

Paul's Use of Deuteronomy 30:12-14 in Romans 10:6-8

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By  
Daniel J. Fabricatore  
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## INTRODUCTION

The use of the Old Testament in the New is an issue that has garnered the attention of biblical scholars for centuries. In particular, Paul's use of Deuteronomy 30:12-14 in Romans 10:6-8 has become almost infamous among New Testament scholars.<sup>1</sup> Is Paul using Deuteronomy 30:12-14 to show that Moses taught justification by faith as some believe? Or does he allude to Deuteronomy 30 simply because the passage affords him a motif of the availability of God's message? In the latter case, Paul would be then demonstrating that the message of righteousness by faith was within reach of those who heard it, just as in the case of Moses.

Paul's use of Deuteronomy 30:12-14 in Romans 10:6-8 is part of a larger debate as to what New Testament writers are doing with the Old Testament they quote. Are they faithful to the original context and meaning of an Old Testament passage, or have they disregarded the original meaning simply to use the passage for their own purposes? Or perhaps, are they giving new meaning to the passage they cite? These are significant issues that need to be addressed.

The paper will deal first with textual matters, so as to determine what deviations if any, have been made by Paul from either the Hebrew Bible or the Septuagint. Next, Deuteronomy 30:12-14 will be interpreted in light of its own context, followed by an examination of how the passage was viewed by Jewish exegetes. Next, Paul's use of Deuteronomy 30:12-14 in Romans 10:6-8 will be examined. Here it will be attempted to show how Paul uses Deuteronomy in his argument in Romans. A conclusion will sum up the work and state how Paul is using this Old Testament

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<sup>1</sup> Calvin noted on the surface the disturbing nature of Paul's citation when he wrote, "This passage is such as may not a little disturb the reader, and for two reasons -- for it seems to be improperly applied by Paul -- and the words are also turned to a different meaning," *Calvin's Commentaries*, <[http://www.ccel.org/c/calvin/comment3/comm\\_vol\\_38/htm/xiv.ii.htm](http://www.ccel.org/c/calvin/comment3/comm_vol_38/htm/xiv.ii.htm)>, no date. Fitzmyer notes the apparent difficulty, "for in the OT it refers ex professo to the mosaic law, but Paul applies it to the gospel" (*Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Bible 33 [New York: Doubleday, 1993], 588). See appendix 2 for a survey of interpretations.

passage. In addition, two appendices are included. The first one deals with Paul's use of the Old Testament in Romans 9-11, and the second one gives a brief survey of interpretations by various commentators.

## TRANSLATION AND TEXTUAL ISSUES

### *Texts and translation*<sup>2</sup>

#### **Deuteronomy 30:12-14 (MT)**

12 לֹא בַשָּׁמַיִם הוּא לֵאמֹר מִי יַעֲלֶה-לָנוּ הַשָּׁמַיְמָה וְיִקְחֶהָ  
 לָנוּ וְיִשְׁמַעֲנוּ אֹתָהּ וְנִשְׁמָנָה׃  
 13 וְלֹא-מֵעַבֵּר לִיִּם הוּא לֵאמֹר מִי יַעֲבֹר-לָנוּ אֶל-יַעַבְר  
 הַיָּם וְיִקְחֶהָ לָנוּ וְיִשְׁמַעֲנוּ אֹתָהּ וְנִשְׁמָנָה׃  
 14 כִּי-קֵרוֹב אֵלֶיךָ הַדָּבָר מְאֹד בְּפִיךָ וּבִלְבָבְךָ לַעֲשׂוֹת׃

#### **Deuteronomy 30:12-14 (NASB)**

12 “It is not in heaven, that you should say, ‘Who will go up to heaven for us to get it for us and make us hear it, that we may observe it?’ 13 “Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say, ‘Who will cross the sea for us to get it for us and make us hear it, that we may observe it?’ 14 “But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may observe it.

#### **Deuteronomy 30:12-14 (LXX)**

12 οὐκ ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ ἄνω ἐστὶν λεγὼν Τίς ἀναβήσεται ἡμῖν εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ λήμψεται αὐτήν ἡμῖν καὶ ἀκούσαντες αὐτήν ποιήσομεν.  
 13 οὐδὲ πέραν τῆς θαλάσσης ἐστὶν λέγων Τίς διαπεράσει ἡμῖν εἰς τὸ πέραν τῆς θαλάσσης καὶ λήμψεται ἡμῖν αὐτήν καὶ ἀκουστήν ἡμῖν ποιήσει αὐτήν, καὶ ποιήσομεν.  
 14 ἔστιν σου ἐγγὺς τὸ ῥῆμα σφόδρα ἐν τῷ στόματί σου καὶ ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ σου. καὶ ἐν ταῖς χερσίν σου αὐτὸ ποιεῖν.

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<sup>2</sup> Unless otherwise specified, citations from the English Bible are from the *New American Standard Bible* (La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1960).

### Deuteronomy 30:12-14 (LXX translation-Brenton)

12 It is not in heaven above, *as if were one* saying, Who shall go up for us into heaven, and shall take it for us, and we will hear and do it? 13 Neither is it beyond the sea, saying, Who will go over for us, and make it audible to us, and we will do it? 14 The word is very near thee, in thy mouth, and in thine heart, and in thy hands to do it.

### Romans 10:6-8 (NA<sup>26</sup>)

Ἡ δὲ ἐκ πίστεως δικαιοσύνη οὕτως λέγει, Μὴ εἶπῃς ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ σου, Τίς ἀναβήσεται εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν; τοῦτ' ἔστιν Χριστὸν καταγαγεῖν·<sup>7</sup> ἢ, Τίς καταβήσεται εἰς τὴν ἄβυσσον; τοῦτ' ἔστιν Χριστὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναγαγεῖν.<sup>8</sup> ἀλλὰ τί λέγει;  
 Ἐγγύς σου τὸ ῥῆμά ἐστιν,  
 ἐν τῷ στόματί σου καὶ ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ σου·  
 τοῦτ' ἔστιν τὸ ῥῆμα τῆς πίστεως ὃ κηρύσσομεν .

### Romans 10:6-8 (NASB)

6 But the righteousness based on faith speaks thus, “DO NOT SAY IN YOUR HEART, ‘WHO WILL ASCEND INTO HEAVEN?’ (that is, to bring Christ down), 7 or ‘WHO WILL DESCEND INTO THE ABYSS?’ (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).” 8 But what does it say? “THE WORD IS NEAR YOU, in your mouth and in your heart”—that is, the word of faith which we are preaching,

### Textual Issues

In comparing the Masoretic Text (MT) with the Septuagint (LXX) one observes a relatively faithful rendering of the MT by the LXX with the addition of καὶ ἐν ταῖς χερσίν σου (“and in thy hands”) in verse 14.<sup>3</sup> The larger textual issues are in regard to how Paul is using Deuteronomy 30:12-14 in Romans 10:6-8.

There is some debate as to whether Paul is quoting Deuteronomy 30:12-14 or simply alluding to it.<sup>4</sup> Dunn makes the point that Paul is clearly citing the passage in order to expound it based on

<sup>3</sup> Paul does not pick up this phrase in Romans 10:6-8.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Ernst Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, trans. and ed. by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 284; and James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, Word Biblical Commentary, 38B (Dallas: Word, 1988), 602-3 for a list of scholars divided over this question.

a comparison of the LXX and Paul’s citation, stating, “the text is too close to that of the Deut passage to be accidental.”<sup>5</sup> The comparison is cited below:

| <i>Deuteronomy</i>                                                                                                                                                                                              | <i>Romans</i>                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>...τίς ἀναβήσεται ἡμῖν<br/>εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν . . . ;<br/>τίς διαπεράσει ἡμῖν εἰς<br/>τὸ πέραν τῆς θαλάσσης . . . ;<br/>ἔστιν σου ἐγγύς τὸ ῥῆμα<br/>σφόδρα ἐν τῷ στόματί σου<br/>καὶ ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ σου . . .</p> | <p>τίς ἀναβήσεται<br/>εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν; . . .<br/>τίς καταβήσεται εἰς τὴν<br/>ἄβυσσον; . . .<br/>ἐγγύς σου τὸ ῥῆμα ἐστίν<br/>ἐν τῷ στόματι σου<br/>καὶ ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ σου . . .</p> |

While it may be true that Paul has certainly cited the text of Deuteronomy, Dunn has not yet established that he did so “to explain and expound it.”<sup>6</sup> There are other possibilities for his having used the passage.<sup>7</sup> In addition, not all agree that the citing of Deuteronomy 30:12-14 by Paul in Romans 10:6-8 is an explicit quotation.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Dunn, *Romans*, 9-16, 603.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> See appendix 2, “Interpretations of Deuteronomy 30:12-14 in Romans 10:6-8.”

<sup>8</sup> D. Moody Smith argues that this passage is a good example over the divide between explicit quotation and allusion. He notes, “A good specimen illustrating the fact that the line between allusion and explicit quotation is not hard and fast is Rom. 10:6-8, where much of the language of Deut. 9:4 (or 8:17) and 30:12-14 is used verbatim. Yet Paul seems to exercise great freedom as well, to delete whole phrases, to change words, and indeed to change the subject. Whereas Deut. 30:12-14 is spoken about the commandment (ἐντολή, i.e. the law), Rom. 10:6-8 has to do with the righteousness of faith made available through Christ. . . The switch from Law to Christ is certainly surprising, but not capricious or arbitrary, as Cranfield (1975, p. 524f) has rightly pointed out. That Paul should present Christ as torah, or its replacement, is in itself exceedingly significant. Paul understands Christ as torah in the general sense of God’s revelation of his righteousness, whether or not a more specific, Jewish expectation lies behind his statements (Davies, 1952). Although Rom. 10:6-8 is usually reckoned as an instance in which Paul is citing Scripture, and Paul was no doubt conscious of his use of the language of Deuteronomy, it nicely illustrates how explicit use of Scripture can shade over into the appropriation of the revelatory language of Scripture to describe God’s new revelation. Probably Paul’s choice of a unique introductory formula (‘ the righteousness of faith says’) indicates his awareness that he is departing from his normal use of Scripture” (“The Pauline literature,” in *It is*

An old and strong argument that Paul is simply alluding to Deuteronomy 30:12-14 to make his point comes from Sanday and Headlam. They argue from certain considerations that Paul “does not intend to base any argument on the quotation from the O. T., but only selects the language as being familiar, suitable, and proverbial, in order to express what he wishes to say.”<sup>9</sup> Suggs argues that there are historically two main arguments from those who doubt that Paul meant this reference to Deuteronomy 30:12-14 to be taken as a quotation. The first is because of the divergence from the text in 10:7a (i.e. *θαλάσσης* to *ἄβυσσον*), and the other is that it is neither Moses nor the Scripture that speaks, but the righteousness based on faith in 10:6a.<sup>10</sup> For instance, Barrett notes in support of the first objection that Paul’s “freedom suggests that he is not using his quotation as a rigid proof of what he asserts, but as a rhetorical form. The variation in the quotation was no doubt suggested by the interpretation of the previous clause.”<sup>11</sup> The second objection that Paul states (that it was not Moses or the Scriptures, but the righteousness of

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*Written: Scripture Citing Scripture*, eds. D. A. Carson and H. G. M. Williamson [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988], 266).

