

BOAST NOT IN YOUR RIGHTEOUSNESS FROM THE LAW:  
A NEW READING OF ROMANS 10.6-8

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By all accounts, Rom. 10.6-8 is a difficult text, puzzling readers with its strange christological, cosmological and hermeneutical features. The pathway along Paul's argument before these verses made no easy traveling (10.4), but upon reaching vv. 6-8 the terrain seems nearly impassable. For example, one might note that the questions, '*who* will ascend/descend...?', are not answered by the succeeding phrases. Indeed, this text starts and stops with abrupt interruptions. Paul has left out significant portions of Deut. 30.12-14 and as it stands his text simply does not make sense with only a surface reading. The author has made it the reader's task to supply the connections, that is, the intertextual and rhetorical connections. This study will attempt to fill the intertextual gaps of Paul's text, especially by paying attention to the role v. 6 has in setting the tone for the following verses. Some attention will be focused on the relationship of v. 6 and the preceding material as well.

Many commentators have struggled with the intertextual features of Rom. 10.6-8. Some, Sanday and Headlam, for example, have found the verses so defective that they denied the presence of a quotation of Deuteronomy 30.<sup>1</sup> Few have followed this suggestion, because the correspondences of peculiar elements, that is, elements of the intertext which are not obviously motivated by the typical Pauline language or argumentation, are too remarkable to ignore even if the correspondences are

1. William Sanday and A.C. Headlam, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 5th edn, 1902), p. 289. C.K. Barrett calls it merely a rhetorical form; see *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1957), p. 199.

brief and incomplete.<sup>2</sup> Even among the works dedicated to studying the use of the Old Testament in Paul's writings, a wide variety of opinions has been offered. E. Earle Ellis looks to Deut. 30.6 (God's pledge to circumcise Israel's hearts) for some contextual bridge to Paul's attitude of faith,<sup>3</sup> while Richard Longenecker and Christopher Stanley stress the non-contextual use of these verses.<sup>4</sup> Anthony Hanson attempts to argue for a typological reading, between Christ and Moses, and Richard Hays believes Paul saw the Gospel prefigured in Deuteronomy 30.<sup>5</sup>

One feature of these verses that complicates matters is the potential allusion to Deut. 9.4 in Rom. 10.6. Just as Paul introduced Isa. 28.16 with an allusion to 8.14 in Rom. 9.32, so it seems that he has also begun his reference to Deut. 30.12-14 here with a textual fragment from Deut. 9.4. In comparison to assessing the relationship between Rom. 9.32 and Isa. 8.14, however, commentators collectively have a much less assured conviction that Deut. 9.4 was helpful to Paul. Some Pauline commentators mention it,<sup>6</sup> while others ignore it.<sup>7</sup> The question,

2. Jack Suggs, "'The Word Is Near You': Romans 10.6-10 within the Purpose of the Letter", in W.R. Farmer, C.F.D. Moule and R. Niebuhr (eds.), *Christian History and Interpretation: Studies Presented to John Knox* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), pp. 289-312 (301).

3. Earle E. Ellis, *Paul's Use of the Old Testament* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1957), p. 123. He also relies on Jer. 31.31 for this bridge, but Hans Hübner justifiably calls this 'einen zeimlichen Umweg'; see Hans Hübner, *Gottes Ich und Israel: Zum Schriftgebrauch des Paulus in Romer 9-11* (FRLANT; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984), p. 87.

4. Richard Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), pp. 121-22; Christopher D. Stanley, *Paul and the Language of Scripture* (SNTSMS; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 130.

5. Anthony Tyrrell Hanson, *Studies in Paul's Technique and Theology* (London: SPCK, 1974), p. 152; Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), p. 155. Hans Joachim Schoeps, however, believes that Paul 'can no longer be excused by alleging the freedom proper to typological exegesis'; see his *The Theology of the Apostle in the Light of Jewish Religious History* (trans. Harold Knight; London: Lutterworth Press, 1959), p. 250.

6. Franz J. Leenhardt, *The Epistle to the Romans* (trans. Harold Knight; London: Lutterworth Press, 1961); Otto Michel, *Der Brief an der Römer, IV* (KEK; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 5th edn, 1966); C.E.B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (ICC; 2 vols.; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1975, 1979); Otto Kuss, *Der Römerbrief: Übersetzung und Erklärt* (Regensburg: Friedrich Pustet, 1978); Ernst Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans* (trans. Geoffrey

therefore, is: *how* can one determine if it was important to Paul? What makes a study of this textual fragment, μὴ εἴπῃς ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ σου, challenging are questions regarding: (1) its variable semantic value in a host of contexts; (2) questions of its effect on the argument of Romans 10 with its second person verb and personal pronoun (which introduces direct address); and (3) the intertextual distance between it and Romans 10.<sup>8</sup> While the first issue can be handled easily, the two remaining issues demand far more than a simple source critical reading can produce.

This study begins by highlighting the work of two scholars for their lead in explaining vv. 6-8. First, the influential work of Jack Suggs has convincingly related traditions in Jewish sapiential literature to Deut. 30.11-14, such as Bar. 3, Sir. 24.4, 23 and Wis. 9.4-9, concluding that Jewish theology, in Paul's time, could understand or equate the Torah with divine Wisdom.<sup>9</sup> Suggs speculates that Deuteronomy 30 was used

W. Bromiley; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980); Hübner, *Gottes Ich und Israel*; Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988); Walter Schmithals, *Der Römerbrief: Ein Kommentar* (Gütersloh: Haus Mohn, 1988); James D.G. Dunn, *Romans* (WBC, 38a, b; Dallas: Word Books, 1988); Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*, pp. 78-79; John Ziesler, *Paul's Letter to the Romans* (New Testament Commentaries; London: SCM Press, 1989); Joseph Fitzmyer, *Romans* (AB, 33; New York: Doubleday, 1992); Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996); John Paul Heil, 'Christ, the Termination of the Law (Romans 9:30–10:8)', *CBQ* 63 (2001), pp. 484-98; Michael Quesnel, 'La figure de Moïse en Romains 9–11', *NTS* 49 (2003), pp. 321-35. Since most of these commentators only mention it and few truly see it having an impact on the text, the question posed above is not answered by these treatments.

7. Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*; A. Nygren, *Romans* (London: SCM Press, 1951); Barrett, *Romans*; Suggs, "The Word Is Near You"; Matthew Black, *Romans* (NCB; London: Marshall, Morgan, & Scott, 1973); Christian Müller, *Gottes Gerechtigkeit und Gottes Volk: Eine Untersuchung zu Römer 9–11* (FRLANT; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1964); Peter Stuhlmacher, *Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Commentary* (trans. Scott J. Hafemann; Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1994).

8. Previously, I have argued that the intertext comes from Deut. 9.4 and not Deut. 8.17 despite their exact match in the LXX; see Douglas C. Mohrmann, 'Semantic Collisions at the Intertextual Crossroads: A Synchronic and Diachronic Study of Romans 9:30–10:13' (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Durham, 2001), pp. 129-31.

