

THE OLD TESTAMENT AND UNIVERSALISM IN PAUL¹

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Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles, preached universal salvation through the act of God in Christ Jesus. That the saving mercy of God would extend beyond the chosen people of Israel to embrace all peoples is an idea which can be read out of many Old Testament passages. The proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom, indeed the very word gospel itself, owes a debt to the salvation-prophecy of Deutero-Isaiah, which seems to have inspired the message of Jesus himself. But universalist teaching is not specially prominent in the sayings of Jesus, so that the mission to the Gentiles was not at first seen to be a natural consequence of his message by his followers. Moreover Deutero-Isaiah is really very ambiguous on the position of the Gentiles. In a previous lecture I found myself driven to accept the contention of R. N. Whybray that there is no real universalism in Deutero-Isaiah.² There are passages which speak of universal recognition of Yahweh's sole existence. But when the prophet says, "Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth" (Isaiah 45.22), he caps it almost in the same breath with the statement that "In the Lord all the offspring of Israel shall triumph and glory" (verse 25), and a wider survey shows that the Gentiles who are to be saved will nevertheless have a subordinate position as servants of the glorified Israel.³

Subsequent ideas on the subject in post-exilic Judaism are equally ambiguous.⁴ The generous words of another contributor to the Book of Isaiah, welcoming proselytes to the worship of

¹ A lecture delivered in the John Rylands University Library on Wednesday, 8 October 1986.

² B. Lindars, "Good Tidings to Zion: Interpreting Deutero-Isaiah Today", *Bulletin*, lxxviii (1985-86), 473-97; R. N. Whybray, *The Second Isaiah* (OT Guides) (Sheffield, 1983), pp. 62-5.

³ Cf. D. W. Van Winkle, "The Relationship of the Nations to Yahweh and to Israel in Isaiah xl-lv", *VT*, xxxv (1985), 446-58.

⁴ Cf. T. L. Donaldson, "The 'Curse of the Law' and the Inclusion of the Gentiles: Galatians 3.13-14", *NTS*, xxxii (1986), 94-112, especially pp. 99 ff.

Yahweh (Isaiah 56.6-8), really show the narrowing of focus. For the shift of emphasis to the legal and covenantal basis of Israelite religion makes the law rather than the theology of the one God the decisive criterion. Eschatological pictures sometimes show the participation of the Gentiles in the coming bliss after the final redemption of Israel. Zechariah 8.20-3 imagines the nations flowing to the restored temple at Jerusalem. The aged Tobit looks forward to the restoration of the temple, and "then," he says, "all the Gentiles will turn to fear the Lord God in truth and will bury their idols" (Tobit 14.6). But when these pictures are thought out in more practical terms, there is a tendency to place the Gentiles in a definitely subordinate position. Thus the Septuagint version of Isaiah, made in Egypt in the third to second century B.C., interprets a remarkable passage in Isaiah 19.25, which makes the old oppressors Egypt and Assyria blessed equally with Israel, in such a way as to make Israel clearly superior to these nations.⁵ A non-eschatological concept of the salvation of Gentiles appears in rabbinic writings of the Tannaitic period, suggesting that "the righteous among the Gentiles" may be acceptable to God without keeping the law. In this connection Rabbinic Judaism developed the concept of the seven Noachic precepts as the basis of universal religion, whereas the 615 commandments of the Sinai Law apply only to the Jews.⁶ But this idea cannot be traced back as far as New Testament times, though the "apostolic decrees" of Acts 15.28f. represent a comparable idea. After weighing up the evidence, E. P. Sanders concludes that there is no systematic or single view of the position of Gentiles in Jewish sources of the time.⁷

Paul may have been influenced by the eschatological texts which suggest universal salvation, including some sayings of Jesus himself.⁸ But he was driven by circumstances to formulate

⁵ This has been shown in detail by A. van der Kooij, "The Old Greek of Isaiah 19:16-25: Translation and Interpretation" (paper read to the Sixth Congress of the International Organisation for Septuagint and Cognate Studies, Jerusalem, 1986). Cf. also J. W. Olley, "Righteousness" in the Septuagint of Isaiah (SCS 8) (Missoula, 1979), who shows that the universalist tendency in the LXX of Isaiah is directed really to proselytes.