<sup>9</sup> William Sanday and Arthur Headlam, *The Epistle to the Romans*, edited by S. R. Driver, A. Plummer, and C. A. Briggs, 5th edition, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1895), 289. The consideration that leads them to this conclusion is five fold:

(1) The context of the passage shows that there is no stress laid on the fact that the O. T. is being quoted. The object of the argument is to describe the characteristics of *δικαιοσύνη ἐκ πίστεως*, not to show how it can be proved from the O. T.

(2) The Apostle carefully and pointedly avoids appealing to Scripture, altering his mode of citation from that employed in the previous verse...

(3) The quotation is singularly inexact. An ordinary reader fairly well acquainted with the O. T. would feel that the language had a familiar ring, but could not count it as a quotation.

(4) The words had certainly become proverbial, and many instances of them so used have been quoted...

(5) St. Paul certainly elsewhere uses the words of Scripture in order to express his meaning in familiar language, cf. ver. 18; xi. i.

<sup>10</sup> M. Jack Suggs, “‘The Word is Near You’: Romans 10:6-10 Within the Purpose of the Letter,” in *Christian History and Interpretation: Studies Presented to John Knox*, eds. W. R. Farmer, C. F. D. Moule, and R. R. Niebuhr (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 300-1.

<sup>11</sup> C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, Black’s New Testament Commentaries (London: A. & C. Black, 1957), 199.



faith that speaks) is what so influenced Sanday and Headlam.<sup>12</sup> Suggs rejects these reasons, arguing that “such an argument would be more significant if there were good reasons for regarding ‘the righteousness based on faith’ as anything other than a rhetorical personification.”<sup>13</sup>

Paul in fact departs from the MT and LXX in a number of ways. First, by stating in verse 6 *μὴ εἶπης ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ σου* as his citing of the Old Testament, Paul is not referring to Deuteronomy 30:12-14 but Deuteronomy 9:4. Paul has omitted what one would have expected, namely, *οὐκ ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ ἄνω ἐστὶν λέγων*, and substituted this opening phrase from Deuteronomy 9:4.<sup>14</sup> However the fact that Paul cites Deuteronomy 9:4 instead of material from chapter 30 does not mean that he has incorrectly cited the Old Testament. Paul then breaks away from Deuteronomy 9:4 and begins to quote the question from Deuteronomy 30:12, ending his quote with *οὐρανόν* while omitting the pronoun *ἡμῖν*. He then gives us the first of three “this is...” (*τοῦτ’ ἐστὶν*) statements that he apparently equates with Christ’s incarnation.

In verse 7 Paul then proceeds to quote from Deuteronomy 30:13, stating, *τίς καταβήσεται εἰς τὴν ἄβυσσον*. There are two textual issues here. First, he substitutes *καταβήσεται* (“go down,” “descend”) for the LXX *διαπεράσει* (“go over”) and the MT *קָבַץ* (“cross over”). Next, Paul substitutes *ἄβυσσον* (“abyss”) for the LXX *θαλάσσης* (“sea”) and the MT *יָם* (“sea”).<sup>15</sup> He equates this action (*τοῦτ’ ἐστὶν*) with Christ’s resurrection from the dead.

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<sup>12</sup> Sanday and Headlam, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 289.

<sup>13</sup> Suggs, “‘The Word is Near You’: Romans 10:6-10,” 301.

<sup>14</sup> C. E. B. Cranfield makes the observation that Romans 10:6a is the reproduction of not one but two passages in Deuteronomy. He notes that *μὴ εἶπης ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ σου* “reproduces exactly the opening words of two verses of the LXX version of Deuteronomy (8:17 and 9:4)” (*A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, ICC [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1975, 1979], 2:523).

Then in verse 8 Paul does two interesting things with the text. First, he keeps two Greek words intact from the LXX rendering of Deuteronomy 30:14 (ἐγγύς... ῥῆμα). Next, he keeps closer to the MT than the LXX in terms of content. He omits the phrase καὶ ἐν ταῖς χερσίν σου that the LXX has added to the MT, and also omits σφόδρα (“very”) which both the MT (פְּרָאָה) and LXX contain. Paul ends his quote of Deuteronomy 30:14 with καρδία σου, choosing to omit αὐτὸ ποιεῖν contained in the LXX which is also reflected in the MT (וַיִּשְׁמַע). Paul equates (τοῦτ’ ἔστιν) these truths in the Old Testament to the preaching of the word of faith.

### *Conclusion*

In Romans 10:6-8 Paul has referred primarily to Deuteronomy 30:12-14. His rendering of the text from this passage captures the main sense, containing a few minor alterations consisting of omission and word changes. In making his arguments in 10:6-8, Paul has introduced Deuteronomy 30:12-14 with a phrase from Deuteronomy 9:4 before making comments on these three verses. His comments on Deuteronomy 30:12-14 have taken on the form of three interpretive phrases (τοῦτ’ ἔστιν) that equate the three verses to three respective events from the New Testament.

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<sup>15</sup> Joseph A. Fitzmyer argues that Paul’s citation in verse 7 is not from Deuteronomy 30:13 but an allusion from Psalm 107:26 (“they go down to the abyss”) which Paul then “substitutes for the crossing of the seas in Deut 30:13” (*Romans*, 590). This is possible but unlikely. The immediate context of Ps. 107:26 has nothing else in it that Paul needs for his argument.

## DEUTERONOMY 30:12-14 IN ITS OLD TESTAMENT CONTEXT

### *The context of Deuteronomy 30:12-14*

The book of Deuteronomy contains four major messages from Moses to the people of Israel (1:5-4:43; 4:44-26:19; 27:1-29:1; 29:2-30:20).<sup>16</sup> The first message (1:5-4:43) is an historical account chronicling God's mighty acts on Israel's behalf as well as an exhortation to obey. The second message (4:44-26:19) basically stipulates Israel's covenantal responsibilities and includes commands, warnings, and laws to follow. The third message from Moses (27:1—29:1) calls Israel to covenant renewal once they entered the Promised Land.

Deuteronomy 30:12-14 is found in the last of these four messages, as Moses summarizes the covenant demands (29:2-30:10) and then charges the people (30:11-20).<sup>17</sup> In this fourth message, Moses reviews the ramifications of what is sometimes referred to as the Palestinian Covenant. Israel's possession of the land promised to Abraham and his descendants was based on an obedient life. Were Israel to live before God in disobedience, she could expect to be disciplined and even exiled (28:15-68; 29:26-28). However, were they to return to God with all their heart, He would restore them to the land (30:1-5). This much is somewhat straightforward. What is sometimes overlooked is the rest of chapter 30. While 30:1-5 deals with the nation, 30:6-10 tends

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<sup>16</sup> For discussion and various outlines of the composition of Deuteronomy, see P. C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 20-4, and Ian Cairns, *Word and Presence: A Commentary on the Book of Deuteronomy*, ITC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 2-11.

<sup>17</sup> Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, 354. Craigie does a good job of presenting the context of the final address of Moses to the people. Particularly helpful is the effort spent showing how Moses in this address gives a review of the themes already discussed in the entire book. See chart on p. 363 in reference to the immediate context of Deuteronomy 30:1-10.

to move toward the individual. Here it is seen that the grace of God would deal with man's basic spiritual problem. God would circumcise their hearts.<sup>18</sup>

There are many issues at work here in 30:1-10. In 30:1-5 Moses is dealing with the restoration of Israel to the promised land after the blessings and curses spelled out in chapter 29. This was a message echoed by the later prophets (Jer. 30:18; Joel 3:1) and seems to point to the kingdom when all of God's promises to Abraham (and later David) are fulfilled. As to the timing of this circumcision of the heart, this too seems prophetic (30:6) with likely ties to the New Covenant (Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 36:24-32). For now, however, it is enough to state that the message is to Israel and that it is this context that Paul draws upon in Romans 10:6-8.

#### *The interpretation of Deuteronomy 30:12-14*

In 30:12 Moses states, "It is not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will go up to heaven for us to get it for us and make us hear it, that we may observe it?'" The identity of the four-fold reference to "it" in verse 12 is found in verse 11.<sup>19</sup> In other words, what "is not in heaven" is "this commandment" (לְאִלֹּהִים לְשָׁמְרָם) referred to in verse 11. This commandment found in verse 11 is actually the call to obey all the "commandments" (לְכָל הַצִּוִּיּוֹת) and "statutes" (לְכָל הַחֻקִּים) in the book of the Law (30:10). The promises in 30:6-9 were made in conjunction with such obedience. Moses writes in 30:10-11:

10 if you obey the LORD your God to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in this book of the law, if you turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and soul.

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<sup>18</sup> What is so fascinating about this is that in his epistle to the Romans when Paul was showing that all men are condemned before God (1:18-3:20), Paul argued this very point regarding the Jews who also stood condemned before God. What God was always after with them was not a circumcision of the flesh, but of the heart (2:17-29).

<sup>19</sup> These four references in verse 12 are the two uses of the feminine singular personal pronoun אֵיךְ and the two qal imperfect verbs (לְשָׁמְרָם, לְשָׁמְרָם) each with the third person feminine singular suffix. These are related to the feminine noun in verse 11, "commandment" (צִוִּיּוֹת).

11 “For this commandment which I command you today is not too difficult for you, nor is it out of reach.

This is why Moses can say in 30:12 that there is no need to go up to heaven to retrieve the law, since it isn’t there.<sup>20</sup> On the contrary, “it is not too difficult” to access. In other words, it is not “out of reach.”<sup>21</sup> One will not have a difficult task to “observe it” (וְלִשְׁמֹרָתוֹ).<sup>22</sup> In this sense, what Moses has stated in verse 11 is a summary introduction to what follows in 30:12-14. This commandment, this word from God is “not too difficult for you, nor is it out of reach.” The proof of this is in verses 12-14.

