerges, moreover, from a close examination of each scriptural citation in Romans is that Paul's primary source is the Greek Bible or Septuagint. The central role of the Greek translations of the Jewish Scriptures for interpreting the form of Paul's scriptural citations has been convincingly demonstrated in Pauline scholarship over the past few decades, including Dietrich Alex-Koch's exhaustive—and highly influential—investigation of the source of each quotation in all of Paul's

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[11] See further David Lincicum, 'Citations in the New Testament', in Alison G. Salvesen and Timothy Michael Law (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of the Septuagint* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), 528–29.

[12] On the rhetorical function of elusiveness and indeterminacy to promote audience participation, see especially Kathy Reiko Maxwell, *Hearing Between the Lines: The Audience as Fellow-Workers in Luke-Acts and Its Literary Milieu*, LNTS 425 (London: T&T Clark, 2010), 27–76; with particular reference to scriptural allusions, see Catrin H. Williams, 'How Scripture "Speaks": Insights from the Study of Ancient Media Culture,' in David Allen and Steve Smith (eds), *Methodology in the Use of the Old Testament in the New,* LNTS 579 (London: T&T Clark, 2019), 61–63.

undisputed letters.[13] This task has been taken further by Christopher Stanley in a more methodologically nuanced study of all of Paul's scriptural quotations,[14] and, more recently, by Kata Kujanpää in an insightful examination of the rhetorical and wide-ranging argumentative functions of scriptural quotations in Romans.[15]

Granted, these and other explorations must be conducted from 'the Septuagint' as an entity attested in Christian manuscripts from the third century onwards, especially in the codices of the fourth and fifth centuries CE (Vaticanus and Sinaiticus), but also as reconstructed in modern critical editions. This undoubtedly inhibits any attempt at searching for the original source (or *Vorlage*) of Paul's quotations. Determining the source, form and function of the scriptural citations in Romans can, as a result, be a painstaking exercise. And while over fifty percent of Paul's quotations in Romans correspond exactly to their Septuagintal counterparts, in the case of the other half the wording of the citations differs, sometimes markedly, from the Septuagint. There are good grounds for arguing that, on several such occasions, Paul himself is responsible for adapting his quotations to bring them into line with his argument, while in other cases it is more likely that he is citing from Greek revisions more closely resembling the Hebrew texts. The next section of this essay will consider some key issues regarding the form and function of Paul's scriptural quotations, and it will do so with reference to illustrative examples drawn from his letter to the Romans.

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[13] Dietrich-Alex Koch, *Die Schrift als Zeuge des Evangeliums: Untersuchungen zur Verwendung und zum Verständnis der Schrift bei Paulus* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1986). For a particularly helpful survey of scholarship since the nineteenth century on scriptural quotations in Paul's letters, see Jonathan D. H. Norton, *Contours in the Text: Textual Variation in the Writings of Paul, Josephus and the Yahad,* LNTS 430 (London: T&T Clark International, 2011), 5–38.

[14] Christopher D. Stanley, *Paul and the Language of Scripture: Citation Technique in the Pauline Epistles and Contemporary Literature*, SNTSMS 74 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

[15] Katja Kujanpää, *The Rhetorical Functions of Scriptural Quotations in Romans: Paul's Argumentation by Quotations*, NovTSupp 172 (Leiden: Brill, 2019).

## Observations on Paul's Sources and Citation Techniques

Among the questions shaping scholarly discussion on Paul's methods of citing the Jewish Scriptures, especially in the case of quotations exhibiting differences from the Septuagintal texts, is whether he had access to other textual traditions, such as Greek versions that had been revised to make them more closely aligned with known Hebrew readings, or was he translating directly from the Hebrew text. When it comes to Paul's access to possible sources, a question often raised is whether he could have been quoting the passages from memory or from written texts, either because he had some scrolls at his disposal or because he worked from an already prepared collection of scriptural excerpts.[16] It should, nevertheless, be borne in mind that distinguishing between 'memory' and 'literary dependence' in this regard may not be possible. Relying on a process of memorisation for the purpose of citation does not necessarily lead to 'lapses' or 'errors', but instead, as Jonathan Norton has cogently noted: 'Assuming that an ancient person memorized the text of a given manuscript copy verbatim, we must acknowledge that citation from memory would be indistinguishable from direct citation from the written source'.[17]

Seeking an answer to such questions becomes less acute if Paul himself, where he deemed it necessary, was responsible for the wording of his scriptural source(s), regardless of whether he had memorised those sources or they were accessible to him in written form. Each one of his

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[16] On Paul's possible use (and composition) of *excerpta* of scriptural verses/passages, see, e.g., Stanley, *Paul and the Language of Scripture*, 74–79, who also provides evidence of how this was common practice in the ancient world.