9. Most recently Suggs's work has been viewed approvingly by Edith M. Humphrey, 'Why Bring the Word Down? The Rhetoric of Demonstration and Disclosure in Romans 9:30–10:21', in Sven Soderlund and N.T. Wright (eds.), *People of God: Essays in Honor of Gordon Fee* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), pp. 129-48.

in debates against Paul, so Rom. 10.6-8 represents his answer to his opponents through a radically new interpretation that was achieved by replacing the Torah with Christ (10.4) as the newly-revealed word of God.<sup>10</sup> Secondly, the most nuanced reading of our passage has been offered by Hays, who rightly senses some importance in the allusion to Deuteronomy 9 and the generally subversive features in Paul's argument.<sup>11</sup> He describes the form of these verses as a line-by-line *peshet* interpretation of Deut. 30.11-14. Just as many commentators before Hays conclude, so he also sees Rom. 10.6-8 as a proof-text of 'righteousness from faith'. He adds that 'the real meaning of Deuteronomy 30 is disclosed not in law keeping but in Christian preaching'.<sup>12</sup>

Despite the value of these contributions, several questions persist which this study will address. Neither of these writers explains the differences between Deut. 9.4 and 30.11 or exposes a purpose in the allusion to 9.4 or Paul's jump from ch. 9 to 30. Suggs completely ignores Deuteronomy 9 and Hays's off-handed conjecture is unsatisfactory.<sup>13</sup> Also, neither accounts for the difference between ἀλλά (Rom. 10.8) and ἵνα/γάρ (Deut. 30.14). By attending to the text's rhetorical structure and voicing,<sup>14</sup> clarity for the purpose of Paul's employment of these intertexts can be gained. This approach will consequently address questions about why Paul chose to personify ἡ ἐκ πίστεως δικαιοσύνη, what or whom 'it' represents, how long 'it' speaks, and to whom 'it' speaks (σου).

She argues that Sir. 24 is particularly enlightening for seeing Paul's argument against Jewish mysticism (esp. pp. 146-47). Paul's level of critique, however, is more general than this scenario describes, and Humphrey does not convincingly show that it was an issue for this letter's audience.

10. Suggs, "The Word Is Near You", p. 301. Cf. Michel, *Römer*, p. 328 n. 14; Elizabeth E. Johnson, *The Function of Apocalyptic and Wisdom Traditions in Romans 9–11* (SBLDS, 109; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987), pp. 133-39, 158-59.

11. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*, pp. 77-83.

12. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*, p. 82.

13. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*, p. 79. He wonders if Paul chose Deut. 30 over a sustained exposition of Deut. 9 because the latter text was 'too easy' to exploit and would 'end the argument prematurely'. He is forced into such speculation for Paul's motives, because he concludes about the argument itself: 'Paul's interpretation presupposes what it argues and argues what it presupposes', p. 82.

14. 'Voicing' represents the language of direct address, indirect address, quotation, and questions in vv. 6-8: λέγει (2x), εἶπης, σου (4x), τίς (2x), and κηρύσσομεν.

### 1. The Semantic Value of Deuteronomy 9

These questions bring us to the initial words voiced by the-righteousness-from-faith, *μὴ εἴπῃς ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ σου*. At this point, one will notice that the Nestle–Aland marginalia mention Deut. 9.4 (MT אל-תאמר בלבבך). A quick comparison of Romans 10 and Deuteronomy 9 uncovers correspondences both verbal and conceptual. Nonetheless, with such a short fragment of the source text, our certainty in assessing Paul’s intent (and the reader’s comprehension) is greatly imperiled. Further undermining the simple approach of comparing contexts to determine if there is an allusion is the presence of this phrase, or a close synonym *בלבב... דבר* in several other contexts of the Hebrew Bible.

Before arguing that Deut. 9.4 is important to Paul’s text, it will be instructive to discuss the meaning of this idiom in Deuteronomy and elsewhere. Once the semantic range of the phrase to ‘say in one’s heart’ has been ascertained, its relevance will be considered. As the following data show, there is a range of meanings to consider for this phrase.

#### A. The meanings include:

i.	<i>conclude (believe)</i>	Deut. 8.17; Isa. 47.8, 10; Zeph. 1.12; 2.15; Obad. 3; Ps. 10.6, 11, 13; 14.1; 35.25; 53.2; Qoh. 3.17, 18; Ps. 15.2; Qoh. 1.16
ii.	<i>decide, choose, plan</i>	Jer. 5.24; Gen. 8.21; 27.41
iii.	<i>intend, desire/aspire</i>	Isa. 14.13; Qoh. 2.1, 15
iv.	<i>realize</i>	Isa. 49.21; 1 Sam. 27.1; 1 Kgs 12.26; (1 Sam. 21.13)
v.	<i>ponder, wonder about, puzzle over</i>	Deut. 7.17; 18.21; Jer. 13.22; Gen. 17.17; Est. 6.6
vi.	<i>consider</i>	Jer. 19.5; Ezek. 38.10

#### B. Key results include:

i.	<i>pride and forgetting</i>	Deut. 8.17; Isa. 14.13; 47.8, 10; Obad. 3; Zeph. 1.12, 2.15; Ps. 10.6, 11, 13; 35.25; 74.8
ii.	<i>sinful behaviour</i>	Ps. 10.6, 11, 13; 14.1; 53.2; 74.8
iii.	<i>fear</i>	Deut. 7.17
iv.	<i>foolishness</i>	Jer. 5.24; Ps. 14.1; 53.2
v.	<i>complacency</i>	Zeph. 1.12
vi.	<i>comprehension of God’s mercy</i>	Isa. 49.21
vii.	<i>a new promise</i>	Gen. 8.21
viii.	<i>evasive or corrective action</i>	1 Sam. 27.1; 1 Kgs 12.26

These phrases refer to introspection. They touch the semantic value of לבב, which for Hebrew denotes the center of human consciousness, so the idiom refers to thinking and decision making as the entity (individual or corporate) converses or debates with, queries, answers, encourages and causes panic for itself. To ‘say in one’s heart’ need not involve emotions; indeed it usually does not carry that emphasis. Determining whether or not it is silent (Ps. 4.5; 1 Sam. 1.13) is difficult, because in one case it certainly is heard (Gen. 27.41). It may emphasize the intimate, personal origination of the thinking (cf. Gen. 18.12), yet, as Gen. 27.41-42 hints, the destination may be important in that it is an attempt to console or persuade oneself. Thus it is truly reflexive. The internalized and insular nature of the communication becomes its problematic feature when marked by self indulgence, pride, impudence and evil intent. Thus its hiddenness may perpetuate a destructive illusion; it often lacks a wider perspective which would otherwise illuminate the thinking.

There is no singular circumstance which surrounds this phrase. Among those listed, it is most often placed in descriptions of the monumental events, such as those before, during or after war. For example, the combatants are given cause to prepare for and reflect on the events. The texts clearly imply that a victorious person or group is prone to an inflated self-assessment and prone to forget the divine endorsement for the war. This usually leads to a tyrannous rule over the defeated. For those not victorious, the time may lead to a disillusionment where prior complacency or self-satisfaction crumble. It may also lead to despair or to a dream for restoration. Such thinking-in-conflict may occur in national or in personal circumstances.

When the אל- is added to the phrase אמר...לבב in Deut. 9.4, it connotes particularly the insular problem of introspection which appears in many of the phrase’s contexts. In 9.4, אל-תאמר לבבך challenges Israel not to forget their debt of gratitude to God—whatever illusion a victory might suggest for their relationship with God (צדקה). To deny this introspection was to deny them the self-consolation, persuasion and aggrandizement of myopic, incestuous thinking.

Upon moving out of the Hebrew Bible, several developments may be observed. First, the frequency of the phrase’s use declines dramatically, and when those occasions which are directly attributable to quotations or allusions to the texts already listed above are set aside (placed in bold type-face below), the occurrences drop to fewer than a dozen times. As

a result the range of meaning is smaller and there is a different distribution of the texts across these meanings, as shown below.