In 30:13 the same form is kept in dealing with the next potential obstacle.<sup>23</sup> Moses adds of this commandment (30:10-11), “Nor is it beyond the sea” (וְלֹא־מֵעַבְרַת לָיָם). While the concept of “sea” is often associated with the netherworld in Near Eastern literature<sup>24</sup> as well as in

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<sup>20</sup> Craigie cross references the obscure reference of the Shepherd-King Etana of the Sumerian king list, “who ascended to heaven” (ANET, 265) and offers that the text of 30:12 may imply “criticism of views held sacred in other Near Eastern religions at that time” (*The Book of Deuteronomy*, 365). There seems to be no such implication observable from the Hebrew text to this writer. Obviously the readers of Moses may have been familiar with such a reality in their day, but one that has been lost to us.

<sup>21</sup> Matthew Black argues that the purpose of Deuteronomy 30:11-14 “was to meet the objection that the Mosaic code was impossible to keep; it is *not* something so far removed from reality that human nature cannot realize it.” *Romans*, The New Century Bible Commentary, 2d ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973), 143.

<sup>22</sup> This common Old Testament verb (שָׁמַר) is used in all three verses under consideration here. It has the sense to “keep” or “obey,” hence, “to observe” (by obedience). The major change is in verse 14 when the third person singular suffix is changed to masculine from feminine to agree with the shift from “commandment” to “word” (דְּבַר).

<sup>23</sup> In both verses (30:12, 13) the major structure of the form is kept. All that is different are those words needed to define the two extremes of location; “heaven” (to go up) and “sea” (to cross).

<sup>24</sup> A. Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia: Portrait of a Dead Civilization*, rev. ed. by Erica Reiner (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), 23. In the Gilgamesh’s conversation with the barmaid it is clear that “sea” refers to the place of the dead. This is seen in Tablet xii 16-21, 25-27:

[Now], barmaid, which is the way to Utnapi [shtim]?  
 What are the directions? Give me, oh, give me the directions!  
 If it is possible, (even) the sea will I cross!  
 (But) if it is not possible, I will roam over the steppe.  
 .....  
 And deep are the waters of death, which bar it approaches.

the Old Testament,<sup>25</sup> and also makes a wonderful contrast to heaven (v. 12), the emphasis seems to be on crossing the sea implying a long journey. In other words, the commandment is not across the sea, so that as Moses asks, “Who will cross the sea for us to get it for us and make us hear it, that we may observe it?” If sea were a reference to Sheol one might have expected the verb “descend”/“go down” (יָרַד) instead of יָצָא. As a result, just as there is no need to go up to heaven to retrieve the Law, so too there is no need to cross the sea to acquire it. As it will be shown, this runs contrary to Wisdom literature and the thought by some that Paul is reaching into Jewish exegesis that commented on this passage through the lens of Wisdom tradition. It is clear that the emphasis in Wisdom literature is that wisdom is difficult to attain while both Moses and Paul stress the nearness and accessibility to the word from God.

In 30:14 Moses gives the reason why these two obstacles, heaven and sea, need not be overcome. It is because as Moses writes, “the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may observe it.” The “word” (דְּבַר) is the “commandment” of verse 11 which is in effect the entire law of commandments and statutes of 30:10.<sup>26</sup> How near is it? It is “in your mouth and in your heart.”<sup>27</sup> The fact that the word is “in your mouth and in your heart” stresses for Cairns the fact that it was a constant presence in their lives. He notes, “‘It is in your mouth’ - first at the liturgical reading in the context of centralized festival, and again at home, in the process of catechizing the family. It is also ‘in the heart’ here in the sense of a dynamic

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Where, Gilgamesh, wilt thou cross the sea?  
(And) when thou arrivest at the waters of death...

<sup>25</sup> See for instance Jonah’s prayer where in 2:3, 5-6 he equates the sea with the place of death. See also Job 28:12-14 and Psalm 70:20.

<sup>26</sup> It would seem that the emphasis in Moses’ instruction about the ‘word’ is on its proximity. The construction of the phrase argues for this; lit. “for near to you the word.” As it will be seen, this may be Paul’s emphasis as well.

<sup>27</sup> These figures of speech, “mouth” and “heart” are likely metonymy of ‘cause for effect’ and ‘subject for its attribute’ respectively. Mouth refers to man’s speaking and heart to his inner man.

remembering, which shapes and motivates current behavior.”<sup>28</sup> The terms “mouth” and “heart” will play a crucial role in Paul’s use of this passage in Romans 10.

The purpose for having the word (commandment) this near is “that you may observe it.” The word can easily be obeyed. It is not a word that is hard to find or difficult to keep. It is no “esoteric or eschatological ethic incapable of being practiced. It is within the capacity of ordinary people here and now.”<sup>29</sup> Moses then follows up the nearness of the word of God to be obeyed with a call to obedience in 30:15-20. What is so interesting here is that when Paul uses this passage to make his point about the proximity of the gospel in Romans 10:6-8, he too follows up with a call to action, namely that of saving faith (Rom. 10:9-15).

While it is obvious that Paul uses this passage to discuss his point regarding justification by faith, it does not appear that this is what Moses is discussing here in Deuteronomy 30:12-14. At best Moses is addressing the issue of an ethical righteousness, namely, what God expected of his covenant people. Therefore to see in this passage the doctrine of justification by faith would be to read Paul’s theology into the passage.

#### *Summary of Deuteronomy 30:12-14*

God had given his people the Mosaic Law by which to live. When they obeyed the Law they would experience rich blessing, and when they disobeyed they could expect to be punished. A promise of blessing included a renewed heart for the individual believer in the future. The word that they needed to obey was a word very near to them. It was not beyond their ability to obey it since it was on their lips and in their hearts. In other words, the word of God which they needed

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<sup>28</sup> Cairns, *Word and Presence*, 265.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

to trust was in their midst. It was a word that was very accessible, and obedience to this word from God would result in their blessing.

### DEUTERONOMY 30:12-14 IN ITS JEWISH EXEGETICAL TRADITION

There are many comments on this passage in Deuteronomy in the literature of Judaism. The Targums for instance make interesting comments upon Deuteronomy 30:12-14. What one sees is that Moses and his relationship to the Law is the center of attention. In commenting on this passage, Targum Neophyti 1 states,

12 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 and fetch for us, and make us hear *the commandments* that we might do them.

13 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.

14 For the word is very near you, in *the words* of your mouths and in your hearts, that you may do it.<sup>30</sup>

The one interesting addition in this Targum is the need for one like Jonah the prophet to descend into the sea in verse 13. It would seem in this case that Jewish exegetes saw in the reference to the sea a contrast to the ascension to heaven mentioned in verse 12.

One of the most fascinating comments on Deuteronomy 30:12-14 is tied to Jewish speculation about Wisdom and her roles as “creatrix, revealer, and redeemer.”<sup>31</sup> Though not all

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<sup>30</sup> Alejandro Diez Macho, ed., *Neophyti 1: Targum Palestinense Ms de la Biblioteca Vaticana*, V Deuteronomy (Madrid: Consejo Superior De Investigaciones Cientificas, 1978), 554. [Italics mine to show major departures from the Hebrew text].

<sup>31</sup> Suggs, “‘The Word is Near You’: Romans 10:6-10,” 304.



the intricacies of Wisdom speculation would have been available,<sup>32</sup> there was enough material that would have been available to him.<sup>33</sup> In Baruch 3:29-30 it is asked concerning Wisdom,

‘Who has gone up into heaven and taken her,  
and brought her down from the clouds?  
Who has gone over the sea and found her,  
and will buy her for pure gold?’

It is against this backdrop of Wisdom literature that many believe Paul cites Deuteronomy 30:12-14. As Seifrid notes, “It is the common reference to Deut 10:12,13 in Baruch 3:29,30 and Rom 10:6-8 that has been cited as evidence of pauline dependence on ‘Wisdom.’”<sup>34</sup> Bruce goes so far as to say that,

It may be that Paul was already familiar with an interpretation of the Deuteronomy passage which facilitated his application of it to the gospel. If he had been accustomed to see in this passage a reference to wisdom (it is referred to wisdom in Baruch iii. 29 f.), then Paul, for whom Christ was the wisdom of God (cf. I Cor. i. 24, 30), could readily have given it a Christian interpretation.<sup>35</sup>

Seifrid however goes on to note that such affinities are no proof of pauline dependence on Wisdom traditions. He writes, “The suggestive similarities (to modern minds, in any case) of these formulations with Rom 10:6-8 and with pauline christology are obvious, but in themselves

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid. See also F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans*, The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963), 204.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 305-8, where Suggs offers the following four motifs that fit this criteria: (1) The Old Testament probably preserves traces of an old myth of a primal man who sat in the council of God and possessed divine wisdom (e.g. Job 15:7-8)... (2) Skeptical sages denied the accessibility of wisdom to men, frequently using terms like ‘heaven’, ‘deep’, ‘sea’, etc., to express the idea that wisdom cannot be attained... (3) An important element in the complex tradition is the personified figure of Wisdom who appears repeatedly in Prov. 1-9 and frequently in later literature. In this form, Wisdom is assigned a special status in relation to creation (the first of God’s works [Prov. 8:22 ff.], co-worker with God in creation [Prov. 8:30?, Wisd. of Sol. 9:1 ff.]). She dwells ‘in high places’ (Ecclus 24:4) and ‘sits by God’s throne’ (Wisd. of Sol. 9:4)... (4) The definition of Wisdom in terms of Law.

<sup>34</sup> Mark A. Seifrid, “Paul’s Approach to the Old Testament in Rom 10:6-8,” *TrinJ* 6 NS (1985): 21.

<sup>35</sup> Bruce, *Romans*, 304.

they do not establish a pauline dependence on ‘wisdom’ traditions.”<sup>36</sup> It would seem, perhaps, that the main point to be made in all this (and which is lacking) is that Wisdom literature is arguing for just the opposite as Moses and Paul. In other words, while Wisdom is difficult to attain, both the word of the Law (Deut. 30) and the word preached (Rom. 10) is not far away, but very near. While the imagery between Deuteronomy 30 and Baruch is close, there is no real evidence that Paul himself is drawing upon such Wisdom literature.

Other commentaries on this passage also attempt to show the completeness of the Law.<sup>37</sup> In these examples what is clear is that Jewish exegetes saw the adequacy of God’s revelation to his people.<sup>38</sup>

### **DEUTERONOMY 30:12-14 IN ROMANS 10:6-8**

#### *Paul’s use of the Old Testament in general*

Paul’s exegesis of Old Testament texts is unique in the way he relates his usage to both Jewish and Gentile settings. E. Earle Ellis notes,

Paul’s exegesis fits into a pattern which, when properly understood, forms a cogent and systematic whole. Even the more difficult passages take their place in the pattern when they are considered from the apostle’s point of view. Paul was a profound thinker and the OT was one subject on which his thought was in orderly array.<sup>39</sup>

D. Moody Smith’s opinion of Paul’s use of the Old Testament is a bit more flexible though not in contradiction of the Old Testament. He writes,

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<sup>36</sup> Seifrid, “Paul’s Approach,” 20-21. Seifrid goes on to demonstrate through an examination of Baruch that Paul stands close to Deuteronomy than Baruch (22).