[17] Norton, *Contours in the Text,* 26. This equally applies to an author's possible interpretative modifications to source texts, whether those have been memorised or accessed visually in their written form. See further J. Ross Wagner, *Heralds of the Good News: Isaiah and Paul <in Concert> in the Letter to the Romans,* NovTSupp 101 (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 23.

scriptural quotations must certainly be examined on a case-by-case basis, and the possibility left open that Paul may have come across different textual traditions and that he could have done so through various means. A range of scenarios can be envisaged in this respect: Paul's access to scrolls, whether occasionally (in synagogues and/or via his own congregations) or via his own personal copies, with some containing alternative textual forms to those he had encountered in other scrolls; his own notes prepared on wax tablets, including collections of excerpta; owing to memorisation; or because of engagement with other Christ-believers on matters of scriptural interpretation.[18] And while textual pluriformity or diversity was a well-established phenomenon in the first century CE, the interpretative freedom exerted by ancient authors by means of their use of various citation techniques must also be given due consideration If the wording of Paul's quotations can, therefore, be shown to differ from all other known versions, and that those deviations are more satisfactorily explained as being theologically, contextually, stylistically or rhetorically motivated for the purpose of the letter's argument, then it can be plausibly claimed that Paul himself intentionally adapted the wording of the scriptural source in question. A small selection of scriptural quotations from Romans will now be examined so that some of Paul's likely sources and citation techniques can be demarcated and described, especially in relation to his engagement with Septuagintal (and other Greek) readings.

## Paul's Reuse of Hebraizing Revisions

As I noted earlier, it is often suggested that, where the wording of the citations is closer to the Hebrew (proto-Masoretic) text than to the Septuagint, Paul may not necessarily be translating directly from the Hebrew but rather drawing on Greek readings that have already been modified to bring them into greater conformity with the original Hebrew text, a phenomenon widely described as the Hebraizing revision of Greek

[18] Cf. Norton, *Contours in the Text*, 13, 34.

(Septuagintal) texts. One widely acknowledged example of this phenomenon is the scriptural quotation in Romans 10:15,[19] which belongs to Paul's broader argument concerning the lack of a believing response to Christ by the majority of Israel (10:14–21). After highlighting in a series of rhetorical questions why the gospel message needs to be heard (10:14) and why messengers need to be sent to preach that message (10:14–15), Paul's first explanatory quotation, an 'essential step in the argument' about the need to send preachers,[20] is drawn from Isaiah 52:7, the wording of which deviates in a number of ways from the majority textual witnesses of the Septuagint.

| Romans 10:15 | Isaiah 52:7 LXX | Isaiah 52:7 (Lucianic) | Isa. 52:7 MT |
|---|---|---|---|
| As it is written,<br><br>'How beautiful (ὡς ὡραῖοι) are the feet of those who bring good news (οἱ πόδες τῶν εὐαγγελιζομένων [τὰ] ἀγαθά)'. | 'For I am the one who says, "I am here, like the springtime (ὡς ὥρα) upon the mountains, like the feet of the one bringing good news of a report of peace (ὡς πόδες εὐαγγελιζομένου ἀκοὴν εἰρήνης), like the one who proclaims good news (ὡς εὐαγγελιζόμενος ἀγαθά)"'. | 'How beautiful (ὡς ὡραῖοι) upon the mountains are the feet of the one bringing good news of a report of peace (πόδες εὐαγγελιζομένου ἀκοὴν εἰρήνης), the one who proclaims good news (εὐαγγελιζομένου ἀγαθά)'. | 'For I am the one who says, "I am here". How beautiful (מה־נאוו) upon the mountains are the feet of the one bringing good news of peace, the one bringing news of good things'. |

[19] For other cases of Hebraizing revision in Paul's scriptural sources, see Kujanpää, *Rhetorical Functions,* 335: Romans 9:14, 33; 11:3, 4; 12:19; and possibly 10:20.

[20] C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1979), 2:535.