⁶ Cf. R. Loewe, "Potentialities and Limitations of Universalism in the Halakah", *Studies in Rationalism, Judaism and Universalism in Memory of Leon Roth*, ed. R. Loewe (London, 1966), pp. 115-50.

⁷ *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (London, 1977), pp. 206-12.

⁸ Notably Matt. 8.11 f. = Luke 13.28 f.

a distinct theory of universal salvation which really has no precedent. The crucial factor is the universal position of Jesus as glorified Messiah and Lord. This enables Paul to surmount the barrier between Jew and Gentile, so that he can actually claim that through faith in Jesus as Lord the Gentiles already stand in the same relation to God as Jews, whose special position is marked by the Law and the Covenant. That this was not something that could be taken for granted is shown by the virulent opposition of the Judaizing party within the church. The idea that there might be no distinction between Jew and Gentile in the sight of God was hard to accept, even by those who entertained generous thoughts of the ultimate salvation of the Gentiles. Paul's defence of his position against the Judaizers has been preserved in his letters to the Galatians and the Romans. However, Paul also had a further question to face, which comes up in Romans only. This is the new corollary with regard to the unbelieving Jews, who have not accepted the gospel. For Paul's position not only has the positive advantage of including the Gentiles in the scope of salvation. It also entails a new form of exclusion, inasmuch as the new criterion of faith in Jesus excludes those who do not believe. Whereas previously the Jews could rest secure in their possession of the Law and the Covenant, now they can have no such confidence. Their position is exactly the same as that of the Gentiles. This really alters the terms of reference of the whole debate. So, having set out the divine plan of salvation in terms which apply to both Jews and Gentiles in the first half of Romans, Paul devotes a special section to the problem of Jewish unbelief in Romans 9-11. Here he shows that the unbelief of the Jews has actually worked positively towards the fulfilment of God's plan of universal salvation by forcing the church to evangelize the Gentiles. By the same token it can be asserted that the unbelief of the Jews is only temporary, and that God's promises to them will not fail.

It is not the purpose of this paper to examine Paul's argument in this section of Romans in detail. The aim is more limited, to determine the basis of Paul's scriptural exegesis in support of his argument. Paul makes frequent appeal to the Old Testament of necessity, for he could not hope to gain a hearing for his revolutionary ideas otherwise. We might at first think that he would make the most of biblical texts which convey a universalist impression, or even reproduce a tradition of exegesis bearing on the question. We shall see, however, that Paul's choice of texts to

support his argument has its best explanation in their availability from prior use in Christian and Jewish debate in connection with other issues. Thus Paul seizes texts which have been used for other purposes, and draws from them new insights in support of his understanding of the divine purpose of universal salvation.

The quotations in Romans 9

The argument begins from God's promise of salvation, which goes back to the stories of the patriarchs. So in 9.1-5 Paul lists what are often referred to as the privileges of the Jews, but should properly be seen as the special features of Judaism which essentially underlie, and so have to be taken up into, Paul's Christian position: the adoption of Israel as God's special people, the revelation of God's glory on Mount Sinai, with the giving of the law, and especially the promises made to the fathers which have reached their fulfilment in the person of Christ. The rest of the chapter explains how God's plan has not been thwarted in spite of human resistance to his will, and how it has come about that the Gentiles are included within the scope of it.

So the next section takes up the idea of the promise in verses 6-24. It is bounded by the use of "call" (*kalein*), which occurs in verse 7 in the quotation from Genesis 21.12 ("through Isaac shall your descendants be called") and verse 24, where Paul concludes that the promise is to "us whom he has called, not from the Jews only, but also from the Gentiles." But the argument up to this point has not yet mentioned the Gentiles, so that this concluding sentence must be regarded as a link, opening up a new theme to be treated in the following verses. Up to this point Paul has shown only that the promise to Abraham required successive adjustments in the course of history. Human qualifications are carefully excluded. Jacob, the younger of Isaac's two sons, is preferred to Esau. At the exodus Pharaoh can be used for God's purpose, like clay in the hands of a potter, in spite of being the enemy of God's people. The biblical quotations which Paul uses in this section are selected from the Old Testament stories according to the needs of the subject, including the reference to the potter, which can be traced to a number of Old Testament passages.⁹