<sup>37</sup> See C. G. Montefiore and H. Loewe, *A Rabbinic Anthology* (New York: Schocken Books, 1974), 157-58.

<sup>38</sup> For a much more detailed interaction of the use of Deuteronomy 30:12-14 in rabbinic literature, see Seifrid’s article, “Paul’s Approach,” 19-25.

<sup>39</sup> E. Earle Ellis, *Paul’s Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957), 114.

As far as Paul's use of the OT is concerned, he engages in ethical application, typology, allegory, and thinks in the categories of promise and fulfillment. But none of the above exhausts or gets at the essence of his use of the OT in crucial passages such as Romans 9-11, Romans 4, or Galatians 3. Precisely at such points Paul's understanding of history and appropriation of the OT, stand in mutually supportive relation. Ethical application, typology, allegory and promise/prophesy and fulfillment do not necessarily negate or deny history, but neither do they take its distinctive character and uniqueness into account as ingredient, essential, and indeed indispensable to the meaning of the OT. If Paul intends to do that, he cannot be satisfied to stay within those methods, and he does not.<sup>40</sup>

Longenecker holds that Paul's use of the Old Testament is christological in nature. Paul starts with Scripture, but he eventually uses it through the lens of Christ. He writes,

Together with the earliest Jewish believers in Jesus, Paul understood the Old Testament christologically. And he worked from the same two fixed points: (1) the messiahship and lordship of Jesus, as validated by the resurrection and witnessed to by the Spirit; and (2) the revelation of God in the Jewish Scriptures. But though in his own experience a true understanding of Christ preceded a proper understanding of Scripture, in his exegetical endeavors he habitually began with Scripture and moved on to Christ.<sup>41</sup>

Sanday and Headlam dedicate somewhat of an excursus in their commentary regarding Paul's use of the Old Testament. They argue that he tends to use the Old Testament in one of three literal ways; (1) in a way that corresponds to the Old Testament meaning (the most common use); (2) using the language of an Old Testament passage without definite specifically citing the passage; and (3) where the words of a text are used that cannot possibly be the meaning of the original context.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Smith, "The Pauline literature," in *It is Written*, 279-80. See also Smith's article, "The Use of the Old Testament in the New," in *The Use of the Old Testament on the New and Other Essays: Studies in Honor of William Franklin Stinespring*, ed. by James M. Efird (Durham, N. C.: Duke University Press, 1972), 36-40.

<sup>41</sup> Richard N. Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period*, 2d ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 89.

<sup>42</sup> Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, 303-4.

*Paul's use of the Old Testament in Romans 9-11*<sup>43</sup>

Paul's use of the Old Testament in this section of Romans is reminiscent of his use in other books. He cites the Old Testament for factual data, to prove a point, to illustrate and to offer praise. There is no one reoccurring way that he uses the Old Testament that might confirm his use of Deuteronomy 30:12-14.

*The Context of Romans 10:6-8*

As noted, Romans 10:6-8 is found in the broader section of Romans 9-11 where Paul is arguing for the vindication of God. D. Moody Smith comments that Paul's own use of Romans 9-11 is "indissolubly wedded to his own concept of history as the arena of God's salvation, whether past or present."<sup>44</sup> There has been much ink spilled over the nature of Romans 9-11 with some seeing it as a part of the logical outworking of Paul's theological thought,<sup>45</sup> a "postscript" to Romans 1-8,<sup>46</sup> as well as an excursus that is in reality an independent work of Paul that was later used in the epistle.<sup>47</sup> Cranfield actually calls the difficulties "notorious."<sup>48</sup> Seifrid however argues for their place as part of Paul's original work to the Romans. He writes that in spite of

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<sup>43</sup> See Appendix 1 for a summary treatment of Paul's use of the Old Testament in Romans 9-11.

<sup>44</sup> D. Moody Smith, "The Pauline Literature", 279.

<sup>45</sup> Cranfield, *Romans*, 2:445-450.

<sup>46</sup> D. Martin Lloyd-Jones, *Romans: The Final Perseverance of the Saints. An Exposition of Chapter 8:17-39*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), 367.

<sup>47</sup> C. H. Dodd, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1932), 150. Dodd states, "In other words, chaps. ix-xi. do not constitute a mere interpolation; though, on the other hand, they were very likely not written *currente calamo* with the rest of the epistle, but represent a somewhat earlier piece of work, incorporated here wholesale to save a busy man's time and trouble in writing on the subject afresh." Many do in fact see Romans as a compilation of sermons.

<sup>48</sup> Cranfield, *Romans*, 2:445.

many different attempts to break up Romans into various parts that existed independently of each other, there is evidence for cohesion of the entire epistle. He notes,

It is not difficult to discern a unifying thread that runs through the entire book. Throughout the epistle, the question of the relationship of Paul's gospel to the revelation already given to the Jewish nation receives attention. Paul claims that his gospel was promised beforehand through the prophets (1:2,5,13-16; 2:9-11,28-29; 3:2,21,28-29; 4:11,23,24). This theme takes on special force in 9-11, not only in the numerous citations of the Old Testament text, but also in the development of the question of God's faithfulness is briefly stated in 3:3,4 (cf. 9:6-9; 11:25-32), and in chaps. 9-11 this question of the relation of Paul's gospel to the previous revelation is picked up and developed (cf. 9:24-33; 10:11-13).<sup>49</sup>

Paul has anticipated the argument that God is somehow culpable for Israel's rejection of the justification that comes by faith (Romans 1-8). He had argued in chapters 1-8 for the justification of the sinner before God by faith alone in Christ alone. After writing his introduction in 1:1-17 that declared the theme of the epistle, namely, that being right with God was by faith, Paul set out to validate this very point. He began in 1:18-3:20 to show first that all men were condemned and needed to be justified before God. Included in this condemnation were Jews, Gentiles, moralists, or in other words, all men. Then in 3:21-5:21 Paul defined justification: All who believe acquire a right standing with God (3:21-31). Paul illustrated this fact in chapter 4 with the examples of Abraham and David. The results of this justification are found in chapter 5 where believing sinners have peace with God through the substitutionary work of Christ on their behalf. In chapters 6-8 Paul then dealt with sanctification and how this justification affects the believing sinner. He showed that because of justification, the believer could say no to sin and yes to righteousness (chapter 6), but could not do so in his own strength (chapter 7). What is needed is the work of the Spirit of God to empower the believer (chapter 8). Paul has demonstrated that God is capable of saving the sinner (chapters 1-8). What happens next in chapters 9-11 is that

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<sup>49</sup> Seifrid, "Paul's Approach," 4.

Paul anticipates the above-mentioned objection to his treatise. Paul's argument in chapters 9-11 is that even though the nation as a whole rejected it, God is still just. There was a remnant of Israel that was justified so Israel's hardening was partial and not complete. In addition, Israel's hardening is not final, but temporary.

In 9:1-29, Paul is considering the case of Israel's rejection, showing in 9:1-13 that Israel's rejection is not inconsistent with God's promises. God had proven his favor toward Israel in making her his chosen people (9:1-5). The fact of divine election is illustrated in 9:6-13 with God's choice of Jacob over Esau. In 9:14-29 Paul shows that Israel's rejection is not inconsistent with God's justice in that God was saving some by mercy. He did indeed leave a remnant, so that Israel's rejection is partial and not complete.

The section in Romans 9:30-10:21, in which the Old Testament quote of Deuteronomy 30:12-14 is found, deals with the fact that Israel was guilty for her own rejection of the righteousness that comes by faith.<sup>50</sup> Paul states both their refusal in 9:30-31 and the reason for it in 9:32-33. Israel's refusal of the righteousness that comes by faith is clear from 9:30-31:

30 What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is by faith; 31 but Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, did not arrive at *that* law.

The reason for this is also evident from Paul's point of view as seen in 9:32-33:

32 Why? Because *they did not pursue it* by faith, but as though *it were* by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone, 33 just as it is written,

“BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE,  
AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED.”

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<sup>50</sup> Doug Moo actually calls this section an “excursus” of Paul's argument in chapters 9-11 (*The Epistle to the Romans*, NICNT, [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996], 618). This is interesting in that chapters 9-11 are seen by many in a similar way in light of the whole book. In that sense it would be an excursus within an excursus.

Then, after declaring his concern for their plight in 10:1 that they needed imputed righteousness, Paul notes that Israel was ignorant of God's demands regarding righteousness (10:2-4), demands that were rooted in their own Scriptures (10:5-8). While Israel was pursuing a righteousness that comes by works of the law (9:31), their Messiah Jesus Christ was the end or goal of the law that they pursued.

The implications of Romans 10:4 on Romans 10:6-8 cannot be overstated.<sup>51</sup> It is to 10:4 that Paul draws support in making his point in 10:6-8.<sup>52</sup> In 10:4 Paul states that Christ is the “end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes” (τέλος...νόμου Χριστὸς εἰς δικαιοσύνην παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι). There are three major issues to be resolved in this verse: (1) the meaning of τέλος, (2) the syntactical relationship between the prepositional phrase εἰς δικαιοσύνην παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι to what has preceded, and (3) the meaning of νόμου.<sup>53</sup>

It makes sense to first decide what “law” Paul has in mind since it is to this concept that Christ is the τέλος. The meaning of νόμος is debated. Many see the use here as pertaining to the Mosaic Law.<sup>54</sup> The context of this verse strongly argues for being related to at least the Old Testament in broad terms.<sup>55</sup> In addition, the entire section of Romans 9-11 has several references

<sup>51</sup> C. F. D. Moule calls Romans 10:4 “one of the most hotly debated passages in the Pauline epistles” (*Essays in New Testament Interpretation* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982], 273). Cf. Robert Badenas, *Christ the End of the Law: Romans 10.4 in Pauline Perspective*, JSNTS (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1985), who states that “The exegesis of Rom 10.4 is a highly problematic task” (81).

<sup>52</sup> Anthony J. Guerra calls Romans 10:5-13 the “proof from Scripture for the bold assertion of 10.4,” namely that Christ is the *telos* of the law (*Romans and the Apologetic Tradition: The Purpose, Genre, and Audience of Paul's Letter*. Society For New Testament Studies, Monograph Series 81 [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995], 151).