In the Hebrew text of Isaiah 52:7, God's speech, 'For I am the one who says, "I am here", is followed by a new sentence opening with the words, 'How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the one bringing good news of peace'. In the Septuagint, at least according to standard editions and translations, there is no break to form two sentences; rather, God's declaration, 'I am here', is followed by a series of comparisons focusing on the nature of his presence: like (ὡς) the springtime upon the mountains, like (ὡς) the feet of the one bringing good news of a report of peace, like (ὡς) the one who proclaims good news.[21] As this Septuagintal rendering stands, it reads as though God is comparing himself to the feet of the messenger, as a description of God himself coming and bringing good news to Zion.[22]

Paul's quotation of this scriptural verse bears closer resemblance to the Hebrew text, where, different from the Septuagint, there is no comparative element but instead an exclamation, 'How beautiful are the feet…'. There is, moreover, a Greek variant reading, found in several predominantly Lucianic manuscripts, which corrects the syntax of the Septuagint rendering to bring it more into line with the Hebrew text. The noun ὥρα ('springtime') now becomes the adjective ὡραῖος ('beautiful'); the first occurrence of ὡς becomes an exclamatory expression; while the other two Septuagintal occurrences of ὡς are omitted. The striking resemblance, both verbally and syntactically, between this Lucianic version and Paul's wording of the quotation suggests that he is citing the Isaianic text according to this version instead of translating directly from the Hebrew text.[23]

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[21] See further Koch, *Die Schrift als Zeuge des Evangeliums*, 66–67; Stanley, *Paul and the Language of Scripture*, 134–41; *Kujanpää, Rhetorical Functions*, 173–77.

[22] Cf. Wagner, *Heralds of the Good News*, 171.

[23] Wagner, *Heralds of the Good News,* 172–73, convincingly argues that the Lucianic manuscripts have not themselves been influenced by Paul's wording of Isaiah 52:7, because they do not include the variations in Romans 10:15 that are distinctively Pauline (on these changes, see further below).

Paul also appears to make significant modifications to the version of Isaiah 52:7 available to him, two of which will now be considered. First, his condensed version of the Isaianic verse lacks the Lucianic reference, also attested in all known LXX readings, to the location of the messenger 'upon the mountains', the geographical region near Jerusalem. That this deviation is to be traced back to Paul himself is suggested by the letter's wider message about the inclusion of both Gentiles as well as Jews, thus transforming Isaiah's description of a herald approaching Israel with a message of salvation into a declaration about the universal proclamation of the gospel. Secondly, and again in contrast to all known Greek (and Hebrew) versions of Isaiah 52:7, the singular 'messenger' (εὐαγγελιζόμενος) becomes the plural 'messengers' so that the news of good tidings in the quotation aligns with Paul's repeated references in the immediate context to preachers of the gospel (Rom 10:16: τὸ εὐαγγέλιον [cf. 1:16], as well as the references to a plurality of preachers in 10:15 and to 'their words' in the scriptural quotation in 10:18).[24] His intention is clearly to adjust the citation so that it dovetails effectively—and fully—with his line of argument. As elsewhere in Romans 9–11, Paul's citation of Isaiah 52:7 confirms, clarifies but also drives forward the case he builds in this particular unit (10:14–21). In line with the hermeneutical position he sets out in the letter's opening section (1:2; cf. 15:4), Scripture is here understood to offer confirmation that God did indeed send out messengers to Israel (as well as to the Gentiles), so that Isaiah's words serve as an authoritative foreshadowing of Paul's own role, and that of other messengers, as divinely commissioned preachers of the gospel.

## Paul's Modifications to Septuagintal Sources

More widely attested in Romans are quotations whose scriptural source is, in all likelihood, a Septuagintal text, but which, once again, has been

[24] Cf., e.g., Koch, *Die Schrift als Zeuge des Evangeliums,* 113–14; Gaventa, *Romans,* 297–98, who also refers to Paul's earlier description of 'the word of faith that we proclaim' (10:8).