⁹ C. E. B. Cranfield, *The Epistle to the Romans* (ICC) (Edinburgh, 1979), ii. 491, lists Job 10.9; Ps. 2.9; Isa. 29.16; 41.25; 45.9; 64.8; Jer. 18.1-12; Wisd. 15.7-17; Eccclus. 27.5; 33.13; 38.29f. The image is also used in the Qumran

Of course the reader of Romans already knows from the earlier treatment of the faith of Abraham in chapter 4 that the children of promise are to be identified with Gentiles as well as Jews, and that the criterion for inclusion is not physical descent or works of the law, but faith. So when he brings in the Gentiles at verse 24, Paul can argue for their inclusion on the one hand, and the failure of the majority of Jews on the other, by listing a short catena of prophetic passages, which give insight into the plan of God and account for the actual situation which he is addressing. This is contained in verses 25-9. First he gives a conflate quotation of Hosea 2.23 and 1.9-10, using the catchword "call":

Those who were not my people
 I will call "my people,"
 and her who was not beloved
 I will call "my beloved."
 And in the very place where it was said to them "You are not my
 people,"
 they will be called "sons of the living God."

As the original application was to exiled Israelites, Cranfield holds that Paul is thinking of the mass of pagan Gentiles and unbelieving Jews from whom both Gentiles and Jews are drawn to compose the people of promise through faith.¹⁰ This is suggested by the mention of both in verse 24. The advantage of this interpretation is that it avoids the necessity of supposing that Paul is deliberately rejecting the proper meaning of the text in order to impose on it a different meaning. What he is doing is to extend the range of the application from those Jews who can be regarded as non-people to the totality of non-people, which includes all the Gentiles.

Then come quotations of Isaiah 10.22f. (abbreviated) and Isaiah 1.9, which account for the fact that "only a remnant" of Israel is promised salvation, though the existence of believing Jews in the church shows that the threatened total destruction of Israel has been avoided:

writings, e.g. IQS 11.22; IQH 1.21, etc. The fact that Wisd. 15.7 is much the nearest to both the thought and the diction of this passage is important for the question of Paul's use of Wisdom, thought by some to be later than Paul, cf. E. E. Ellis, *Paul's Use of the Old Testament* (Edinburgh, 1957), pp. 77-80.

¹⁰ Op. cit., p. 499 f.

And Isaiah cries out concerning Israel; "Though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them will be saved ..."

And as Isaiah predicted,

"If the Lord of hosts had not left us children,

we should have fared like Sodom and been made like Gomorrah."

Now the fact that the first of these two quotations begins with words almost identical with words *omitted* from the preceding quotation of Hosea 1.10 suggests that a deliberate process of selection and adaptation of scripture lies behind Paul's composition, which has more in common with the handling of scripture at Qumran than with that of the later rabbis, who never conflate texts.¹¹ In my *New Testament Apologetic* (1961) I suggested that this textual work might belong to the primitive church's apologetic of response, in which the failure to win the allegiance of the whole Jewish people to Christ was accounted for by discovering further understanding of God's plan from the study of the prophetic scriptures.¹² If this is correct, Paul's catena may be derived from a group of texts on this issue, which he now applies not only to the failure of Jewish response, but also to his new argument on the inclusion of the Gentiles.

The chapter ends with a summary of the position that has been reached, that the Gentiles are included through faith, but Jews have "stumbled" for lack of it. He rounds this off with a conflation of two texts from Isaiah, which I will here give separately:

And he will become a sanctuary, and a stone of offence,
and a rock of stumbling to both houses of Israel ... (Isaiah 8.14)

Behold, I am laying in Zion for a foundation
a stone, a tested stone,
a precious cornerstone, of a sure foundation:
"He who believes will not be put to shame." (Isaiah 28.16 LXX)

¹¹ The best example from Qumran is actually in the B text of the *Damascus Document* from the Cairo Genizah (CD 20.20-2), where Mal. 3.18 is conflated with Exod. 20.6. The words quoted from Mal. 3.18 replace similar words in the verse which immediately precedes Exod. 20.6. For another example from Qumran, cf. 4Q *Florilegium*, 1.10f., which gives an abridgement of 2 Sam. 7. 11-14.

¹² B. Lindars, *New Testament Apologetic* (London, 1961), pp. 169-88.