<sup>53</sup> Moo, *Romans*, 636. These are somewhat clear issues for most New Testament scholars. Cf. Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 379-80.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. Cranfield, *Romans*, 2:516; Moo, *Romans*, 636; Morris, *Romans*, 380. Strong evidence for this is that in the next verse Paul is citing Moses.

to Old Testament passages from the Pentateuch itself.<sup>56</sup> Another argument is that law here is law in general or as a principle.<sup>57</sup> Here it is sometimes argued that νόμος cannot be the Mosaic law because it lacks the definite article.<sup>58</sup> However this argument is weak since anarthrous nouns sometimes are definite.<sup>59</sup> As a matter of fact, the Mosaic law is sometimes indicated without the article.<sup>60</sup> For these reasons, including the fact that Paul in the very next verse declares the explanation<sup>61</sup> for what Moses has written, the view here is that νόμος refers to the Mosaic law.

The next issue to be settled therefore is the meaning of τέλος. The difficulty here is that τέλος has a semantic range that includes the ideas of “end, termination, cessation, conclusion,

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<sup>55</sup> Cf. Badenas, *Christ the End of the Law*, 113-114. What this view has going for it is the fact that Paul’s plethora of quotations from the Old Testament in Romans 9-11 are spread out throughout the Old Testament; e.g. Gen. 18 in 9:9; Gen. 25 in 9:12; Ex. 33:19 in 9:15; Hos. 2:23 and 1:10 in 9:9:25-26 respectively; Isa. 10:22 in 9:27; Deut. 30:12-14 in Rom. 10:6-8; Joel 2:32 in 10:13; Ps. 19:4 in 10:18; Deut. 32:21 in 10:19; 1 Kings 19:10, 18 in 11:3-4 respectively.

<sup>56</sup> Gen. 18, 25; Ex. 33; Deut. 29, 30, 32.

<sup>57</sup> Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, 284.

<sup>58</sup> James Denney, “St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans,” in *The Expositor’s Greek Testament*, ed. by W. Robertson Nicoll ([n.p.]; reprint, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 2:669.

<sup>59</sup> See Dan Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids; Zondervan, 1996), 243.

Badenas argues that there are three major reasons why the absence of the article cannot be accepted as a valid reason for rejecting the referent here as the Mosaic law. He notes,

“1. The syntactical form of the phrase τέλος νόμου Χριστός does not allow us to infer any special significance from the anarthrous use of νόμος because in this apodictic statement all the elements are anarthrous. The article being dropped before τέλος, it is also naturally [sic] dropped before, for syntactical reasons. Χριστός is usually used without the article in Romans.

2. There is no evidence of such a distinction of meaning based on the use of the article. As has been sufficiently proved, there is clear evidence of νόμος used indifferently with article and anarthrously referring to the same reality. Moreover, the anarthrous use of νόμος meaning ‘Torah’ is very well attested in Pauline contemporary Judaism.

3. The immediately preceding occurrences of νόμος in the context (and the only ones in this section), namely, the two mentions of νόμος in 9.31, are both anarthrous and unanimously accepted as referring to the Torah. There is no indication in the passage, nor any logical reason to prove that Paul meant something else in 10.4” (113).

<sup>60</sup> Cf. Rom. 3:20; 5:13; Gal. 2:16; 3:2; 4:4. It is granted that in many cases, a previous use of law in a given context may include the article. It is clear that context alone must determine if νόμος refers to the Mosaic Law or law in general when used without the article.

<sup>61</sup> Μωυσῆς γὰρ γράφει .



goal, outcome”.<sup>62</sup> Is Christ simply the “goal” to which the Mosaic law pointed (teleological), or is He the “end” or “cessation” of the law (temporal) to all who have been justified by faith alone in Christ alone?<sup>63</sup> It would seem that this question can only be answered by discussing the third issue that this verse presents, namely, the syntactical relationship between the prepositional phrase εἰς δικαιοσύνην παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι to what has preceded. Moo holds that the syntax argues for taking the preposition εἰς as purpose or result, and not as modifying νόμος.<sup>64</sup> In other words, Paul is not stating that Christ is the end of Israel’s misunderstanding of law and its righteousness, but that He is the “telos of the law, with the result that there is (or with the purpose that there might be) righteousness for everyone who believes.”<sup>65</sup> He introduces τέλος as being translated “end” by all major translations, but asks, “does ‘end’ mean (1) ‘termination,’ as in the sentence, ‘the end of the class finally came!’ or (2) ‘goal,’ as in the sentence, ‘the end of government is the welfare of the people’; or (3) ‘result,’ as in the sentence ‘She did not foresee the end of her actions.’ Each of these meanings is possible for the word *telos*, and each is attested in Paul.”<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, translated by William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, 3d ed., rev. and ed. by Frederick William Danker (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2000), 998-99. [Hereafter cited as *BDAG*]. For an exhaustive treatment of τέλος, see Badenas, *Christ the End of the Law*. Badenas sees τέλος here used in a teleological manner (144-51).

<sup>63</sup> For a helpful summary of how τέλος has been interpreted, see Morris, *Romans*, 380.

<sup>64</sup> Moo, *Romans*, 637, n. 34. Similar uses of εἰς seem to be found in the immediate context; cf. 10:10: εἰς δικαιοσύνην ... εἰς σωτηρίαν.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 637-38. I would disagree a bit that Paul is not fixing a misunderstanding on the point of Israel. In 10:2-3 Paul argues that they were in error in regard to the way they sought righteousness. The γάρ that introduces verse 4 seems to be explanatory; cf. Cranfield, *Romans*, 2:520.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 638. While I am convinced that τελευτων has the sense of “termination” and “goal,” I am not so sure that “result” is such a common use of the noun. I wonder if there was too much of a desire to couple this understanding of τέλος with the similar use of εἰς. Is Christ the *result* or *consequence* of the law? He is correct that the English word “end” is a bit ambiguous, but result would be no improvement. Cranfield summarizes the three main ways that τέλος has been understood as (i) fulfillment; (ii) goal; and (iii) termination (2:516).

In actuality, Moo sees two major options, (1) stressing termination, and (2) and (3) denoting in some way that the law pointed to Christ. For Moo, and others,<sup>67</sup> given contextual and lexical data, Christ is both the end of the law and its goal.<sup>68</sup> The believer is not under the law. The law was unable to justify or sanctify the sinner. It was powerless for such things (Rom. 8:3). However the law did do a good job at pointing out one's sin and it still has that purpose today, when used with unregenerates (1 Timothy 1:8-11). But a just man is not under the law since it has been rendered inoperable<sup>69</sup> for the believer (Rom. 7:6). Therefore 10:4 is stating that in regards to justification before God, the law has no bearing. The law never could produce righteousness. The basis for being right with God is faith. A faith-righteousness based on the work of Christ renders the law ineffective to the believer. It has served its pedagogical purpose (Gal. 3:24). Christ is the *telos* (termination/goal) for the believer. All others are still under the law.<sup>70</sup> It is to the latter group that Paul will next make mention in verse 5.

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<sup>67</sup> Cf. Cranfield, *Romans*, 2:519; Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, 597; Seifrid, "Paul's Approach," 10; Bruce, *Romans*, 203.

<sup>68</sup> Moo writes, "These considerations require that *telos* have a temporal nuance: with the coming of Christ the authority of the law of Moses is, in some basic sense, at an end. At the same time, a teleological nuance is also present. This is suggested not only by the contextual factors mentioned above but also by the fact that similar NT uses of *telos* generally preserve some sense of direction or goal. In other words, the 'end' that *telos* usually denotes is an end that is the natural or inevitable result of something else. The analogy of a race course (which many scholars think *telos* is meant to convey) is helpful: the finish line is both the 'termination' of the race (the race is over when it is reached) and the 'goal' of the race (the race is run for the sake of reaching the finish line). Likewise, we suggest, Paul is implying that Christ is the 'end' of the law (he brings its era to a close) and its 'goal' (he is what the law anticipated and pointed toward). The English word 'end' perfectly captures this nuance; but, if it is thought that it implies too temporal a meaning, we might also use the words 'culmination,' 'consummation,' or 'climax' (*Romans*, 641).

<sup>69</sup> καταργέω.

<sup>70</sup> In other words, it is not "an absolute end of the mosaic law" (Seifrid, "Paul's Approach," 10).

In verse 5 Paul introduces Moses and sums up his teaching regarding the demands of the Law in regards to the righteousness. Paul, in what is likely a reference to Leviticus 18:5, states,<sup>71</sup> “Moses describes in this way the righteousness that is by the law:<sup>72</sup> ‘The man who does these things will live by them.’”<sup>73</sup> What is interesting here about the use of Leviticus 18:5 is its context. Leviticus 18:1-5 sets the stage for Israel’s call to moral uprightness, especially in regard to sexual relationships (18:6-23). It would seem that what Moses has in mind in Leviticus 18:5 is the expectation that God has for an Israelite regarding how to live in a covenantal community. This emphasis on living is brought out later in Leviticus 18:29 and 20:9-21 where the consequences for such sinful acts are declared: death.<sup>74</sup> It would seem then what Paul is stressing

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<sup>71</sup> NIV is preferred over the NASB. See note below.

<sup>72</sup> There is a significant textual variant in verse 5 regarding the placement of ὅτι. The conjunction ὅτι follows νόμου in p<sup>46</sup>, αc, B, Dc, G, K, etc., and it follows γράφει in α\*, A, D\*, 33\*, 81, 630, etc. The editors of the third edition of the UBS text and the 26th edition of the Nestlé-Aland have placed ὅτι after νόμου, while the recent UBS<sup>4</sup> has dropped any reference to the variant. It, like the 27th edition of Nestlé-Aland, reads the placement of ὅτι after νόμου. Some commentators have opted for placing it after γράφει (Sanday & Headlam, *Romans*, 286; Cranfield, *Romans*, 2:520-21; Badenas, *Christ the End of the Law*, 118-19). In addition, the NASB translates the verse after γράφει while the NIV translates it after νόμου. If read after νόμου, then the phrase τὴν δικαιοσύνην τὴν ἐκ [τοῦ] νόμου is an accusative of respect: “For Moses writes *with respect to the righteousness of the law*, that...” If ὅτι is read after γράφει, then the phrase τὴν δικαιοσύνην τὴν ἐκ [τοῦ] νόμου becomes the object of the participial substantive from Leviticus 18:5, ὁ ποιήσας: “For Moses writes *that the man who practices the righteousness based on the law shall live by them.*”

Regarding internal evidence, it seems that there would have been a tendency by scribes to attempt to harmonize this passage with Galatians 3:12 (and LXX), and place it after νόμου. Hence, many hold that it belongs after γράφει. However, external evidence supports reading ὅτι after νόμου, given the earlier and more geographical diverse readings. In this sense, Paul’s quote of Moses begins with the phrase, “The man who does these things...” If ὅτι belonged after the verb γράφει, it would be extending the quote. However, in that case, the phrase “the righteousness of the law” would belong to the quote. By taking ὅτι to be after νόμου, Paul is not saying that Moses taught a righteousness by the law, only that such a doctrine is dubious in light of Moses instruction from Leviticus 18:5. In other words, “you can’t do it!” (Cf. Moo, *Romans*, 643; Seifrid, “Paul’s Approach,” 12-13; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 589; Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, [New York: UBS], 1971, 524-25).