amended by Paul to secure closer correspondence between the citation and its new literary/theological context.[25] To illustrate this aspect of Paul's citation practice, attention can be drawn to a scriptural quotation belonging to the same argumentative unit (Rom 10:14–21) as the one examined in the previous section of this essay. Paul declares that many have refused to respond in faith (10:16, citing Isa 53:1), even though they have had the opportunity to hear the report that comes 'through the word of Christ' (10:17–18, citing Ps 18:5 LXX). He then explicitly identifies those who reject the gospel as the majority of Israel (cf. 10:16: 'not all have obeyed') by rhetorically probing whether they recognized the significance of what they have heard: 'Again, I ask: did Israel not understand?' (10:19a). The explanatory response comes not through Paul's own words, but rather in the form of a quotation from the second half of Deuteronomy 32:21 LXX (Rom 10:19b). It is introduced by the statement, 'First, Moses says', to signal its derivation from the Torah but also its function as a word of testimony whose relevance centers on the present time (λέγει): 'I will make you jealous of those who are not a nation; with a foolish nation I will make you angry'. By means of the voice of Moses, God's words, which in their original context concern Israel's future unfaithfulness (idolatry) and the consequences of Israel's actions, are interpreted by Paul as relating to the present: in the face of unbelieving Israel's disobedience and lack of acknowledgement of the gospel, he will incite jealousy and anger in his chosen nation in relation to those who are a no-nation (οὐκ ἔθνος), that is, believing Gentiles (cf. 9:25–26, 'not my people').[26]

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[25] Kujanpää, *Rhetorical Functions,* 339, observes that Paul adapts the wording of thirty of the fifty-one quotations in Romans examined in her study. That making adjustments to cited sources was a widespread practice among ancient writers is demonstrated clearly by Stanley, *Paul and the Language of Scripture,* 267–350.

[26] Because of the overarching thematic focus of Rom 10:14–21, Paul's quotation does not include the first half of Deut 32:21, which proclaims that God's own jealousy is provoked by Israel going after no-gods.

| Romans 10:19 | Deut 32:21 LXX |
|---|---|
| First Moses says,<br>'I will make you jealous of those who are not a nation; with a foolish nation I will make you angry'.<br>πρῶτος Μωϋσῆς λέγει·<br>ἐγὼ παραζηλώσω ὑμᾶς ἐπ' οὐκ ἔθνει,<br>ἐπ' ἔθνει ἀσυνέτῳ παροργιῶ ὑμᾶς. | 'So I will make them jealous of those who are not a nation; with a foolish nation I will make them angry'.<br>κἀγὼ παραζηλώσω **αὐτοὺς** ἐπ' οὐκ ἔθνει,<br>ἐπ' ἔθνει ἀσυνέτῳ παροργιῶ **αὐτούς**. |

Romans 10:19 makes two slight but significant changes to the Septuagintal version of Deuteronomy 32:21: twice it reads the second person plural ὑμᾶς ('you') instead of the third person plural αὐτούς ('them'). This reading finds no counterpart in the manuscript tradition of the Septuagint nor in the Hebrew text, whereas a rationale for Paul's own revision of the citation becomes apparent when its integral role in this chain of scriptural quotations is recognized. This quotation, together with the two Isaianic citations that follow (65:1 and 65:2 LXX) in Rom 10:20–21, are used to draw attention to the different responses to the gospel among Jews and Gentiles. Accordingly, Paul has deliberately adapted the pronouns in Deuteronomy 32:21 so that a clear, and rhetorically charged, contrast is created between two different groups: a direct address to unbelieving Israel ('you') about believing Gentiles ('them').[27] Similarly, whereas both Isaiah 65:1 and 65:2 function as God's words addressed to Israel in their original context, Paul establishes the Gentile mission as the subject of the first of these Isaianic quotations, thereby taking up and specifying the role of Gentiles as the unnamed 'no-nation' ('them') who will provoke Israel ('you') due to God's dealings with them (Deut 32:21) and who will find God without looking: 'I have been found by those who did not seek me (μὴ ζητοῦσιν); I have shown myself to those who did not ask for me (τοῖς ἐμὲ μὴ ἐπερωτῶσιν)' (Isa 65:1, cited in Rom 10:20). Paul, in the next verse, retains the original referent in his

[27] Cf. Stanley, *Paul and the Language of Scripture*, 143–44; Wagner, *Heralds of the Good News*, 190.

quotation of Isaiah 65:2, 'But of Israel he [Isaiah] says' (again with λέγει), this time to describe Israel as 'disobedient and obstinate' people despite God persistently calling upon them by holding out his hands.[28]