For Paul faith in Christ is the decisive factor. He is the precious cornerstone for those who believe, but the stone of stumbling for those who do not believe. Paul's use of this material must certainly be traced to the apologetic of response. It is in fact much better represented in 1 Peter 2, where the two texts are quoted separately, along with a further text on the stone rejected by the builders from Psalm 118.22. Moreover the context of 1 Peter 2 includes application of the precious cornerstone to the Messiah in verse 4, which accords with the interpretation of the Targum, and ends with allusion to the non-people and non-beloved of Hosea in verse 10.¹³ This really clinches the argument that Paul is indebted to a prior tradition of scriptural exegesis, which has been preserved independently in 1 Peter. This has a further consequence for our understanding of the availability of biblical testimonies. Paul is quite able to draw on the Pentateuch for details of the well known stories of the patriarchs, etc., which form the substance of his argument in this chapter, but when he wishes to adduce texts in support of specific points he depends on passages in the Prophets and Psalms which have already been quarried for use in the Christian and Jewish dialogue. Thus there is no sign in this chapter that Paul is drawing on a Jewish exegetical tradition in relation to universalism, and this supports my contention that the scriptural basis of Paul's universalism is a new development.

The quotations in Romans 10

In the next chapter Paul presses home his point that the failure to make the response of faith is the crucial factor which explains the apparent exclusion of the main body of Judaism from the company of those who are being saved. This again has to be proved from scripture. Paul starts from the fact that the Jews have not been wrong to seek to establish their "righteousness" (*dikaïosunē*), i.e. their good standing with God, but they have not taken into account the consequences of the Christ-event. For "Christ," says Paul, "is the end (*telos*) of the law for righteousness to every one who believes" (10.4). We do not need to decide between the rival claims of abolition or goal to be the meaning of

¹³ For the christological use of the "stone" testimonies, cf. M. Black, "The Christological Use of the Old Testament in the New Testament", *NTS*, xviii (1971), 1-14 (p. 11 ff.).

telos in this context.¹⁴ Surely both meanings are implied. Christ affirms the law as its goal in the sense already given in chapter 9, because he embodies the fulfilment of the promises. But his coming requires a different method of obtaining "righteousness", and that is faith, not works of the law. So in this sense the law is abolished. These two aspects of the matter are then teased out with the aid of appropriate quotations. First, Paul states that, for the law to be the means of salvation, it is obviously necessary that it should be kept. This is neatly expressed by quoting Leviticus 18.5, "The man who does these things shall live by them," which he had already used to make the same point in Galatians 3.12. This, however, is inappropriate for the new concept of righteousness by faith. So he then produces in verses 6-8 an elaborate midrash of Deuteronomy 30.12-14:

But the righteousness based on faith says, Do not say in your heart, "Who will ascend into heaven?" (that is, to bring Christ down) or "Who will descend into the abyss?" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say? The word is near you, on your lips and in your heart (that is, the word of faith which we preach).

Several comments need to be made on this passage. First, we notice the opening contrast. Whereas the quotation of Leviticus 18.5 was expressly said to be what "Moses writes", here it is what "the righteousness based on faith says". Thus it is a passage which holds good in the new dispensation, provided that it is interpreted in the light of the Christ-event. Paul is therefore intentionally imposing on the passage the meaning which is appropriate as a result of Christ's ending of the law.

Secondly, the quotation begins with words from another context, "Do not say in your heart". These words occur earlier in Deuteronomy at 8.17 and 9.4, and in both cases are directed at preventing Israel from boasting in her own capacity for righteousness. The choice of this phrase to open the quotation must surely be deliberate, and may even be intended to remind the alert reader of these other relevant passages. As we shall see, the word "heart" becomes a recurring note, like "call" in chapter 9.