<sup>73</sup> Käsemann argues convincingly that Paul’s use of Leviticus 18:5 here, in Galatians 3.12, and a summarizing of it in Romans 2:13, is evidence that Paul is rejecting a view that a right standing with God could ever be accomplished along the lines of obedience to the law. In a sense, according to Käsemann, Paul is arguing along with Moses that this is so (*Romans*, 285).

with Leviticus 18:5 is a principle, namely, that the law taught the need to obey its demands in order to live. Herein lies the rub. It would seem that Paul is using Moses in this manner to illustrate the point he made earlier in 9:30-31, namely, that Israel was unable to attain righteousness with God because she sought it in the wrong manner - by works instead of faith.

Seifrid notes,

Paul's emphasis is on the "doing," or more precisely, the "doer" in contrast to the believer in 10:4. And it is clear from the context that "doing" stands in opposition to believing. Gentiles have obtained the righteousness of faith, while the Jews who pursued the law of Moses have not (9:30-31). Whatever one may make of the citation in 10:6-8 it is clear that it categorically excludes any human action. This is developed in 10:9,10: righteousness and salvation come simply by believing in the heart and confessing with the mouth. From this it becomes clear that "doing (the law)" and "believing in Christ" are set in opposition as means of righteousness.<sup>75</sup>

In other words, the main thrust of Leviticus 18:5 does not seem to be justification by faith.

*The Interpretation of Romans 10:6-8*

### **The prohibition against denying the incarnation and resurrection 10:6-7**

In verse 6 Paul speaks of a faith-righteousness when he states, "But the righteousness based on faith" (ἡ δὲ ἐκ πίστεως δικαιοσύνη). It is possible to take the δέ that introduces verse 6 as either contrastive or as a connective. If Paul is picking up on Romans 10:4 and the truth that justification comes by faith in Christ alone, it is most likely connective. Paul is then simply continuing with this thought. If Paul is picking up verse 5 and Moses' treatise that all who attempt justification by law must adhere to that law, then it is most likely contrastive.<sup>76</sup> Based on the interpretation of 10:5 above, namely, that Paul is expounding his point made in 9:30-33

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<sup>74</sup> Seifrid, "Paul's Approach," 11-12. Seifrid rejects the views of some commentators that the theology of Leviticus taught provision for sin based on atoning sacrifice. Instead he sees a simple reference to the requirement to obey in order to live. Israel was bound to obey.

<sup>75</sup> Seifrid, "Paul's Approach," 15.

regarding Israel's erroneous pursuit of right standing with God based on the law, **δέ** must be given an adversative meaning.<sup>77</sup> In other words, he is stressing the righteousness that comes by faith in contrast to that which Israel pursued by works.

This righteousness based on faith, Paul states, “speaks such” (οὕτως λέγει). Paul does not use one of his standard introductory formulas for the citing of an Old Testament such as καθὼς γέγραπται οὐ τί λέγει ἡ γραφή. This personification of the Old Testament Scriptures by Paul has been understood by many scholars as Paul's hint to his readers that he was alerting us to a proverbial use of Deuteronomy 30:12-14.<sup>78</sup> However the phrase “the righteousness based on faith” is a summary introduction of what he is about to cite from the Old Testament. Therefore the Scriptures do in fact λέγει. Shedd describes this citing of the Old Testament as *ad sensum*.<sup>79</sup>

What do the Scriptures “thus speak?” Paul makes a clear citation of Deuteronomy 30:12 when he says, “Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’ As noted earlier, the first part of Romans 10:6, “Do not say in your heart” is actually from Deuteronomy 9:4. The question, “Who will ascend into heaven?” is the key Old Testament citation here for it is the one that Paul expounds. Upon the citing of Deuteronomy 30:12, Paul adds the first of three equations, “that is” (τοῦτ' ἔστιν).<sup>80</sup> Some are very adamant about pesher exegesis on the part of

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<sup>76</sup> D. Martin Lloyd-Jones, *Romans: An Exposition of Chapter 10. Saving Faith*, (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1997), 79.

<sup>77</sup> The γάρ... δέ construction used here in 10:5-6 is often used adversatively. In Romans 1-8 the pair appear 22 times, with the overwhelming majority of these uses being contrastive. Cf. 2:25; 5:7-8, 10-11, 16; 6:10, 23; 7:2, 14, 18b, 22-23; 8:8, 6, 13, 22-23, 24-25.

<sup>78</sup> Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period*, 98. Cf. also Seifrid, “Paul's Approach,” 17; D. Moody Smith, “The Pauline literature,” 266.

<sup>79</sup> William Shedd, *A Critical and Doctrinal Commentary on the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans* ([ n.p.]: Scribner's, 1879, reprint, Minneapolis: Klock and Klock, 1978), 316.

<sup>80</sup> Many see the expression τοῦτ' ἔστιν as a kind of pesher formula, used to introduce an eschatological perspective. This “pesher” is a kind of “charismatic exegesis” performed by spiritually endowed men of God like the

Paul. C. H. Dodd calls Paul's method in Romans 10:6-8 a "striking example" of the way that Paul is opening up the Scriptures.<sup>81</sup> Matthew Black calls Paul's use of Deuteronomy 30:12-14 in Romans 10:6-8, "One of the boldest, and most individualistic, of Pauline *peshers*."<sup>82</sup> However Seifrid, in an extensive treatment of the uses of  $\tau\omicron\upsilon\tau' \ \epsilon\acute{\sigma}\tau\iota\nu$  in a variety of literature, has demonstrated that this formula is not distinctly the form of Qumran *peshers*.<sup>83</sup> It is evident that  $\tau\omicron\upsilon\tau' \ \epsilon\acute{\sigma}\tau\iota\nu$  functions as a formulaic expression within Koine Greek apart from any Semitic parallels. As such it carries the explanatory emphasis, "this or that means, that is to say."<sup>84</sup> Dunn proposes that Paul's formula combines Greek and Jewish styles.<sup>85</sup>

Paul then adds to the quote of Deuteronomy 30:12 as well as the explanatory  $\tau\omicron\upsilon\tau' \ \epsilon\acute{\sigma}\tau\iota\nu$  formula, the statement "to bring Christ down" ( $\chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\acute{\omicron}\nu \ \kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\gamma\alpha\gamma\acute{\epsilon}\iota\nu$ ). Paul prohibits anyone from denying that Christ has already been brought down; i.e. the incarnation,<sup>86</sup> which

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apostle Paul. Cf. E. Earle Ellis' work titled *Prophecy and Hermeneutic in Early Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 160-61.

<sup>81</sup> C. H. Dodd, *According to the Scriptures: The Sub-Structure of New Testament Theology* (New York: Scribner's, 1953), 18.

<sup>82</sup> Matthew Black, "The Christological Use of the Old Testament in the New Testament," NTS 18 (1971): 8.

<sup>83</sup> Seifrid, "Paul's Approach," 29-34. This is a superb treatment of this issue.

<sup>84</sup> *BDAG*, 284; F. Blass and A. Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, translated and revised by R. W. Funk (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1961), 73.

<sup>85</sup> James Dunn, "'Righteousness from the Law' and 'Righteousness from Faith': Paul's Interpretation of Scripture in Romans 10:1-10," *Tradition and Interpretation in the New Testament: Essays in Honor of E. Earle Ellis*, edited by G. F. Hawthorne with O. Betz (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 218-19.

<sup>86</sup> Some see the referent not as the incarnation, but the exaltation of Christ; cf. James Dunn, *Romans*, 38B, 615. In an earlier work, *Christology in the Making: A New Testament Inquiry into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1980), Dunn made a similar point (186). In response to this work, Cranfield notes, "But this interpretation, though Professor Dunn is of course not alone in maintaining it, does seem to be too much of a *tour de force*. One obvious difficulty in the way of accepting it is the order of vv. 6 and 7. The fact that v. 7 refers explicitly to Christ's resurrection from the dead makes it natural to suppose that what is referred to in v. 6 is likely to be something chronologically prior to the Resurrection. Professor Dunn's reply to this is that the order of the questions in vv. 6 and 7 was determined simply by Deuteronomy 30.12f. It is true that in Romans 10.9 we get a surprising order (outward confession mentioned before inward belief) and that the explanation of this seems to be Deuteronomy 30.14, in which 'in thy mouth' precedes 'in thy heart'. But in this case Paul immediately reverses the order in v. 10, so that the awkwardness is straightened out: nothing like this is done for the awkwardness presented

was crucial to both the message and the provision of imputed righteousness. Support for seeing the infinitive “to bring down” (καταγαγεῖν) as supporting the incarnation or the first coming of Christ is found in the next verse where the reference to bringing Christ “up” is tied to the great event of his resurrection.

The use of Deuteronomy 30:12 in Romans 10:6 would seem, therefore, to be for illustrative purposes. He is using the passage for his own purpose and gives it a bit of a twist.<sup>87</sup> Just as the message of God was close by with Moses, so too with Christ. In other words, in Deuteronomy 30:12 the commandment of God was not up in heaven that it had to be brought down to be obeyed (hence “believed”). On the contrary, it was in their midst. So too, the basis for faith-righteousness is not in heaven but has come down in the incarnation of the Son of God. Given how Paul reproduces the basic form of Deuteronomy 30:12-14 in Romans 10:6-8, it would seem that however one sees Paul using Deuteronomy 30:12 in Romans 10:6, one must see him doing the same thing in Romans 10:7 and 8 as well.

In verse 7 Paul makes the same point by citing Deuteronomy 30:13 and adding the second “that is” statement. He writes, “or ‘Who will descend into the abyss?’ (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).” What is implied here is the statement, “Do not say in your heart.” While it was noted that the reference in the Hebrew Bible of “sea” likely referred to a literal sea of water, the LXX had “abyss.” It was noted, however, that the sea is known as the place of the dead. Paul

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(on Professor Dunn’s interpretation) by the order of vv. 6 and 7. There is a further difficulty in the way of accepting Professor Dunn’s interpretation: even if we can get over the obstacle of the order, there remains the difficulty that the parallelism between vv. 6 and 7 strongly suggests that, since what is spoken of in v. 7 has already happened, what is spoken of in v. 6 must also be something which has occurred already. A reference to bringing down the now exalted Christ from heaven combines very oddly with that to bringing up from the dead him whose resurrection is a fact of the past. The natural interpretation of v. 6 is surely that which understands it to refer to the Incarnation” (C. E. B. Cranfield, *On Romans and Other New Testament Essays* [Edinburg: T. & T. Clark, 1998], 59-60).