Isaiah's words (65:1–2) offer an explanatory response to Paul's earlier question about Israel's [lack of] understanding (10:19) but also to the function of the 'no-nation' (Deut 32:21): disobedient Israel must have understood but stubbornly rejected the gospel, particularly as 'God has actually been found by Gentiles who were not seeking him'.[29] Hence, all three scriptural quotations are to be expounded together and read in light of each other; collectively, they become the authoritative mouthpiece for Paul's line of thought in this part of Romans 9–11. Furthermore, although the wider context of Deuteronomy 32 is not overtly evoked at this point in Paul's argument, its anticipatory power is suggested by Paul's claims in the next chapter that Israel's jealousy will ultimately leads to its salvation (Rom 11:11–14; cf. 11:1, 26–27), thus recalling the assurances in the Song of Moses that God will not turn away from his people (cf. Deut 32:35–36). Paul, consequently, makes revisions to the Septuagintal versions of his scriptural quotations not only to provide support for his own arguments, but to underline that the arguments themselves, as shown in this particular example, are already inscribed and presently (and verbally) active in the summoned testimony of the Scriptures.

## Paul's Use of Composite Quotations

Paul's citation practices in Romans also contribute significantly to the phenomenon of composite scriptural quotations, a mode of scriptural reference that is receiving more focused and systematic treatment since the publication of the two volumes edited by Sean Adams and Seth

[28] See further Kujanpää, *Rhetorical Functions,* 198, 200.

[29] Cranfield*, Epistle to the Romans*, 2:541.

Ehorn on this topic.[30] Their project consistently defines a composite citation as an explicit form of scriptural quotation in which 'literary borrowing occurs in a manner that includes two or more passages (from the same or different authors) fused together and conveyed as though they are only one'.[31] Most of the citations examined in these two volumes fall into one of two categories: *combined* composite citations, when two or more excerpts are 'joined back-to-back' under a single citation formula,[32] and *conflated* composite citations, in which a word or phrase from one passage is inserted into a quotation from another passage, 'with no signal to the audience that such a commingling of texts has taken place'.[33] The interpretative lever that frequently justifies this mode of scriptural fusion within one quotation is the application of the Jewish exegetical device later described by the rabbis as *gezerah shawah,* although it is already widely attested in late Second Temple Jewish texts, including the Dead Sea Scrolls, the writings of Philo, and various Septuagintal books.[34] It involves the bringing together of two or more 'distant' scriptural texts on the basis of shared vocabulary (catchword links) and/or analogous themes found in the wider contexts of those texts.

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[30] Sean A. Adams and Seth M. Ehorn (eds), *Composite Citations in Antiquity: Volume One: Jewish, Graeco-Roman, and Early Christian Uses*, LNTS 525 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016); Sean A. Adams and Seth M. Ehorn (eds), *Composite Citations in Antiquity: Volume Two: New Testament Uses*, LNTS 593 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2018).

[31] Adams and Ehorn, 'What is a Composite Citation?', *Composite Citations in Antiquity: Volume One*, 4.

[32] Christopher D. Stanley, 'Composite Citations: Retrospect and Prospect', *Composite Citations in Antiquity: Volume One,* 204.

[33] See Stanley, 'Composite Citations: Retrospect and Prospect', 204.

[34] For specific examples in ancient Jewish texts, see, e.g., Catrin H. Williams, 'John, Judaism, and "Searching the Scriptures"', in R. Alan Culpepper and Paul N. Anderson (eds), *John and Judaism: A Contested Relationship in Context* (Atlanta: SBL, 2017), 80–85, 90–94; cf. Michael Tilly, 'Paulus und die antike jüdischen Schriftauslegung', *Kerygma und Dogma* 63 (2017), 175–76.

The essay on Romans contributed by Mark Reasoner to the *Composite Citations* project identifies a significant number of examples in the letter that meet the working definition of a composite citation (around twenty-five percent of all quotations, according to Reasoner's calculations),[35] all of which also fall into the categories of conflated or combined composite citation,[36] and frequently held together by catchword association.[37] To illustrate Paul's application of this exegetical phenomenon, I offer some observations on Romans 11:26–27, where Paul, in the final part of his extended discussion in chapters 9–11, anchors his confidence in God's faithfulness to Israel through appeal to Scripture. He speaks of the disclosure of a 'mystery' of the divine purpose, declaring that, as a consequence of the completion of the Gentile mission (11:25) and as expressed in the much-debated phrase: 'all Israel will be saved' (11:26a). In other words, the 'hardening' of a remnant of Israel (cf. 11:7, 17–24) will be taken away and, as receives clarificatory confirmation in the next quotation, Israel will be delivered from ungodliness. Paul may present the quotation in question as a single unit of scriptural testimony (11:26b: καθὼς γέγραπται), but it belongs to the category of a combined composite citation comprising of back-to-back excerpts drawn from two Isaianic passages. Much of the citation comes from the Septuagint's rendering of Isaiah 59:20–21, 'The one who delivers will come for Zion's sake; he will turn ungodliness away from Jacob. And this is my covenant with them'. However, the final part of the quotation takes the form of a slightly altered phrase from the last line of Isaiah 27:9 LXX, 'when I take away