Next Paul selects from Deuteronomy 30.12 and 13 phrases which suggest that the law might need to be fetched from heaven above or from across the sea, so as to become accessible and

¹⁴ Cf. Cranfield, *op. cit.*, pp. 515-20; E. Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans* (London, 1980), pp. 279-83.

capable of being put into practice. But in each case he glosses it with an application to Christ, and in the second case actually substitutes “descend into the abyss” for “go over the sea”, which fits the application to Christ better.¹⁵ This change appears in the Targum, and indicates that Paul is at this point taking advantage of a contemporary Jewish exegesis.¹⁶ The glosses require the substitution of Christ for the law as an agreed hermeneutical principle: what is said of the law can and should be said of Christ (with suitable adjustments, of which faith instead of works is the most important). M. J. Suggs has shown that Paul has developed this principle from the contemporary Jewish idea of Wisdom, which he has already used christologically in 1 Corinthians.¹⁷ For in New Testament times the law was held to be the embodiment of divine Wisdom. Baruch 3.29f actually echoes Deuteronomy 30.12-13 to make the point that God’s inscrutable Wisdom is accessible in the law. But for Paul Christ is the embodiment of Wisdom, revealing in his death and resurrection the total plan of salvation. Christ does not have to be fetched from heaven or brought up from the grave, because he is the living Lord whose work of salvation can be appropriated by faith in the heart. So, having made the christological application explicit through the glosses, Paul can finish with the nearness of God’s word on the lips and in the heart, which he then expounds in terms

¹⁵ Paul’s text here corresponds with Psalm 107.26 (LXX), adapted.

¹⁶ Instead of substituting the descent motif for the crossing of the sea, the Targum combines both: “For this precept which I command you this day is not hidden from you, neither is it far away. The law is not in the heavens, that one should say: Would that we had one like Moses the prophet who would go up to heaven for us, and make us hear the commandments that we might do them. Nor is the law beyond the Great Sea, that one should say: Would that we had one like Jonah the prophet who would descend into the depths of the Great Sea and bring up the law for us, and make us hear the commandments that we might do them. For the word is very near to you, in the word of your mouths and in your hearts, that you may do it” (A. Diez Macho, *Neophyti I*, v (Madrid, 1978), 553f.). Cf. M. McNamara, *The New Testament and the Palestinian Targum* (Analecta Biblica 27) (Rome, 1966), pp. 70-8.

¹⁷ Cf. M. J. Suggs, “‘The Word is near you’: Romans 10:6-10 within the purpose of the letter”, *Christian History and Interpretation: Studies presented to John Knox*, ed. W. R. Farmer, et al. (Cambridge, 1967), pp. 289-312; W. D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism* (London, ²1955), pp. 147-76.

of confession of faith and belief in the heart (i.e. intellectual assent).¹⁸

With this text before us, I think we must conclude that Paul operated with a concept of two senses of scripture, the literal which recognises that the passage is concerned with the law, and the prophetic which regards it as achieving its full meaning in Christ. This is not mere allegorism, and the abuse that has been heaped on Paul for his treatment of this passage is not really justified.¹⁹ It is a theological approach to scripture, which relates the biblical record to the ongoing plan of God, and finds many places in it where the insight into God's plan is so clear that it can be taken as a partial preview of the full revelation of the plan in Christ. For, of course, like the writers of the Qumran literature and the Pseudepigrapha, Paul thought of a predetermined divine plan which is unfolded in its proper time, and may be the subject of partial revelations on the way.

We must not delay further over this fascinating text, which Paul uses really as a short-cut, so as to pass rapidly to his main contention that the only reason for the tragic unbelief of the Jews is precisely that they failed to believe when the gospel was preached to them. Though he does not say so, this is why he regards Christ as a "stone of stumbling" to them. What he does do is to recall the positive side, that Christ is the "precious cornerstone", quoting once more the final words of Isaiah 28.16, but now applied to "everyone". So literally his version of these words reads: "Everyone who believes on him will not be put to shame" (verse 11). This opens the way to the climactic statement taken from Joel 2.32: "Everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved" (verse 13).

Thus we return to a statement of universalism, and we may well ask whether Paul has derived it from prior Jewish usage in this sense.²⁰ But once again there are affinities with Christian exegetical work, undertaken in the first instance for a rather different purpose. The connection between Isaiah 28.16 and Joel

¹⁸ Paul deliberately omits the final phrase, "so that you can do it," to avoid the suggestion of justification by works rather than faith.

¹⁹ Cf. Cranfield, *op. cit.*, p. 524.

²⁰ It is applied only to proselytes in the rabbinic passages adduced by H. L. Strack and P. Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch* (7 vols., Munich, ³1961), iii. 282.