<sup>87</sup> Some might say it is his peshet on Deuteronomy 30:12 for the purpose of explanation. Cf. E. Earle Ellis, *The Old Testament in Early Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991), 84. Richard Longenecker calls it a “short midrash” (*Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975, 2d ed., 1999], 106).

chose “abyss” because it more accurately reflects what he wants: the resting place of the dead,<sup>88</sup> where Christ was. Paul is saying, “Don’t dare ask who will go down to the abyss to find the truth of a faith-righteousness, for the Truth is not there; it (He) has been raised from the dead.”

Therefore just as it was wrong to ask who might go into heaven to bring Christ down in the flesh, so too to ask this question about going down into the abyss to bring up Christ from the dead.<sup>89</sup> As it will be shown in verse 8, the reason for this prohibition is that the very word to be observed is nearby and it is very accessible.

### **The reality of the availability of the message of a faith-righteousness 10:8**

In verse 8 Paul cites Deuteronomy 30:14 to demonstrate that the message of a righteousness with God by faith is readily available to them. He states, “But what does it say?” He is referring to the righteousness based on faith (10:6) found in the rest of the Old Testament passage he is quoting. It (Deuteronomy 30:14) says, “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart.” The word<sup>90</sup> is that very message of a faith-righteousness that they need not look very far to find. It is near them; in their mouth and heart. He then identifies it for them with the last of three “that is” statements. It is “the word of faith which we are preaching.” There are a couple ways to take the genitive “of faith,” but given the context, it is best to take it as an objective genitive: “The word that calls for faith.”<sup>91</sup> The expression “the word of faith” (τὸ ῥῆμα τῆς πίστεως) is a bit unusual, particularly because ῥῆμα is not the usual term for word, especially in contexts of the

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<sup>88</sup> *BDAG*, 2.

<sup>89</sup> Moo, *Romans*, 656.

<sup>90</sup> As noted earlier, Paul has substituted the masculine “word” for the feminine “commandment.”

<sup>91</sup> This is the view of Moo, *Romans*, 657, n. 52; cf. also Cranfield, *Romans*, 2:526.



word of God.<sup>92</sup> However Peter uses it in 1 Peter 1:25 to discuss the word of God that was preached (τὸ εὐαγγελισθῆν) to his readers, namely the saving gospel. The bottom line is that Paul was proclaiming a message that needed to be believed. This fact is borne out in 10:9-10. The apostolic message of the cross is a message about imputed righteousness on the basis of faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ. The object and content of this faith is what Paul will proceed to discuss in 10:9-13.

### *The Interpretation of Romans 10:6-8 Validated*

It has been suggested above that Paul's use of Deuteronomy 30:12-14 was to make his point that just as God's word concerning righteousness under Moses was near by and easily accessible, so too the message concerning righteousness with God in the present age. Stated another way, the message of a right standing with God was ready to be acted upon. It is the "word of faith" that is being preached. It calls for a response. Paul now brings to bear the point he wanted to make by citing Deuteronomy 30:12-14.

### **The need for faith so as to acquire a right standing with God 10:9-13**

Upon declaring that the word of the righteousness that is based upon faith is near by and has been preached to his readers, Paul next lays out their responsibility. In verse 9 he states, "that if you confess with your mouth Jesus *as* Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved."

The conjunction "that" (ὅτι) which begins verse 9 is a matter of some debate, being taken by most to be either referring to the content of the expression τὸ ῥῆμα τῆς πίστεως, or causally,

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<sup>92</sup> That term is λόγος.

so as to explain how the “word of faith” is near. The latter is preferred.<sup>93</sup> It should be noted, however, that a causal use of the conjunction does still provide the content of faith to some degree. This is borne out because verse 9 refers back to verse 8 and the word that is near, as well as forward to verse 10 in light of the ramifications of such confession and belief. In other words, by doing what is called for by the word preached, one demonstrates the content of faith in how he responds.

Paul states to his readers that “if”<sup>94</sup> they respond in a certain way, “you shall be saved.”<sup>95</sup> This response is described with the expression, if “you confess with your mouth Jesus *as* Lord” and “believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead.” The full ramifications of what both conditions mean is beyond the scope of this paper. However, two terms do have a direct bearing on the scope of this paper: “mouth” and “heart.” It seems that Paul uses both conditions as almost synonymous expressions. In other words, the verbs confessing (ὁμολογήσης) and believing (πιστεύσης) are the same response here. This is seen in verse 10 when Paul elaborates on each condition. Here it will be shown that both responses result in the very same thing:

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<sup>93</sup> Cranfield, acknowledging that grammatically it is possible to punctuate with a comma at the end of verse 8 and seeing the conjunction the force “that” and verse 9 as the content of “the word of faith,” argues for the latter, stating, “It is far more natural to take ὅτι in the sense of ‘because’ or ‘for’, and to understand v. 9 as explaining the statement, ἐγγύς σου τὸ ῥῆμα ἐστὶν ἐν τῷ στόματι σου καὶ ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ σου, The statement of v. 8a is true, because all that one has to do, in order to be saved, is to confess with one’s mouth Jesus as Lord and to believe – really believe – in one’s heart that God has raised Him from the dead.” (*Romans*, 2:526-27). Morris leans towards content of faith (*Romans*, 384), as does John Murray, (*The Epistle to the Romans*, NICNT [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965], 2:55) and Käsemann, (*Romans*, 291), while Fitzmyer is indifferent (*Romans*, 591). Perhaps Moo, who also acknowledges both possibilities, has the best solution. He writes that a causal classification is preferred “because it would be awkward to have two ‘content’ clauses in a row (e.g., ‘that is the word of faith ...,’ ‘that if you confess...’)” (Moo, *Romans*, 657).

<sup>94</sup> This third class conditional statement (ἐάν plus the subjunctive verb ὁμολογήσης) is broad enough to handle “what is *likely to occur* in the *future*, what could *possibly occur*, or even what is only *hypothetical* and will not occur” (Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 696).

<sup>95</sup> The immediate context of receiving δικαιοσύνη and σωτηρίαν argues for seeing the verb σώζω as referring to deliverance from sin. In other words, it is eternal salvation and not deliverance from temporal circumstances that is in view here.

salvation. Confessing with one's mouth "Jesus *as* Lord,"<sup>96</sup> and believing in one's heart that God raised him from the dead results<sup>97</sup> in "righteousness" (δικαιοσύνην) and "salvation" (σωτηρίαν) respectively. One wonders if Paul by these two responses is making some kind of connection with the events mentioned in 10:6-7 concerning the incarnation (10:6) and resurrection of Christ (10:7). If in fact the confession called for, "Jesus *as* Lord" (κύριον Ἰησοῦν) does imply Jesus as Yahweh as Wallace noted earlier, then perhaps Paul is arguing for a confession that Jesus as God has come in the flesh.<sup>98</sup> Clearly the second conditional response, that God has raised Christ from the dead is contained in 10:7. In any case, the two terms "mouth" and "heart" harken back to Deuteronomy 30:14 and the fact that God's word was very near to Israel as well: "in your mouth and in your heart."

Paul goes on in verses 11 and 13 to use the Old Testament to round out his point. In verse 11 he cites Isaiah 28:16 in order to validate the need for *believing* with one's *heart*: "For the Scripture says, 'Whoever believes in Him will not be disappointed.'" Then in verse 13 he cites Joel 2:32 to validate the response of *confessing* with one's *mouth*: "for 'Whoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved.'"

The need for Israel to heed a word from God that was in their hearts and in their very mouth parallels Paul's exhortation concerning the message of faith that he was preaching. In light of the Christ event, individuals needed to confess with their mouths that Jesus is in fact the God-man and believe that God raised him from the dead. Earlier in Romans, Paul stressed that it was upon his resurrection from the dead that Christ was demonstrated to be the very Son of God (1:4).

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<sup>96</sup> Wallace states that this double accusative (κύριον Ἰησοῦν) argues for seeing Jesus as Yahweh (*Greek Grammar*, 187-88). Cf. also Cranfield, *Romans*, 2:529.

<sup>97</sup> The preposition εἰς precedes both "righteousness" (δικαιοσύνη) and "salvation" (σωτηρίαν).

## Conclusion

In light of the incarnation and resurrection of Christ, the availability of a faith-righteousness is very near. There is no need to look anywhere else. It is in their midst. It is the very word of the person and work of Christ that was preached to them. The response to this word of righteousness is faith in the person (God-man) and work (death/resurrection) of Jesus Christ.

Paul's logic seems to parallel Moses'. Just as Moses stressed that God's word was near by and needed to be obeyed, so too the gospel that was being proclaimed. This word from God needed to be believed in order to be right with God.

## CONCLUSION

This has been a brief survey of the issues related to Paul's use of Deuteronomy 30:12-14 in Romans 10:6-8. It has been shown that Paul cites Deuteronomy 30:12-14 in Romans 10:6-8 for the most part in a straightforward manner, making slight changes to the both the MT and the LXX. It would not seem that Paul's thrust was to exactly cite the MT or LXX. What qualified as a quote in Paul's day is impossible to ascertain. There are no well-established criteria as to what qualifies as an exact quote, partial quote, or allusion. Paul does have a purpose, however, in his use of the passage.

It has been noted that Moses' teaching in Deuteronomy 30:12-14 is found in a context of God's expectations of his covenant people. If they obeyed his word, they enjoyed his blessing. In that sense, they really lived. The word that they needed to obey was not difficult to find since it

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<sup>98</sup> This is not outside the use of other New Testament writers; cf. John in 1 John 4:2-3.

was very near to them, in their mouths and hearts; the very word of God that Moses spoke to them.

It was also noted in the examination of the exegesis of Judaism, that the stress seems to be on the fact that God's law was not so far away in heaven or across the sea that one needed to ask for help in fetching it. In addition, while some of the imagery of Deuteronomy 30:12-14 crops up in Baruch, there was no justification to think that Paul was drawing from Baruch in making his point in Romans 10.

Paul's use of Deuteronomy 30:12-14 in Romans 10:6-8 is reminiscent of Moses' argument in that he follows the logic of Moses. Paul, like Moses, calls for a response in light of the proximity of the word of God. There is no need to go up to heaven to bring Christ down again; he became the God-man. There is no need to bring him up from the abyss; he has been raised from the dead. This word is the gospel that Paul and his companions were preaching to them. It is a word that is nearby, in the hearer's heart and mouth and calls for a response as well: confession of Jesus as Lord and faith in his resurrection from the dead.