The meanings include:

i.	<i>conclude (believe)</i> <sup>15</sup>	<i>Jos. Asen.</i> 6.1, 11.15; Mt. 24.48 (and pars); <b>Rev. 18.7</b> (Isa. 47.8)
ii.	<i>intend, desire/aspire</i>	<b>2 Bar. 67.7</b> (Isa. 14.13)
iii.	<i>realize</i> <sup>16</sup>	Tob. <sup>S</sup> 4.2 <sup>17</sup> ; 1 Macc. 6.11; <i>T. Abr.</i> <sup>A</sup> 6.6
iv.	<i>ponder, wonder about, puzzle over</i> <sup>18</sup>	Ps. Sol. 8.3; <sup>19</sup> <i>Jos. Asen.</i> 11.3; <b>11Q19 66.2</b> (Deut. 18.21); <b>4Q158 6.18</b> (Deut. 18.21)
v.	<i>pray</i>	Jdt. 13.4; (cf. also <i>Jos. Asen.</i> 11.3, 15)

The circumstances surrounding these texts are less dominated by the themes of war, but they are not absent altogether (Jdt. 13.4; 1 Macc. 6.11; Ps. Sol. 8.3; Rev. 18.7) and personal crises play a larger role (Tob. 4.2; *T. Abr.* 6.6; *Jos. Asen.* 6.1; 11.3, 15). Pride and sinful action again result from this introspection as seen in 2 Bar. 67.7, Mt. 24.48 and Rev. 18.7, while positive resolutions also issue from it (contrition: *Jos. Asen.* 6.1; courage: Jdt. 13.4). Clearly, the phrase did not have much currency in this period and consequently it was likely to arise when it was borrowed from the older sacred texts.

## 2. Paul's Use of Deuteronomy 9.4

Paul's rendition of Deut. 9.4 is worded precisely in accord with the LXX.<sup>20</sup> Yet, when trying to determine whether or not Deut. 9.4 was important for Rom. 10.6-13, there is another factor to consider. This

15. Cf. Ps. Sol. 1.3 (λογίζω); 1 Cor. 3.7 (ἔστηκεν and κέκρικεν); or in an opposite sense, Mk 11.23 (μὴ διακρίνω).

16. Cf. *T. Abr.* B 6.13 (γνωρίζω); *Jos. Asen.* 23.8 (ἀναγινώσκω).

17. Tob. BA reads: εἶπεν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς.

18. Cf. Mk 2.6 (and pars: διαλογίζω).

19. Edward Ryle and Montague Rhodes James, *Psalms of the Pharisees, Commonly Called the Psalms of Solomon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1891), pp. 74-75, following Wellhausen, emends the Greek ποῦ, a mistranslation of the Hebrew by confusing אָפִי for אֶפֶס. It would thus put the phrase in category iii. 'to realize'.

20. This is less remarkable than it first appears, since the MT, Samaritan Pentateuch, Targumim and Vulgate all agree without variation on this phrase. The question of Paul's *Vorlage* again resists an easy answer.

factor perhaps cuts both ways, that is, affirming and challenging its importance. Namely, in the extant Greek literature of Paul's day, the phrase, 'to say in one's heart', *only* appears in the few texts given above which were written by Jews and Christians—not once outside these! This suggests that it was strictly a Hebrew idiom. Therefore, Paul's use of this foreign phrase must be recognized when calculating the rhetorical impact Romans 10 had on his readers/hearers. For ears attuned to biblical literature, the phrase would possibly evoke one or more of the nuances in the semantic range mentioned above, while for other ears its awkwardness would interfere with their ability to follow the reading. Since Paul only uses it once and then in a very unusual intertextual complex, it is possible that he was aware of how alien it would be for Gentile audiences. Its presence would likely create an awkward tension for the reader and perhaps it would be meaningless. Doubtless, to determine its semantic value, it would require an intertextual reading, a reading to connect Rom. 10.6 to another text.<sup>21</sup> Of course, Paul's use of the-righteousness-from-faith as a speaker would already signal to his audience that a heightened literary reading was expected.

Whatever we might conclude about the competency of the readers, Paul, on the other hand, probably intended it to carry some semantic value, given the fact that he proceeds directly into another quotation from Deuteronomy. This second, more extensive reference to Deuteronomy 30 suggests that Paul himself must have been influenced by the language of Deuteronomy, at least generally. Moreover, there are several thematic connections between the source and new contexts. The correlation of v. 4 (תקדב/διὰ τὰς δικαιοσύνας μου) with 10.3 (τὴν ἰδίαν [δικαιοσύνην]) seems intentional.<sup>22</sup> In addition, both contexts depreciate human righteousness as a basis for claiming a right to God's election (cf. Rom. 9.12, 32a; 11.5-7). Finally, both combine prayerful intercessions (by Moses and Paul—9.3, 10.1), based on God's mercy (e.g.

21. Moo, *Romans*, p. 650, by contrast, simply asserts that Paul 'wants his readers to associate these words with the context from which they were drawn' without explaining how Paul's desire would be perceptible to the readers.

22. Dunn also observed the verbal correlation of ἵστημι in both texts, Deut. 9.5 (στήση/στή) and Rom. 10.3 (στήσαι); see James D.G. Dunn, "'Righteousness from the Law' and 'Righteousness from Faith': Paul's Interpretation of Scripture in Romans 10:1-10", in Gerald F. Hawthorne (ed.), *Tradition and Interpretation in the New Testament: Festschrift E. Earle Ellis* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), pp. 216-27 (224).

9.15; 11.30-32), and his promises to the patriarchs (9.6-9, 32a; 11.28), after a collapse in human faith (9.31-33). Given the contextual connections, the exact representation of the intertext as it was preserved in the LXX, and immediate use of Deuteronomy 30 in vv. 7-8, little doubt should remain that Paul was purposefully alluding to Deut. 9.4. It remains to determine its semantic value.

The intertextual connection with Deuteronomy 9 would not have been perceived by everyone, but once made, the reader or auditor might remember the phrase's semantic value. This value could be transferred to Romans 10. In Deut. 9.4, the action of saying 'in one's heart' meant something like 'refraining from concluding', or, more idiomatically, it was approximate to 'do not boastfully say'. If this value is imported into Romans 10, then several questions immediately arise.<sup>23</sup>

First, is 'boasting' appropriate to the context and who would be the one(s) to boast? If this can be answered affirmatively, the reader would thereby be able to eliminate other potential semantic values for the intertext, such as those listed earlier from Old Testament and post-biblical Jewish literature.<sup>24</sup> The key lies with 10.3 and Israel's zeal. Those who have zealously affirmed their relationship with the law and have refused God's present righteousness and salvation would be the likely candidates for a warning or prohibition from the-righteousness-from-faith, such as 'do not boastfully say'.<sup>25</sup> Their nearness to v. 6 supplies the reasonable and natural antecedent to σου. Schlatter, by contrast, believes the target of the-righteousness-from-faith's speech was the believer who must not look for Jesus.<sup>26</sup> This would be unlikely because: (1) it assumes that looking for Christ according to Deuteronomy 30 (in word or in concept)

23. Dunn, *Romans*, believes partial citations are 'characteristic features of Jewish exposition' (p. 603). This present reading contends that the structure (form) of Paul's argument points to a different explanation for the ellipsis, especially in a way that accounts for the differences between the source and new contexts and would be more appropriate for a non-Palestinian provenance and destination.

24. Cranfield, *Romans*, II, p. 523; and Dunn, *Romans*, p. 602, perceive the nuance of boasting in Deut. 9, but do not apply it to Rom. 10.

25. David Capes unjustifiably reads both Deut. 9 and Rom. 10 as if they were concerned with 'performance-based righteousness'; see David B. Capes, 'Yahweh and his Messiah: Pauline Exegesis and the Divine Christ', *Horizons* 16 (1994), pp. 121-43 (127). Better stated, both question the relevance of, or existence of, Israel's prior relationship with God *for the present*; cf. Phil. 3.1-16.