2.32 is provided by Joel 2.26f, not quoted by Paul, where it is twice asserted that "My people shall never again be put to shame." Isaiah 28.16 belongs to the apologetic of response, as we have seen, and it looks as if the Joel passage has been adduced as a commentary upon it. It is, then, to do with the claim that believers will not be put to shame. This is given more positive content by the Joel passage, because it continues in Joel 2.28-32 with a description of the outpouring of the Spirit in the last days. Luke includes this very passage in Peter's speech on the day of Pentecost,²¹ very probably deriving it from his knowledge of Christian exegetical work. This suggests that the Joel passage was valued for its relevance to the church's eschatological message and its own spiritual experience, quite apart from any application to the question of the Gentile mission. The conclusion follows that Paul has taken it from current usage in the church, and drawn from it the specific point of universal salvation, which he requires for his present argument.

Paul's midrashic style continues in the verses which follow (10.14-21). Having established that salvation is purely a matter of responding in faith to what has been done in Christ, he proceeds to show that the opportunity for this response has been duly provided by the apostolic preaching, so that what distinguishes those who are saved from those who are not saved is only the question whether they have responded in faith to the gospel. Whereas the Gentiles have responded, sadly Israel (at least for the most part) has not done so. All this is explained by means of a series of quotations linked by catch-words. These are Isaiah 52.7 ("How beautiful are the feet of those who preach good news!"); Isaiah 53.1 ("Lord, who has believed what he heard from us?"); Psalm 19.4 ("Their voice has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world"); Deuteronomy 32.21 ("I will make you jealous of those who are not a nation, and with a foolish nation I will make you angry"); and finally parts of Isaiah 65.1-2, distributed between the Gentiles ("I have been found by those who did not seek me; I have shown myself to those who did not ask for me") and Israel ("All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and contrary people").

Now it is no accident that Paul has come across these particular quotations. Three come from Isaiah, including one from the

²¹ Acts 2.16-21 and 39.

Suffering Servant chapter 53, which belongs to the passion apologetic. One is from the Psalms, and one from Deuteronomy 32, which is itself a psalm, and might have been included with other canticles in a psalms scroll in Paul's day.²² If we turn to Romans 15.9-12 we shall find that Paul has another catena from precisely the same sources: Psalm 18.49; Deuteronomy 32.43; Psalm 117.1; and Isaiah 11.10. All these mention the praises or faith of the Gentiles. In addition Paul has another quotation from the passion prophecy (Isaiah 52.15), applied to his own projected mission to Spain, in 15.21.

There can be little doubt that Paul has been aided in his selection of these texts by their availability within Christian usage. The Psalms were naturally familiar to all Jewish Christians, and include fundamental proof-texts for Christian claims. Deuteronomy 32 is used twice in Hebrews, including a passage which Paul himself uses in Romans 12.19. Isaiah is basic for the whole concept of the gospel.

This last point requires further comment. It seems likely that Jesus himself has a reference to Isaiah 40.9 when he says in Mark 9.1 that "some standing here will ... see the kingdom of God coming with power" (an allusion which reflects the Targum).²³ This suggests that the Deutero-Isaianic concept of the gospel stems from Jesus himself, and the outworking in Christian usage has grown from the most primitive proclamation. Thus Isaiah can be regarded as the gospel prophecy of earliest Christianity. From it are drawn, as occasion demands, messianic texts, passion texts, the apologetic of response, and finally (in Paul's hands) the defence of the Gentile mission. This explains why the catenae in Romans 10 and 15, which we have just looked at, both contain quotations from the passion prophecy, applied in the first instance to the response of faith and in the second to Paul's own missionary plans. It is entirely wrong to suppose that Paul

²² I made this suggestion in *New Testament Apologetic*, p. 244, in view of the collection of *Odae*, which includes Deut. 32, immediately following the Psalms in LXX^A without separate heading. This is usually regarded as a Christian addition of the canticles used in the monastic office, but the fact that Christian liturgy was derived from synagogue usage is constantly emphasised in recent studies of liturgy, and the addition of other psalms to the collection of 11QPs^a shows that my suggestion is by no means impossible.

²³ Cf. B. D. Chilton, *God in Strength: Jesus' Announcement of the Kingdom* (Freistadt, 1979), pp. 277-88.

was referring to the passion apologetic in using these texts, or even (as some commentators have suggested in the second case) regarded himself as the suffering Servant of the Lord instead of Jesus.²⁴ Paul found them relevant to what he was actually saying in each case, but he chose them because they were available, and this was because the prophecy had already achieved special notice in other connections.