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[35] Mark Reasoner, '"Promised Beforehand through his Prophets in the Holy Scriptures": Composite Citations in Romans', in *Composite Citations in Antiquity: Volume Two*, 128–58.

[36] The examples examined by Reasoner in his essay are as follows: a) combined composite citations: Romans 3:10–18; 9:25–26; 11:34–35; 14:11–12; and b) conflated composite citations: Romans 9:20; 9:27–28; 9:33; 10:6; 11:8; 11:26–27.

[37] One of the most striking examples of catchword association between two scriptural quotations in Romans is the presence of the verb λογίζομαι in both Genesis 15:6 LXX (Rom 4:3; cf. 4:6, 9, 23) and Psalm 31:1–2 LXX (Rom 4:7–8) to provide scriptural warrant for the notion of righteousness apart from works.

his sin', with no indication that a change of source is taking place at this particular point in the quotation. The aim of the citation, as part of Paul's wider argument in chapter 11, is to link the hope of Israel's future deliverance with covenantal renewal and the forgiveness of sins.

| Romans 11:26–27 | Isaiah 59:20–21 LXX | Isaiah 27:9 LXX |
|---|---|---|
| As it is written,<br>'Out of Zion will come the one who delivers; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. And this is my covenant with them, when I take away their sins'. | The one who delivers will come for Zion's sake; he will turn godlessness from Jacob. And this is my covenant with them, said the Lord, my spirit that is upon you and my words that I have put in your mouth shall not fail out of your mouth… | Because of this the lawlessness of Jacob will be removed. And this is his blessing, when I take away his sin. |
| ἥξει ἐκ Σιὼν<br>ὁ ῥυόμενος, ἀποστρέψει ἀσεβείας ἀπὸ Ἰακώβ.<br><br>Καὶ αὕτη αὐτοῖς<br>ἡ παρ' ἐμοῦ διαθήκη,<br>**ὅταν ἀφέλωμαι τὰς ἁμαρτίας αὐτῶν.** | καὶ ἥξει ἕνεκεν Σιων<br>ὁ ῥυόμενος καὶ ἀποστρέψει ἀσεβείας ἀπὸ Ιακωβ.<br>καὶ αὕτη αὐτοῖς<br>ἡ παρ' ἐμοῦ διαθήκη,<br>εἶπεν κύριος· | διὰ τοῦτο ἀφαιρεθήσεται ἡ ἀνομία Ιακωβ, καὶ τοῦτό ἐστιν ἡ εὐλογία αὐτοῦ,<br><br>**ὅταν ἀφέλωμαι** αὐτοῦ **τὴν ἁμαρτίαν.** |

There is no doubt that the exegetical 'glue' binding together these two Isaianic passages is their mutual thematic focus on the future restoration of Israel (chs. 59–60 and 24–27),[38] their strong syntactical affinities, and also, in line with catchword association, their 'shared' reference to Israel as Jacob. Since there is no evidence of an analogous, pre-Pauline fusion of these two scriptural excerpts, it is likely that Paul himself is responsible for their juxtaposition in Romans 11:26–27, where their 'combined' emphasis aligns well with his overall argument, especially in chapter 11. One of the probable reasons why Paul chooses to fuse together elements from two different Isaianic verses is that his interest at this point lies in

[38] See further Kujanpää, *Rhetorical Functions,* 248–50.

asserting that Israel's state of ungodliness will be transformed, and not—as is done in Isaiah 59:21—in spelling out its effects and the circumstances of Israel's covenantal status following its redemption. Rather, with the aid of the final words of Isaiah 27:9, Paul is able to specify that Israel's sins will be taken away by God.[39] He therefore offers a very different interpretation of Isaiah's words, in that the focus shifts from God's promise of Israel's future deliverance from godless nations to Paul's claim that godlessness in fact belongs to Israel itself.[40]