26. Adolf Schlatter, *Gottes Gerechtigkeit: Ein Kommentar zum Römerbrief* (Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1935), p. 313.

was an issue for believers (in Rome or elsewhere),<sup>27</sup> and (2) it neglects the interest Paul has expressed to correct and win over the unsubmissive Jews.<sup>28</sup> Therefore, a directly confrontational tone is highly appropriate to the context if Paul hoped to close the pathway to life by the law and to strip away Israel's basis for its zeal and to motivate them to a joint faith with the Gentiles. Israel's present zeal for God was based on a presumption of righteousness and Paul aimed to eliminate their delusion (10.2-5). The apostle had earlier upbraided a hypothetical Jewish interlocutor for boasting in the law when his sin betrayed infidelity to it (2.17, 23). Then, after demonstrating the sinfulness of all humanity, Paul, in 3.27 (and 4.2), refused the right of boasting to those who would claim such a right based on their distinctive Jewish piety (cf. 9.32a). With these earlier direct attacks on Jewish boasting and with the offensive mounted against Jewish piety in 9.31–10.3, a subtle attack on their boasting again in 10.6 is reasonable. Perhaps this allusion to Jewish boasting could be considered a counterbalance to his prohibition of Gentile Christian boasting in 11.18 and 12.3-16. Therefore, to answer the question just posed, the zealous Jews of 10.3 are the target of the prohibition of 10.6 (σοῦ) and a rejection of their boasting is indeed apropos to the larger context of Romans and fitting for an attack on misguided zeal.

### 3. *Deuteronomy 9 in the Voice of the 'Righteousness-by-Faith'*

To recognize the antecedent of σοῦ is not a peripheral concern. Michel Quesnel's recent work on Paul's scriptural citations in Romans 9–11 puts the question thus:

27. *Contra* Arnold M. Goldberg, 'Torah aus der Unterwelt? Eine Bemerkung zu Röm 10, 6-7', *BZ* 14 (1972), pp. 127-31 (130); and Jan Heller, 'Himmel- und Höllenfahrt nach Römer 10', *EvT* 32 (1972), pp. 478-86 (484-85). Both authors use rabbinic material to reconstruct a polemic between Paul and mystics within the Church.

28. William Campbell, 'The Purpose of Paul in the Letter to the Romans: A Survey of Romans 1–11 with Special Reference to Chapters 9–11' (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation; University of Edinburgh, 1972), p. 372, suggests that 'the Jews ought not to seek to bring Christ down from heaven' makes more sense in this context, which addresses the Jews primarily. However, it is not clear from the context that Paul was fighting a Jewish belief that certain deeds could induce God to send his Messiah; see Johannes Munck, *Christ and Israel: An Interpretation of Romans 9–11* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), p. 87. A more general use of Deut. 30 as proposed below fits the general nature of Paul's argument.

Elle est adressée à un destinataire toujours nommé à la seconde personne. Comme aux versets précédents, elle est aussitôt suivie d'un commentaire dont l'instance d'énonciation est douteuse: s'agit-il de la Justice (qui vient de) la foi? S'agit-il de l'auteur de la letter?<sup>29</sup>

Although Quesnel interprets the second person address as a conversation with Paul's interlocutor, he neither locates the person within the context nor infers how such rhetoric might help us understand the structure and meaning of the speech. Scholars have long observed how Paul deliberately employs diatribe rhetoric in Romans 9–11.<sup>30</sup> This is most obviously seen in 9.18-23. Several features in the passage under consideration also belong to Paul's diatribe. First, v. 6 begins a speech by ἡ ἐκ πίστεως δικαιοσύνη (the-righteousness-from-faith), a personification of an abstraction: Paul has given 'it' a voice. Rudolf Bultmann notes this about Paul's construction: '*wenn er 1 Kor 12,15f und 21 die Glieder des Leibes sprechen läßt, so erinnert das an die griechische Manier; und noch mehr ist das der Fall, wenn er Röm 10,6-8 die abstrakte Größe der δικαιοσύνην ἐκ πίστεως redend einführt*'.<sup>31</sup> Secondly, since it directly addresses a 'you (sg.)' in vv. 6, 8 and 9 and since v. 8 ends with 'this is the word of faith which we preach', it is clear that the passage features direct address.<sup>32</sup> Next, it is clear that 10.6-8 uses

29. Quesnel, 'La figure de Moïse', pp. 321-30; ET: 'It is addressed to a recipient always named in the second person. As with the preceding verses, it follows immediately with a commentary from whom the authority of the enunciation is uncertain: Is it the Righteousness (which comes) from faith? Is it the author of the letter?'

30. E.g. C.H. Dodd, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans* (London: Collins, 1932), pp. 162-63.

31. Rudolf Bultmann, *Der Stil der paulinischen Predigt und die kynisch-stoische Diatribe* (FRLANT, 13; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, repr. 1984), pp. 87-88; ET: 'When he allows the members of the body in 1 Cor. 12.15f. and 21 to speak, it reminds us of the Greek style; and even more this is the case when he, in Romans 10.6-8, introduces the abstract celebrity-character, δικαιοσύνην ἐκ πίστεως, as speaking'. See also H. Schlier, *Der Römerbrief: Kommentar* (HKNT; Freiberg: Herder, 1977), p. 311; Cranfield, *Romans*, II, p. 522; Stanley K. Stowers, *A Rereading of Romans: Justice, Jews, and Gentiles* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), p. 309.

32. Compare the use of first and second person pronouns in the citations of 9.7 (σοι = Abraham); 9.17 (σε/σου = Pharaoh, μου = God); 9.20 (με = 'Oh man', Paul's Jewish diatribe partner); 9.25-26 (μου = God, ὑμεῖς = Israel); 9.29 (ἡμῖν = Isaiah and Israel); 10.16 (ἡμῶν = Isaiah and God); 10.19 (ἐγώ = Moses on behalf of God); 10.20-21 (ἐμέ/μου = Isaiah on behalf of God); 11.3 (σου = God, μου = Elijah); and 11.27 (ἐμοῦ = God). The only other occasions for second person

rhetorical questions, even if it is not clear how. Finally, as Stanley Stowers has shown, questions begun with ἤ (as in 10.7) have parallels in the Greek writers.<sup>33</sup>

This brings us to the very heart of the problems in reading Rom. 10.6-8, since it appears that Paul has surprisingly blended diatribe techniques with the citation of the Hebrew Bible. His abstraction, the-righteousness-from-faith, even speaks in a distinctly Hebraic idiom! It is also possible to note now that the-righteousness-from-faith will quote its Jewish interlocutor in vv. 6c-7. Deuteronomy 30 is not cited directly by the-righteousness-from-faith, only indirectly. In v. 8, Paul interrupts the speech, writing ἀλλὰ τί λέγει, before the-righteousness-from-faith can resume, and there only it appears that ‘it’ has decided to cite Deut. 30.14 directly. More will be said about this below. In short, v. 6 introduces a speaker to challenge Paul’s Jewish interlocutor whose life is characterized by a zeal for God, which, nevertheless, ignores the fact that Jesus Christ is the very τέλος of the law. Paul has the-righteousness-from-faith prohibit the interlocutor (σου) from boastfully saying, ‘Who will ascend’. In other words, the interlocutor must not cite Deuteronomy 30. Now it will be important to analyze the citation of Deuteronomy 30, exploring what that Scripture might have to do with ‘boasting’, and to identify who or what ‘the-righteousness-from-faith’ is and how long it speaks.

#### 4. Reading Romans 10.7-8 in Light of 10.6

Even to ask these questions reveals how this reading of Deuteronomy 9 has set off a chain reaction, since it becomes clear that Deuteronomy 30 comes from the voice of the-righteousness-from-faith only as *indirect speech*, as ‘it’ quotes its opponent (σου). Romans 10.6c, ‘who will ascend into heaven?’, a snippet from Deut. 30.12, must be heard from the voice of the zealous Jew. In both Romans 10 and Deuteronomy 30, neither audience was to ask this question, but the reasons for this are different. Originally, Moses discouraged the people from seeking the divine revelation in the heavens, because it was near to them already in

pronouns or verbs is Paul’s direct statements to the Romans (e.g. 9.1-3; 11.13, 25, 28, 30) or a Gentile diatribe partner (11.19ff.). Thus all the characters of direct address in chs. 9–11 are identifiable, leaving only 10.6-9.