The quotations in Romans 11

The last of our three chapters of Romans can be dealt with more briefly. In this chapter Paul argues, again from scripture, that, in spite of the failure of the Jews to believe, their ultimate salvation is assured in the purpose of God. In verse 2 he refutes the suggestion that their present failure implies ultimate rejection, using words from Psalm 94.14. His appeal to history refers to God's answer to Elijah in 1 Kings 19. But then he takes up once more the Christian tradition of biblical exegesis. He refers to the unbelief of the Jews as a "hardening" involving blindness. This undoubtedly goes back to the apologetic of response, for which the basic text is Isaiah 6.9f, which is quoted in all four Gospels and Acts.²⁵ An abbreviated form is given in John 12.40 as follows:

He has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart,
lest they should see with their eyes and perceive with their heart,
and turn for me to heal them.

Instead of using this actual verse, however, Paul gives a conflation of two other passages which convey the same thought and use the same vocabulary, Deuteronomy 29.3 and Isaiah 29.10. It is likely that they had already been adduced as commentary on the basic text before Paul used them. This conflated text is immediately followed by a quotation of Psalm 69.22f, which makes a further comment, suggesting the punishment that is due for such lack of response:

Let their feast become a snare and a trap,
a pitfall and a retribution for them;
let their eyes be darkened so that they cannot see,
and bend their backs for ever.

²⁴ Cf. J. D. G. Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit* (London, 1975), p. 113, and the discussion in C. J. A. Hickling, "Paul's Reading of Isaiah", *Studia Biblica*, iii (Sheffield, 1978), 215-23.

²⁵ Matt. 13.14-15; Mark 4.12; Luke 8.10; John 12.40; Acts 28.26f.

This psalm comes from the passion apologetic, for which it is used many times in the New Testament,²⁶ and Paul has another quotation from it in Romans 15.3.²⁷ Here he has linked it to the apologetic of response through the catchwords “let their eyes be darkened so that they cannot see.” Again we must think of the ready availability of the text through the previous use of the psalm, and understand that it is here used for a secondary purpose, unconnected with the passion apologetic as such.

The spontaneity of Paul’s argument and use of scripture then appears with striking effect in the very next verse (11.11): “So I ask, have they (i.e. the Jews) stumbled so as to fall? By no means! But through their trespass salvation has come to the Gentiles, so as to make Israel jealous.” Thus the success of the Gentile mission will actually be the means whereby the Jews are stirred to respond to the gospel. Indeed, Paul sees his own mission to the Gentiles as directed obliquely to the Jews, “in order to make my fellow Jews jealous, and thus save some of them” (verse 14). He has seized the catchword “make jealous” (*parazēlōsai*)—and probably hit on the idea—from the quotation of Deuteronomy 32.21, which he had used in 10.19: “I will make you jealous of those who are not a nation ...”

Towards the end of chapter 11 the missionary use of Isaiah reappears in verses 26f, where Paul has a conflated text about the coming Deliverer, consisting of Isaiah 59.20-21a and Isaiah 27.9. As the latter conveys the idea of forgiveness, replacing a reference to the covenant in the missing part of Isaiah 59.21, it is most probable that here we have another example of texts adduced as commentary on a foundation text, which Paul does not quote. This would be the famous new covenant passage of Jeremiah 31.31-4, which is quoted in Hebrews 8.8-12. Yet another conflated text concludes the chapter, to express Paul’s profound gratitude that God’s plan of salvation is assured for all people. It consists of Isaiah 40.13 combined with Job 41.11, but the text differs considerably from the Septuagint. Paul may well have taken this from liturgical use as a doxology.

²⁶ Matt. 27.34,48; Mark 15.36; Luke 23.36; John 15.25; 19.29; Rom. 11.9f.; 15.3; Heb. 11.26.

²⁷ “The reproaches of those who reproached you fell on me,” Ps. 69.9 (Heb. 11.26 alludes to the same verse). This shows that Paul is fully aware that this is primarily a passion psalm.

The significance of this last group of missionary quotations for our purpose is that they are general in their application, and not specifically adduced in connection with the controversy over the admission of the Gentiles. This is a further indication that Paul's use of scripture for this issue is a matter of *ad hoc* argument rather than the product of an existing tradition.