One other modification, again probably to be ascribed to Paul himself, is that the Septuagintal reference to deliverance 'for the sake of Zion' (ἕνεκεν Σιων) is changed to 'out of Zion' (ἐκ Σιων), and this due to the exclusive (Israel-centred) force of the former phrase: Christ, the likely referent of the opening promise about 'the one who delivers' (ὁ ῥυόμενος), will come out of a restored Zion not only for the sake of Israel, as announced by Isaiah, but also for the benefit of believing Gentiles.[41] Paul's adjustment of 'his sin' (Isa 27:9) to 'their sins' is motivated by contextual considerations, particularly the plural references in Isaiah 59:20–21 to 'my covenant with them' (αὐτοῖς) and to ungodliness as a plural noun (ἀσεβείας), to highlight God's forgiveness of Israel's sins. Thus, once again, by reading Scripture creatively—through the combination of two analogously-oriented Isaianic promises—Paul secures interpretative leverage in order to be able to recontextualise and reinterpret Scripture as a witness to the gospel.

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[39] On this point, see especially Wagner, *Heralds of the Good News,* 294.

[40] As noted, e.g., by Reasoner, '"Promised Beforehand"', 149.

[41] For the view that Paul interprets God (not Christ) as 'the one who delivers [out of Zion]', see, e.g., Michael Wolter, *Der Brief an die Römer,* EKKNT 6.2 (Göttingen: Patmos Verlag, 2019), 2:212–13; Schröter, 'Israel's Scriptures in Romans', 355. This, it is claimed, is supported by all the pertinent scriptural passages (cf. Pss. 13:7; 19:3; 49:2; 109:2, 125:5, all LXX) and also by the fact that Romans 11 focuses on God's attitude towards Israel. In the context of the letter, nevertheless, it can be argued that Paul interprets God as the speaker of the scriptural quotation ('and this is my covenant…') who proclaims the coming of Christ as deliverer (cf. I Thess 1:10; cf. Rom 7:24). See further Gaventa, *Romans,* 324.

## AUDIENCE-CENTRED CONSIDERATIONS

The notoriously complex question that inevitably arises from an investigation of Paul's often highly sophisticated citation techniques and strategies, all of which reflect the capabilities of a profoundly literate scriptural exegete, is whether the first listeners or readers of the letter to the Romans would, like its author, have been adequately equipped to 'reverse engineer'[42] and identify the original literary context of the (sometimes multiple) scriptural components in Paul's composite citations. In light of increasingly audience-oriented approaches to the interpretation of New Testament texts, the dialogical function of Paul's use of Scripture is, understandably, now being afforded much closer scrutiny. With regard to Romans, one may ask: What were the original recipients expected to know of Scripture, and was that knowledge meant to deepen or evolve through their interaction with Paul's letter? What levels of competence were required to follow Paul's argumentation: close familiarity with the specifics of individual texts or only the broad outlines of the scriptural narrative? Addressing such questions must also take into account the cultural, and ancient media, environment inhabited by Paul and his audiences, one in which textuality and orality, and the interactive dynamics between them, were key factors in the composition, transmission and reception of texts.[43]

How scholars respond to such questions depends, to a large extent, on the nature of the approaches they develop for investigating the reception of the Scriptures in the New Testament writings. The intertextual approach adopted by Richard Hays and others assumes that Paul's intended audiences were expected to appreciate the wider context of the

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[42] Adams and Ehorn, ''What is a Composite Citation?', 13.

[43] See further Williams, 'How Scripture "Speaks", 53–69. See also Norton, *Contours in the Text*, especially 123, where he identifies examples of 'oral patterning' in Paul's letters, including references to what Scripture 'says' (λέγει, e.g., Rom 4:3; 10:11; 11:2), as indicative of their function as rhetorical acts of persuasion, communicated in a predominantly oral context.

quoted texts,[44] and that they also had the capacity to identify more subtle modes of reference in the form of allusions or 'echoes.' Others work on the basis that Paul, when he composed Romans, envisaged a wide spectrum of listeners and readers, especially as he was writing for a congregation (or congregations) that he had never met and of which he may have only had limited information.[45] Expectations regarding their prior scriptural knowledge could range from those with high levels of scriptural literacy, whether visual and/or aural, to those only with acquaintance of the broad outline of Israel's principal stories. Christopher Stanley therefore places Paul's envisaged audience(s) along a spectrum from 'informed', 'competent' to 'minimal' scripturally literate listeners and readers.[46] It should be observed, however, that these proposed categories do not necessarily fall firmly along ethnic lines. There is wide acceptance that the Roman congregation(s) was a mixed audience with a (probably) Gentile majority,[47] and yet Gentiles associated with a

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[44] Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989).