33. Stanley Stowers, *The Diatribe and Paul’s Letters to the Romans* (SBLDS, 57; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1981), pp. 94 and 229 n. 69.

the Torah.<sup>34</sup> The passage originally affirmed the law, and the Jewish traditions preserved by Bar. 3.29-30 and Philo (esp. *Poster. C.* 84–88, *Mut. Nom.* 236–239, *Virt.* 183 and *Omn. Prob. Lib.* 68) in their respective ways employed Deut. 30.12-14 to affirm and boast about the law as well.<sup>35</sup> In Deuteronomy, Baruch and Philo the intertext helps the authors explain how the distance between God and humanity was bridged by the law. In other words, to cite Deut. 30.12-14 was itself to vaunt the law as the distinctive and supreme expression of God's Wisdom to bring his people into right relationship with him. It was this very purpose in Baruch 3 that led Suggs to believe that the text was originally used against Paul. Arnold Goldberg discovered that Deut. 30.12-14 was applied in rabbinic literature against mystical heretics, which again typifies its role in Jewish reactions to abhorrent movements. Its didactic value could be exploited in at least two ways: to discourage a pursuit of truth, wisdom and righteousness elsewhere and to highlight Judaism's superiority over other religions. Paul's gospel runs against the grain of this text in either case, and it is clear now that the-righteousness-from-faith would have ample reason to interdict Jewish boasting through their citation of Deut. 30.12-14. Paul would have taken Moses' intention through these words to encourage loyalty to the Torah. The confrontational tone in Deuteronomy 9, however, supplanted Moses didacticism (Deut. 30.11) with a rebuke, and then recast the dynamics of the entire speech. The-righteousness-from-faith thus sustains the assault on reliance on the law as the administration of righteousness.

34. Mohrmann, 'Semantic Collisions', pp. 142-54. The language of ascending mountains into the heavens, crossing great seas to the ends of the world or plummeting the abyss to visit the gods of the netherworld is common in ancient Near East literature. If Deut. 30 is dated to the exilic period, this Hebrew text may have been used as a polemic against neo-Babylonian interest in the Gilgamesh mythology. Within this scenario, Moses has already reached these places to retrieve divine wisdom—something that even Gilgamesh ultimately fails to do, and so the (Israelite) interest in Babylonian religion may be curtailed. Ps. 139.2-9 and Prov. 30.4 found uses of the text in non-confrontational contexts, but Rom. 10 bears more similarity to Baruch and Philo.

35. Despite Dunn's correct observation that these authors had made more universal applications of the law through Deut. 30, their esteem for the law and their basis of confidence in it was not thereby undermined ('Righteousness from the Law', pp. 224-25). It was this universal dimension in their reading of the law that contended for its abiding superiority. So, Paul's point in Rom. 10.5-6 was not to compare Jewish particularism and universalism.

5. *The Structure of Paul’s Argument in Romans 10.6-8*

The differences in Paul’s rendition of Deuteronomy 30 are so extensive that it will be profitable to review the major witnesses again, here translated and placed in parallel columns.

MT	LXX	TN	Romans 10.6-8
12. It is not in the heavens, so that you need to say,  “Who will go up for us into the heavens, receive it for us, and teach it to us that we might do it?”	12. It is not in the heavens above, causing one to say,  “Who will go up for us into heaven and receive it for us and, after having heard (it) we will do it?”	12. That law is not in the heavens, that one should say: Oh, that we had someone like Moses the prophet who could ascend into heaven and obtain it for us, and make us hear the commandments that we might do them.	6. ...“Do not say in your heart,  ‘Who will ascend into heaven...?’ —that is to bring Christ down,
13. Neither is it across the sea, so that you need to say,  “Who will cross over for us to the other side of the sea, receive it for us, and teach it to us that we might do it?”	13. Neither is it across the sea, causing one to say,  “Who will cross over for us to the other side of the sea and receive it for us and announce it to us and we will do it?”	13. Nor is that law beyond the Great Sea, that one should say: Oh, that we had someone like Jonah the prophet who could descend into the abyss of the Great Sea and ascend again with it for us, and make us hear the commands that we might do them!	7. or ‘Who will descend into the abyss...?’ —that is to bring Christ up from the dead”.
14. For, the word is very near to you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it.	14. Very near to you is the word, in your mouth and in your heart and in your hands in order to do it.”	14. For the word is very near to you, in the word of your mouths and in your hearts that you may do it.	8. But by contrast, what does it say? “Near to you is the word, in your mouth and in your heart”— that is the word of faith which we preach.

What strikes the reader immediately is the difference in tone between Romans and the other versions. From the beginning in v. 6, Paul transforms Moses’ instructions into a stern prohibition and at the conclusion, in v. 8, he needs to introduce a strong adversative, ἀλλά (cf. כִּי in the MT SamP and אַרְוֵם of the targumim), in order to realign the two texts and finish with a conciliatory tone befitting the words of 30.14. Paul has also restructured the text with interruptions to mention Christ. Most commentators believe these were explanatory statements, but in a confrontational setting they could be rebuttals.

It is commonplace now to read in commentaries that the thrice-given  $\tau\omicron\upsilon\tau'$  ἔστιν is a signal for '(midrashic) pesher' hermeneutics; this is usually invoked to justify what looks like a blatantly poor use of Deuteronomy 30.<sup>36</sup> Yet, this phrase is a ubiquitous literary convention which Paul and other Greek writers used for all manner of explanations (e.g. 7.18; Acts 1.19; Heb. 2.14), including explanations of quotations.<sup>37</sup> Romans 10.6-8 is no more a pesher in form than Philo's *Sac.* 46.4, Plutarch's *Lives* 6.4.7,<sup>38</sup> or Epictetus's *Dissertationae Arrianodigestae* 1.9.25.1 (quotation of Socrates and explanation), among many others.<sup>39</sup> Given that Michael Fishbane's research in the Hebrew Bible uncovered what could be called verbal and functional equivalents to  $\tau\omicron\upsilon\tau'$  ἔστιν, such as  $\text{אָרָא}$  and  $\text{אָרָא}$ ,<sup>40</sup> it must be admitted that these literary precursors to Paul's text and Qumran also undermine a conclusion that the phrase can be taken as a technical indication of pesher exegesis. The presence of diatribe rhetoric, by contrast, is quite plain. Therefore,  $\tau\omicron\upsilon\tau'$  ἔστιν may indicate a cessation in the indirect quotation of Deuteronomy 30 with a direct reply or retort by the-righteousness-from-faith against the Jewish interlocutor.

So, the indirect speech of the Jews does not progress very far before the-righteousness-from-faith interrupts and replaces the second half of the verse. Instead of 'in order that he might retrieve it (the law) and teach it to us that we might do it?', the-righteousness-from-faith interjects, 'that is to bring Christ down'. Again in v. 7, the Jewish interlocutor attempts to proceed, saying 'who will descend into the abyss?'. This is the last word from the opponent. For again, the-righteousness-from-faith interrupts with 'that is to bring Christ up from the dead'.

36. E.g. Quensel, 'La figure de Moïse', p. 331.

37. In a search of the TLG database, this phrase (in its various forms, e.g., with or without the final  $\nu$ ) appears over 700 times between the second century BCE and first century CE. *Contra* Michel, *Römer*, p. 328 n. 16, this phrase can indeed introduce exegetical remarks. Thus it should not be differentiated from '*hellenistischen Rhetorik*'.

38.  $\tau\omicron\upsilon\tau'$  ἔστιν followed by an infinitive is not uncommon as the references to Philo and Plutarch exemplify.