The only place in these three chapters where one can say that Paul has made an exegetical discovery (apart from his brilliant use of "make jealous" just mentioned) is his treatment of Isaiah 65.1f at the end of chapter 10, which I quoted without comment in dealing with the catena to which it belongs. I simply pointed out that Paul applies "I have been found by those who did not seek me; I have shown myself to those who did not ask for me" to the believing Gentiles, and then "All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and contrary people" to the unbelieving Jews. However, there are two points that need attention. In the first place the verbs in the first part should be regarded as examples of an idiomatic usage, the tolerative passive, and so should be translated, "I was ready to be found ... I was ready to show myself ..." Secondly, this is confirmed by words which Paul has deliberately omitted from the first verse: "I said, 'Here am I, here am I,' to a nation that did not call on my name." The two verses are thus really an appeal to recalcitrant Israel to repent, and to apply the first verse to the Gentiles simply disregards the real meaning of the text. Of course Paul uses the Septuagint version, where the Greek verbs are passive. But does this mean that the tolerative sense was not recognised in antiquity? Though this has been often supposed, in fact the tolerative use of the passive is not uncommon in Greek too, and there are examples of it in Paul's own writings where he is not translating Hebrew.²⁸ Thus we ought not to assume that Paul misunderstood the sense here.²⁹ He simply took advantage of a literal understanding, which allowed him to use the text for the benefit of his argument.

²⁸ Cf. Rom. 12.2, *suschēmatisesthe ... metamorphousthe*; 1 Cor. 6.7, *adikeisthe*; Col. 2.20, *dogmatizesthe*.

²⁹ Strack-Billerbeck ad loc. have two rabbinic references, which both appear to be aware of the tolerative sense. One (*Midrash Ps. 10 §2*, attributed to R. Jonathan, c. A.D. 220) applies it correctly to obstinate Israel, whereas the

Conclusion

Paul's concept of universal salvation had precedents in prophetic passages of the Old Testament, in some strands of contemporary Jewish thought, and some of the remembered sayings of Jesus. But these were often ambiguous, and there is no evidence for a considered theological treatment of the problem, though the question is raised poignantly after Paul's time in 2 Esdras.³⁰ Paul reached his position as a consequence of his conversion to faith in Christ, but his argument on the subject was wrung from him by the exigencies of the Judaistic controversy. For this reason it was essential to show that his Christian universalism was supported by the revelation of God in scripture, and so his argument is exceptionally rich in scriptural quotations and allusions. Our examination of these quotations has shown that Paul had no tradition of Jewish exegesis on which to build, but gathered his quotations in an *ad hoc* way from his familiarity with the use of scripture in Christian and Jewish debate. In many instances he seized on texts which were quite widely used by Christians, but for other purposes. His most heavily adapted quotations are usually related to texts used elsewhere in the New Testament, which suggests that adaptation and conflation are an early Christian characteristic rather than a specially Pauline feature.

Paul's argument in Romans 9-11 is a fine example of sustained reasoning, but it is also spontaneous and creative. He gives the impression of making it up as he goes along. In particular, his use of "make jealous" at the climax of the argument, whereby the future salvation of the Jews is introduced, is a master-stroke for which the reader is totally unprepared by the quotation from

other (*Midrash Ruth*, attributed to R. Tanchuma, c. 380) sees the possibility opened up by verse 1 as fulfilled in the proselytes Rahab and Ruth, and so comes close to Paul's interpretation. On the other hand Strack-Billerbeck assume that the LXX passives are unaware of the tolerative sense. It was also not recognised by the Reformers of the sixteenth century (cf. F. Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Prophecies of Isaiah* (London, 1892), ii. 450 ff.), and is not represented in either AV or RV.

³⁰ E.g. 2 Esdras 7, where Esdras constantly complains about the huge multitude which will perish, but is told not to grieve over them, but to be content with the future glory of Zion and the chosen people. 2 Esdras was written in the wake of the catastrophe of the Jewish War and destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

which it is derived at the end of chapter 10. Paul builds up his argument with great rhetorical skill. But there is also an inspirational quality about his writing, which makes these three chapters not merely the statement of an intellectual position of the greatest importance in the early development of Christianity, but also a revelation and a challenge to the reader in every generation.