[45] Schröter, "Israel's Scriptures in Romans," 337 n.1, notes that, different from his other letters, Paul does not use the term ἐκκλησία to describe his Roman addressees (e.g., I Cor 1:2; 2 Cor 1:1; Gal 1:2; Phil 4:15; I Thess 1:1, 2) and this because he was probably not 'well informed about the organizational structure of the Christian groups in Rome'.

[46] Christopher D. Stanley, *Arguing with Scripture: The Rhetoric of Quotations in the Letters of Paul* (New York/London: T&T Clark International, 2004).

[47] Scholars regularly draw attention to passages such as Romans 1:5–6 (also 1:13–14), where Paul stresses that his mission is to the Gentiles, 'among whom are you' (ἐν οἷς ἐστε). That Paul envisages a mixed audience may be gleaned from the interruption in 11:13 ('Now I am talking to you Gentiles'), if interpreted as a marker that Paul wishes to highlight his argument as now directed specifically at the Gentiles among the letter's recipients. For the view that Paul is addressing an exclusively Gentile audience, see Caroline Johnson Hodge, *If Sons, Then Heirs: A Study of Kinship and Ethnicity in the Letters of Paul* (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 9–11, 46–47

synagogue in Rome could have already acquired good knowledge of the Scriptures before encountering Paul's letter.[48]

It is necessary in this regard to distinguish between, on the one hand, the issue of Paul's own ability to carry out intricate manoeuvres in his scriptural quotations and, on the other, questions relating to the capacity (or not) of his audiences to appreciate those manoeuvres. It is quite possible that what, compositionally, underpins Paul's scriptural quotations, including modifications to the wording of over half of them, was not intended by him to be identified and dissected by the letter's recipients, including taking into account the wider original literary context of each quotation. The focus, rather, would be on the rhetorical impact of the finished 'product' of his explicitly signaled quotations; even Paul's earlier noted emphasis on the writtenness of his quotations in Romans ('as it is written') not only serves as an indicator of their authoritative status but a signal to the audience that his discourse now incorporates, and receives divinely endorsed support from, the words of Scripture. Indeed, as Katja Kujanpää has recently observed, Paul probably did imagine an audience in Rome possessing various levels of scriptural competence but that his overarching aim was to make his arguments accessible to *all members*,[49] regardless of whether there were some in their midst who were able to follow all the subtle scriptural connections at play in his quotations. Paul is concerned above all else to ensure that it is his own interpretative discourse, as established within the letter, that should guide his audience's understanding of the text; this is why the precise 'final' form of his quotations, as well as the congruence between them

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[48] See especially Bruce N. Fisk, "Synagogue Influence and Scriptural Knowledge among the Christians of Rome," in Stanley E. Porter and Christopher D. Stanley (eds), *As It Is Written: Studying Paul's Use of Scripture* (Atlanta: SBL, 2008), 157–85.

[49] Kujanpää, *Rhetorical Functions,* especially 338–39. Her investigation leads her to draw the conclusion that, in the case of most scriptural quotations in Romans, Paul guides his readers in such a way that the elucidatory process does not require them to supply or search for information from the original context of those quotations. See also Stanley, *Arguing with Scripture,*172.

and his line of thought,[50] is so important for Paul. The quotations are to be interpreted in exactly the way he wishes them to be 'heard'.

The primary function of the scriptural quotations in Romans is to support, articulate and validate Paul's arguments and to stress continuity between the witness of Scripture and his own teaching. The communicative force of these quotations depends not so much on his audiences' ability to sift through possible changes to their wording or to situate those quotations within their original context, but rather on them recognizing the symbiotic relationship between the authoritativeness of the Scriptures and their role as living testimonies to the gospel for which Paul declares himself to have been set apart and which he has inscribed for Roman congregations in the letter he addresses to them.

[50] Cf. Norton, *Contours in the Text,* 136: This is often achieved by means of close verbal correspondence between the vocabulary of the scriptural quotation and that expressed in Paul's argumentation.