39. So also concluded by Mark A. Seifrid, 'Paul's Approach to the Old Testament in Rom 10.6-8', *Trinity Journal* 6 (1985), pp. 27-34. Fitzmyer, *Romans*, p. 590, refuses to associate this phrase with  $\text{עַל פְּשָׁרוֹ}$  yet still maintains it is 'midrashic'.

40. Michael Fishbane, 'Inner Biblical Exegesis: Types and Strategies of Interpretation in Ancient Israel', in G.H. Hartmann and S. Budick (eds.), *Midrash and Literature* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), pp. 44-65.

Paul's rendering of Deut. 30.12 in 10.6c, except for omitting  $\kappa\alpha\iota/\eta\mu\acute{\iota}\nu$ , matches the MT and LXX, but in 10.7a his words vary from Deut. 30.13, which originally spoke of crossing the seas. Perhaps his modification was prompted by Ps. 107.26,<sup>41</sup> or, more likely, Paul's intertext was a transformed rendering of Deut. 30.13 which is also preserved in an Aramaic tradition.<sup>42</sup>

The conclusion of the quotation appears in v. 8. A small but significant variation in Paul's intertext requires comment. If Paul's intention was merely to quote the Old Testament, 10.8 would have begun with  $\gamma\acute{\alpha}\rho$  or  $\acute{\omicron}\tau\iota$ , but instead Paul replaces the expected connective with a strong adversative,  $\acute{\alpha}\lambda\lambda\acute{\alpha}$ . Paul himself, as a narrator, thus breaks the pattern of recitation to add, 'What does *it* say?', clearly meaning that the righteousness-from-faith was thereafter leading with direct speech. Together these signs were meant to tell the audience that the opponent had been silenced and that Deuteronomy 30, having been transformed (substituting Deut. 9.4 for Deut. 30.11) and subverted by the interruptions, could now be rightfully exploited. The typical Jewish (and original) inferences from Deut. 30.12-14 have been *denied*, not simply reappropriated according to a christological hermeneutic.<sup>43</sup> In v. 8, the speech overlays the original meaning of Deut. 30.14, because of the argument overall in Romans 9–11, with Paul's new vision of God's calling to *both* Jew and Gentile (cf. 9.24-26). This new context transforms the near-word or revelation of God as the Pauline kerygma rather than the Mosaic Torah.

Just as crucially, if the indirect speech was over and if the righteousness-from-faith has hijacked its opponent's recitation, the adver-

41. So Kuss, *Römerbrief*, p. 755; Hübner, *Gottes Ich und Israel*, p. 86; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, p. 588.

42. See Stanislas Lyonnet, 'Saint Paul et l'exégèse juive de son temps: A propos de Romains 10.6-8', in *Mélanges bibliques rédigés en l'honneur de André Robert* (Paris: Bloud & Gay, 1957), pp. 494-506; his argument has been repeatedly critiqued (see, e.g., Fitzmyer, *Romans*, p. 591). No claim is here made that Paul knew of this Targum. More likely, the association of sea and abyss long preceded Paul and the targumim (cf. Ps. 139 and Heller, 'Himmel', p. 484). Goldberg, 'Torah', pp. 127-30, argues against such a connection, but on this point he is unconvincing. On the other extreme, Hanson, *Studies in Paul's Technique and Theology*, pp. 154-55, claims that Paul was using a Targum and that he was hereby portraying Christ as types of Moses (v. 12) and Jonah (v. 13).

43. *Contra* Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*; and Suggs, "'The Word Is Near You'".

sative ἄλλὰ in v. 8 would signal a change in attitude.<sup>44</sup> Whereas 10.4 releases the tension between v. 1 and vv. 2-3, that is, between compassion and criticism, and whereas vv. 5-7 resumes Paul's prophetically adversarial tone so that the passage begins to build a new rhetorical tension again between these two poles, v. 8 again releases it, coming back to conciliatory words in order to lead its Jewish opponent towards faith in Christ and to a new state of right relationship before God. Suggs supposes Paul had been attacked with Deuteronomy 30 and was therefore forced to respond, yet he cites no textual evidence for this supposition. This analysis supports him first by listening to Deuteronomy 9 and then by recognizing the indirect speech of Paul's real or hypothetical antagonists. Paul uses diatribe rhetoric to create this peculiar text. Such is the rhetorical structure of vv. 6-8 which accounts for the strange fits of starts and stops in the truncated citation.

What remains is to explain Paul's intertext in its new context and the interruptions of the-righteousness-from-faith. The significance of both questions taken from Deut. 30.12-13 about ascending and descending has largely been answered by the work of Suggs.<sup>45</sup> Quests to the remotest parts of the cosmos often symbolized an interest in obtaining divine knowledge, virtue and wisdom. Paul's comment on his own ascent (ἀρπάζω) to heaven supports an association of heaven with a

44. Ulrich Wilckens, *Der Brief an die Römer* (EKK, 6; 3 vols.; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1978), II, p. 225, seems to recognize the differences between vv. 7 and 8, but he does not explain them other than to say, '*Der nach den beiden abgewiesenen Fragen entscheidende positive Satz V 8a entspricht nahezu wörtlich Dtn 30,13 [sic-30.14?]*'; ET: 'The decisively positive sentence in v. 8a, after the two rejected questions, corresponds almost exactly to Deut. 30.13 [sic 30.14?]' . John E. Toews also senses the importance of this disjunction and highlights the contrast between v. 6 (εἴπησ) and v. 8 (λέγει); see his 'The Law in Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Study of Roman 9.30-10.13' (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Northwestern University, 1977), p. 318.

45. Suggs, "'The Word Is Near You'", pp. 305-306 (n. 32 above). Not every tradition, however, envisages Wisdom being made accessible to humanity as he implies (e.g. Prov. 30.1-4). Aspects or limited portions of divine wisdom, often a divinely-inspired law, could be apportioned for human enlightenment, but the full bounds of wisdom were the prerogative of heaven alone. See also the well-reasoned discussion by Stuhlmacher, *Romans*, p. 125. Seifrid, 'Paul's Approach', p. 23, concludes against Suggs that Paul was not making use of the equation of Christ and Wisdom-Torah. No assumption is being made here that Paul knew of Bar. 3 or was building upon this tradition specifically, but this is not necessary to hold that a general association of Torah with divine wisdom was available for Paul's use.

special source of knowledge, if not also revealing an association with boasting upon the acquisition of its secrets (2 Cor. 12.1-5).<sup>46</sup> The reverence for the Torah as divine revelation in ancient Israelite traditions no doubt motivated its appropriation of common Ancient Near East motifs of ascending to the heavens, crossing the seas, or descending to the abyss as a means to defend and extol their law as the embodiment of revealed Wisdom. With these tendencies in mind, we may note how Paul likewise adapted this imagery, after 10.4, to subvert the law. This is the motivation behind the interruptions of the interlocutor's speech.

Next, what should be understood from the interjections by the-righteousness-from-faith in reply to this implied exegesis? Interpreting v. 6 is not straightforward, because Christ's descent from heaven is neither a theme of Romans nor even of the Pauline corpus generally. It has been variously characterized as an allusion to Christ's incarnation,<sup>47</sup> or a return from his present station in heaven.<sup>48</sup> An explanation of v. 7, which speaks of Christ's ascent from the abyss to be resurrected, may come from early Christian speculation that Christ's death took him into Hell, that is, the abyss or underworld (1 Pet. 3.19-20).<sup>49</sup> Christ's resurrection as a theme of Romans, repeated often since 1.4, is the chief interest here as the basis of righteousness for all believers (10.9-10; cf. 4.25). The employment of the peculiar language of Deuteronomy 30 in this context certainly invites speculation, and these speculations tend to see Paul's argument diverging into wild, unrelated theological fancies. Yet, Goldberg's reminder that the two halves of the imagery are prob-

46. Humphrey, 'Why Bring the Word Down?', pp. 136-37, also discusses 2 Cor. 2-3 as an expression of Paul's de-emphasis of esoteric knowledge.

47. Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, p. 290; Nygren, *Romans*, p. 381; Barrett, *Romans*, p. 199; Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 288; Cranfield, *Romans*, II, p. 525; Achtemeier, *Romans*, p. 169; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, p. 590. One of the most ardent defenders of this reading is Capes, 'Yahweh', pp. 130-31. He cites 2 Cor. 8.9, Phil. 2.6-11 (see, however, Munck, *Paul*, pp. 87-88), and 1 Cor. 15.47 as other texts that hint at incarnational thinking. Cf. also Jn 3.13-58. Among the Pauline texts, all of which are debated, perhaps the clearest indication (in the undisputed Pauline letters) of Paul's belief in Christ's preexistence, a prerequisite of incarnation, shows through in 1 Cor. 8.6, καὶ εἷς κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστός, δι' οὗ τὰ πάντα καὶ ἡμεῖς δι' αὐτοῦ, which ascribes a responsibility in the creation to Jesus; cf. then Col. 1.15-20.

48. As in 1 Thess. 4.16; cf. Wilckens, *Römer*, pp. 224-25; Thomas C. Rhyne, 'Nomos Dikaiosynes and the Meaning of Romans 10.4', *CBQ* 47 (1985), pp. 486-99; Stuhlmacher, *Romans*, p. 156; Ziesler, *Romans*, p. 261.

49. Michel, *Römer*, p. 328; Kuss, *Römerbrief*, p. 758.

ably best seen as working together rightfully diminishes the value of such speculation.<sup>50</sup> The more tenable contextual inference would simply be to see Christ and Torah equated, and since Torah was increasingly seen in the Jewish traditions of Paul's day as the embodiment of divine Wisdom, so then by extension Christ was the new embodiment of that Wisdom.<sup>51</sup> By this reading, Christ's arrival from the extremes of the cosmos shows he also came from the abode of Wisdom and thus he now represents the divinely-revealed word (v. 8).<sup>52</sup> The immanence of God through Christ's journeys down from heaven and up from the abyss has brought, for Paul's historical-theological sketch in Romans 9–11, the mysterious transcendence of the Creator (9.19-23) into intimate contact with humanity.<sup>53</sup> The bridge between God and humanity supplied by the law was now provided by Christ. Such a transposition supports (γάρ...δέ, vv. 5, 6) the point of 10.4 and the essence of τέλος.

God's immanence in Christ as the near word was then remarkably appropriated by Paul as the 'word of faith which we preach'. In Paul's own preaching of Christ he presents the resurrection and he believes that preaching also participates in its power (1.16-17; cf. 1 Cor. 2.2-4; 1 Thess. 1.5-6). This leads him to equate his preaching with the significance of Christ's arrival as God's newest revelation of divine Wisdom.<sup>54</sup> Therefore, Rom. 10.6-8 subtly contends for the Pauline kerygma as the access to God's power and salvation for all who believe. Paul was pointing out the way for the Jews to move beyond encountering Christ as a stumbling stone towards making him their object of trust and confession. By finishing the quotation of Deuteronomy 30 with 'preaching', Paul echoes וישמענו 'and will teach us' in Deut. 30.12-13. Perhaps his focus on preaching (leading to confession) also motivated his selectivity in the citation's form that omitted the thrice mentioned 'doing' (פוע/ποίηω) in vv. 12-14. Of course, what follows in 10.9-13 builds upon Paul's

50. Goldberg, 'Torah', pp. 130-31.

51. Suggs, "'The Word Is Near You'", pp. 307-308.

52. Leenhardt, *Romans*, p. 269.

53. Another way of expressing this is as Mary Ann Getty, in 'An Apocalyptic Perspective on Rom 10.4', *Horizons* 4 (1982), pp. 79-131 (113-14), says, making righteousness accessible to all humanity. The language of transcendence and immanence is preferred, however, for three reasons: (1) God's implied agency; (2) the issue of the trustworthiness of God's word (9.6); and (3) the connection it maintains with its literary precursors.

54. *Contra* Seifrid, 'Paul's Approach', p. 26.

conciliatory gesture where the ‘you’ is eventually incorporated into the πᾶς.

Finally, these observations allow us to identify the-righteousness-from-faith. As v. 8 ends, ‘this is the word of faith which *we* preach’, the question arises: is it Paul speaking as the narrator or is it the-righteousness-from-faith? The first person plural ‘we’ seems to imply Paul is again speaking, but the ‘you’ of vv. 9-10 would carry on from the speech of the-righteousness-from-faith. Perhaps Paul has subtly picked up the speech, or, just as likely, the transition in v. 8b fuses Paul and the-righteousness-from-faith. This latter possibility is substantiated by the similarity which this passage has with other Pauline texts: Gal. 2.2; Col. 1.23; 1 Thess. 2.9 and 2 Tim. 4.2.<sup>55</sup>

According to this reading, the skillful voicing of vv. 6-8 allows Paul to speak in the prophetic tradition of Moses (Deut. 9), yet simultaneously remove Moses’ written Torah as the focus of God’s salvific activity. It is not enough to say, as Hays does, that Paul’s interest in Deuteronomy 30 was really in v. 14,<sup>56</sup> because the abruptness of this indirect dialogue indicates that Paul first meant to challenge Jewish introspection (‘saying in one’s heart’) that found in Deut. 30.12-14 a proverbial defense of the law and grounds for boasting. The overall transformation is clarified and made comprehensible only in light of this denial of the law. Paul was not sneaking Jesus into Deuteronomy. He strikes out against the differences, effectively subverting the primary position of the law as God’s revealed word, in order to claim positively that Christ was the τέλος νόμου. The continuity between Rom. 10.8 and Deut. 30.14—to which commentators hasten in the hope of redeeming Paul’s exegesis—is achieved only at the cost of denying the fundamental purpose of Deuteronomy 30: supporting the law.<sup>57</sup> Extracting principles from Romans 10 about the transcendence or immanence of God, wisdom theology or God’s gra-

55. Taken from Schlier, *Römerbrief*, p. 312. In light of the parallel between vv. 8 and 17, he also appropriately cites κηρύσσειν Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν in 1 Cor. 1.23; 15.12; 2 Cor. 4.5; 11.4; Phil. 1.15. Together all this shows that the-righteousness-from-faith serves as a mouthpiece for Paul.

56. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*, p. 81; also C.K. Barrett, ‘Romans 9.30–10.21: Fall and Responsibility of Israel’, in L.D. Lorenzi (ed.), *Die Israelfrage nach Röm 9–11* (Rome: St Paul von den Mauern, 1977), pp. 99-121 (117); and Dunn, ‘“Righteousness from the Law”’, p. 224.

57. It is now evident that the phrases begun by τοῦτ’ ἔστιν are more akin to interruptions and rejoinders to an implied exegesis, rather than an explicit exegesis. Certainly, the peshet label is no longer pertinent.

cious election must all be secondary.<sup>58</sup> Again, the attachment Paul has to his Scriptures typifies the transitional role of the law in salvation, for it points to Christ, continues to speak prophetically of Israel's sin, but yet yields its priority to the newest revelation of God. τέλος is a transition, both goal and end.

#### 6. *The Alleged Tension between Romans 10.5 and 10.6-8*

The consensus among scholars reads a contrast between vv. 5 and 6-8, finding the δέ between them as the signal for this. Such a reading results in a surprising conflict between Lev. 18.5 and Deut. 30.12-14, both of which are attributable to Moses and encourage fidelity to the law. Has the apostle made Moses contradict himself?<sup>59</sup> Many scholars have interpreted this contrast as a sign of inspired exegesis that probes deeper than the literal meaning of Deuteronomy 30 (Nygren, Leenhardt, Lindars,<sup>60</sup> Cranfield, Seifrid), or have described it less charitably as simply arbitrary (Windisch),<sup>61</sup> fanciful (Dodd), paradoxical (Barrett), fantastic (Käsemann), or historically outrageous (Hays). Most attribute it to the (alleged) wiles of Jewish midrashic interpretation. Opposing this consensus, a few have tried reading Lev. 18.5 and Deuteronomy 30 in a positive light, rendering δέ as a conjunctive, and alleviating the intertextual tension.<sup>62</sup>

58. Moo's belief that God's graciousness is the main point of Paul's citation is susceptible to this criticism and also represents the weakest (contextual) connection of the three listed above (*Romans*, p. 653).

59. E.P. Sanders answers affirmatively and compares it with other alleged instances in Jewish literature; see his *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1983), pp. 160-61.

60. Barnabas Lindars, *New Testament Apologetic: The Doctrinal Significance of the Old Testament Quotations* (London: SCM Press, 1961). Others are cited above.

61. Hans Windisch, *Paulus und Christus: Ein biblisch-religionsgeschichtlicher Vergleich* (Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament, 24; Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1934).

62. E.g. Walter Kaiser, 'Leviticus and Paul: Do This and You Shall Live (Eternally?)', *JETS* 14 (1971), pp. 26-27; Ragnar Bring, 'Paul and the Old Testament: A Study of the Ideas of Election, Faith and the Law in Paul with Special Reference to Romans 9:30-10:30', *Studia Theologica* 25 (1971), pp. 21-60 (49-50); Toews, 'The Law in Paul's Letter', pp. 246-47; Cranfield, *Romans*, II, pp. 521-22 (although Cranfield finds the contrast between Christ's righteousness and believers' righteousness); Robert Badenas, *Christ the End of the Law: Romans 10.4 in Pauline Perspective* (JSNTSup, 10; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1985), pp. 120-25; Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*, p. 76; seemingly, Johnson, *Function of Apocalyptic and Wisdom Traditions*, p. 157; Lloyd Gaston, *Paul and the Torah* (Vancouver: University of British

In favor of the consensus, several signs of a contrast cannot be ignored. Romans 10.5 participates in an ongoing contrast within Romans between life with the law, for which Paul can no longer be an advocate, and life with Christ. The positive element of the contrast comes in v. 6, which claims to represent the righteousness from faith. Hence v. 6 joins with earlier texts in Romans that examine faith as the key to peace with God in this life and the next. A contrastive style is well at home within Romans 9–11, which is dominated by a binary logic. Furthermore, the difference in ‘writing’ and ‘speaking’ points to a contrast in different strengths of presence, and hence relevance, implying that the righteousness from the law (v. 5) was being distanced from the auditor and that its replacement, righteousness by faith (vv. 6–8), was being brought nearer.

Having defended the consensus, certain significant objections must also be raised against it that could benefit the cause of the minority. First, given Paul’s regard for Moses—who has just been made to *write* a doctrine which Paul cannot support instead of personally *speaking* it, and upon whom Paul will very soon call upon for his authoritative voice (10.19)—would it be reasonable for Paul to be striking up a polemic with Moses with his very own words? Secondly, given the significant verbal and conceptual affinity shared by Lev. 18.5 and Deut. 30.16, would it be likely that Paul chose 30.12–14 to combat the former? Suggs’s article takes this question seriously, resulting in a conjecture that Paul was cornered into using Deut. 30.11–14 because his opponents had found it handy ammunition against his contention with Lev. 18.5.<sup>63</sup> Thirdly, since Deut. 30.12–14 defends the law so that Baruch and Philo could derive great comfort from its meaning, would it be logical and likely that Paul could employ this text in an opposite way without realizing the outrageous results of his argument?

In light of the present reading, however, the objections of the minority are answered and the natural reading of the text is preserved. A contrast indeed exists between vv. 5 and 6, which the  $\delta\acute{\epsilon}$  signifies. Yet, this is not a strong contrast, because that is delayed until v. 8 where Paul inserts  $\alpha\lambda\lambda\acute{\alpha}$ . Therefore, Paul’s countermanding of Leviticus 18 is of no different degree and for no different a motivation than that of Deuter-

Columbia Press, 1987), p. 130; N.T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Thought* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), p. 245; Stowers, *A Rereading of Romans*, p. 308.

63. Suggs, “‘The Word Is Near You’”, p. 304.

onomy 30. Just as Paul has denied the validity of Lev. 18.5, so likewise he must deny the validity of Deut. 30.12-14. In other words, although there is an irreducible contrast between 10.5 and 6, there is no tension between Lev. 18.5 and Deut. 30.12-14 in Romans 10!<sup>64</sup> These intertexts function in a parallel manner, so the perception that the latter is a proof-text for the-righteousness-from-faith must be abandoned. Therefore, this challenges the universal perception that Deut. 30.12-14 in Paul's hands became an affirmation of the-righteousness-from-faith.<sup>65</sup> While the contrast between vv. 5-6 has been preserved, the inexplicable tension between Leviticus 18 and Deuteronomy 30 has been removed without recourse to a 'midrashic' explanation. At v. 6 the contrast is light and δέ may be translated as 'while' or 'now' as a progressive (epochal) contrast, because the deepest contrast is postponed until v. 8 when the-righteousness-from-faith speaks directly.

### 7. *Summary and Conclusions*

In conclusion, the preceding exegesis has argued that the-righteousness-from-faith character stands in for Paul, who desires to win over the Jews to his gospel. The tone is at first confrontational or prophetic (vv. 5-7) before it turns towards encouragement (v. 8). With intriguing creativity and craftsmanship Paul transforms Deuteronomy 30 in a remarkable way. Paul attacks boasting in the law and supplants the law as the greatest expression of God's nearness with Christ and his Gospel. Hanson describes the contrast in vv. 5-8 as being 'between two ways of life', which is correct if the alternatives are understood as life guided by the law versus faith in Christ.<sup>66</sup> The contrast is not between obedience

64. So, analyses of Rom. 10.5-8 that attempt to account for the alleged antinomy from the rules of rabbinic rhetoric miss the mark; see J.S. Vos, 'Die hermeneutische Antinomie bei Paulus (Galater 3.11-12; Römer 10.5-10)', *NTS* 38 (1992), pp. 254-70. Schoeps, *Paul*, pp. 17-78, compares the cancellation of Lev. 18.5 in Gal. 3.12 with the exegetical technique specified in the thirteenth midda of R. Ishmael which requires a third text to settle a contradiction between two other contradictory texts. He does not apply this rule to Rom. 10.5-8, however.

65. A comprehensive listing of commentators would be superfluous; see, e.g., Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, p. 285. Dodd, *Romans*, p. 177, believes Paul was treating it as a prophecy about Christ.

66. Hanson, *Studies in Paul's Technique and Theology*, p. 149.

and faith.<sup>67</sup> These verses rest on the epochal divide typified for Paul by Adam or Moses on the one hand and Christ on the other. Both Leviticus 18 and Deuteronomy 30 stood for the former, so they become a foil to Paul's gospel until he can redefine the immanence of God in Christ and his own preaching as an intertextual bridge between the two. Instead of abetting Israel's presumptive introspection ('saying in one's heart') which relied on texts such as Lev. 18.5 or Deut. 30.12-14 and hoped observance of the law could confirm its place before God, the-righteousness-from-faith claims that Christ is the near-word of God or τέλος νόμου. Moving from parochial introspection to universal confession, Paul describes this near-word in vv. 9-10.

67. Sanders, *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People*, p. 40, says it is not 'righteousness versus anarchy'. He is also right to say that Paul was not denying that 'there is righteousness based on the law, concerning which Moses wrote', yet agreement is not extended here to him when he claims that Deut. 30 proved for Paul that there was 'another righteousness'.