In Deuteronomy 30:12-14 Paul has found a passage that deals with righteousness, albeit ethical righteousness, as well as being a message from God that is near and therefore able to be acted upon. Paul argues that sinners can be right with God (imputed righteousness) by faith alone. This faith resulting in righteousness with God is a response to the gospel message that is nearby as well. Paul is not doing exegesis on Deuteronomy 30:12-14 and finding justification by faith. Adherence to the Mosaic law never saved a single sinner (Rom. 8:3). This does not mean that the Old Testament did not teach justification by faith, for it did (Gen. 15:6). It just did not do it here in Deuteronomy 30:12-14. Paul finds an analogous correspondence with this passage on two major points. First, Moses is stressing ethical righteousness by God's people. Secondly, he is

stressing this righteousness in a message that is easy to act upon because it is very near them.

Paul in the same manner is stressing a theme of righteousness through a message very near to his readers, the very gospel of Jesus Christ that he is preaching to them.

Clearly there is room for further study. The context of Deuteronomy has some future promises about the circumcised heart that calls for a closer examination (30:6). As noted in this paper, Paul in Romans deals with the fact that God had always desired a spiritual circumcision in contrast to simply a physical one (2:25-29). This theme has ramifications for the New Covenant as well and how this promise to Israel affects the gospel message (2 Cor. 3).

APPENDIX 1

PAUL'S USE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT IN ROMANS 9-11

Paul's use of the Old Testament in all of Romans is beyond the scope of this paper.

However, it is possible and necessary to look at how he uses the Old Testament in the context before and after Romans 10:6-8. Therefore a survey of his use of the Old Testament in Romans 9-11 in this appendix will suffice, especially since the material in these three chapters is related to Israel.

### **Romans 9:1-29**

In 9:6-13 Paul makes use of four separate Old Testament passages to prove his point regarding God's election of Israel.<sup>99</sup> Paul notes that God made a promise to Abraham that he would have descendants through a son named Isaac (9:7- cf. Gen. 21:12), and that this son would be through Sarah (9:9- cf. Gen. 18:10). Isaac would have twin sons of his own and when his wife Rebekah was expecting, she was told that the older son (Esau) would serve the younger son of promise (Jacob) as God stated (9:12 – cf. Gen. 25:23). Finally, God gave his own reason for this order of importance: It was because He set his love on Jacob and not Esau (9:13 – cf. Mal. 1:2f.). What is proven in the example of Jacob and Esau is Paul's premise in 9:6 that "they are not all Israel who are *descended* from Israel."<sup>100</sup> Paul has used the Old Testament passages in a straightforward manner in order to state fact. The passages are simply lifted out of the Old Testament and used by Paul to show what and why God did what He did.

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<sup>99</sup> Ellis also makes the point that Paul combined passages in three distinct ways: merged quotation, chain quotation, and midrashic commentary. Romans 9-11 is an example of midrashic commentary (*Paul's Use of the Old Testament*, 11, n.5).

<sup>100</sup> Morris notes, "It was an error to assume (as many Jews of his day did) that descent from Abraham gave them total security and a favored position before God. The purpose of God was fulfilled in Isaac, not Ishmael; in Jacob, not Esau" (*Romans*, 352).



In 9:14-21 Paul justifies this particular selection of one Israelite over another by showing through Old Testament example that God has a track record of doing this kind of thing. God simply extends mercy and compassion to whom He wishes (9:15 – cf. Ex. 33:19). As a matter of fact, Paul states, this is exactly what He did with Pharaoh (9:17 – cf. Ex. 9:16). God acts out of his own desires (9:18). Once again, Paul has used the Old Testament to make his point and he has done so by the simple stating of facts that these passages provide.

In 9:22-29 Paul's use of the Old Testament becomes a bit less straightforward. First, Paul cites Hosea 2:23 and 1:10 in Romans 9:25 and 26 respectively. As is commonly known, these passages were used by Hosea the prophet in his ministry to the Israelites of the Northern Kingdom and their ten tribes. Two of Hosea's children were named "no compassion" and "not my people" (1:6, 9) to represent the backslidden Northern Kingdom of Israelites. In 1:10 (and 2:23) God held out hope that Israel would once again be called his people and be the object of his compassion/love. Paul picks up these two passages in Hosea and applies them to the Gentiles.<sup>101</sup> The question is, how? While Paul gets the facts correct from Hosea, what is glaring from his use in Romans is that there is no reference in Hosea to Gentiles being the object of this future hope of God. Perhaps Morris has the best explanation here. He notes,

The point apparently is that the sin of the ten tribes had been such as to place them outside the people of God. If there was hope for people who been put there as a punishment, then much more was there hope for people who were there naturally. Apostate Israel, God says, was *not my people*; they had lived as heathens and now they had become as heathens.<sup>102</sup>

In a sense, the fact that Israel was considered as not being God's people placed them in a position relative with Gentiles. In that light, Paul sees the passages in Hosea as applying to that

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<sup>101</sup> As does Peter in 1 Peter 2:10.

<sup>102</sup> Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 370.

group who were never considered God's special people, namely, the Gentiles.<sup>103</sup> Therefore Paul seems to be applying the Hosea passages to the Gentiles, for it seems unlikely that Hosea specifically is teaching Gentile inclusion from the promise of restoration of Israelites referred to as not God's people in 1:10 and 2:23.

Next, continuing in the same pericope (9:14-29), Paul cites a host of verses from Isaiah<sup>104</sup> to give weight to the premise that it is a remnant of Israel that was saved, not all with a physical link to Abraham. The "pearl stringing" of verses found in 9:27-29 is now applied only to Israel. Paul introduces the citation of Isaiah 10:22, 23, and 1:9 respectively with the expression, "And Isaiah cries out concerning Israel" (9:27).<sup>105</sup>

### **Romans 11:1-36**<sup>106</sup>

In 11:3-4 Paul cites 1 Kings 19:10 (14) and 18 to illustrate that God always kept a remnant among his elect people Israel. He is not saying that 1 Kings 19:10 (14) and 18 is prophetic in any direct way, only that just as God preserved Jewish believers in the old economy like Elijah and 7000 elect men, so too in the new one. Paul uses the Old Testament here to state facts and to illustrate.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Cranfield notes of this use by Paul, that "The ten tribes were indeed thrust out into the dark realm of the heathen, so that there is real justification for regarding them as a type of rejection. But their restoration was promised in Hosea's prophecy, and Paul takes this promise as a proof of God's purpose to include the Gentile in His salvation" (*Romans*, 2:499-500).

<sup>104</sup> With possible allusion to Genesis 22:17 and Deuteronomy 29:23.

<sup>105</sup> Moo notes of this shift of application, "If Hosea speaks allusively to the situation of the Gentiles, Isaiah quite directly 'cries out concerning Israel'" (*Romans*, 614).

<sup>106</sup> The section 9:30-10:21 was dealt with earlier when Romans 10:6-8 was interpreted in light of its use of Deuteronomy 30:12-14.

<sup>107</sup> Moo says that this seminal remnant text of the Old Testament "suits Paul's purpose admirably, with its contrast between the apparent hopeless state of Israel and God's assurance of his continuing care for the people

In Romans 11:5-10 it is clear that Paul uses the Old Testament to point out the irony of what became of the Jews. Paul's expression in verse 5, "In the same way then"<sup>108</sup> shows that just like with Elijah, there was a remnant of Jews who belonged to God while a host of Israelites did not. The remnant received grace (11:5-6) but the rest were hardened by the sovereign hand of God. To prove his point, Paul cites Deuteronomy 29:34 and Isaiah 29:10 in 11:8 and Psalm 69:22-23 in 11:9,10. Paul is drawing parallels with the Old Testament people of God.

In 11:25-32 Paul is arguing that one day Israel will be saved when God delivers them and forgives their sins. In 11:26-27 he cites Isaiah 59:20-21 and 27:9 respectively to prove his point, showing that God had made provision for such a supernatural change of heart.

Finally, in 11:33-36 Paul breaks into praise about God and his unsearchable ways and cites Isaiah 40:13 and Job 35:7 (41:11) to validate God's greatness.

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through his preservation of a remnant of true believers" (*Romans*, 676-77). Käsemann states that Paul uses the Old Testament typologically (*Romans*, 300). Barrett calls it an "historical illustration" (*The Epistle to the Romans*, 208).

<sup>108</sup> Käsemann states that 11:5 draws out "the consequence for the present" application by Paul (*Romans*, 300).

## APPENDIX 2

INTERPRETATIONS OF DEUTERONOMY 30:12-14 IN ROMANS 10:6-8

As noted in the introduction, Paul's use of Deuteronomy 30:12-14 in Romans 10:6-8 has been a matter of no small discussion over the years. Many prominent New Testament scholars have offered their own views as to what Paul is doing with the text. This appendix is a brief survey of the ways in which leading New Testament scholars have classified Paul's use of Deuteronomy 30:12-14.

C. E. B. Cranfield states of Paul's use here that it "is not arbitrary typology but true interpretation in depth,"<sup>109</sup> calling the use an "intimate connexion."<sup>110</sup> That connection is that the gift of the law is identical to the gift of the incarnation: grace. Cranfield sees the Old Testament passage as containing at least the basis of justification before God, namely grace. Leon Morris holds that Paul sees in Deuteronomy 30:12-14 "witnesses to the grace of God."<sup>111</sup> In other words, they were good choices for what he wanted to say about the availability of a faith-righteousness.

The views of Cranfield and Morris are nowhere near as strong as that of William Shedd, who sees Paul's use as messianic in nature. He adds that Paul is out to prove "the doctrine of justification from the Old Testament."<sup>112</sup>

E. Earle Ellis sees in Paul's use similarity with Qumran peshar so as to introduce an explanation.<sup>113</sup> This is somewhat similar to Richard Longenecker who stresses that it is a biblical quote that is somewhat proverbial in nature, being christological in focus and similar to

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<sup>109</sup> Cranfield, *Romans*, 2:524.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:525.

<sup>111</sup> Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 383.

<sup>112</sup> William G. T. Shedd, *A Critical and Doctrinal Commentary on the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans*, 315.

contemporary midrash. He calls it a “short midrash” whereby he gives the passage a “appropriate” or contemporary setting.<sup>114</sup>

Charles Hodge notes that Paul is not interpreting Moses as teaching a method of justification by faith, but that he is “alluding” to the language because in it he finds in a illustration for “expressing his ideas in scriptural language.”<sup>115</sup> This was an unusual find from this great reformed scholar since they tend to see much continuity between the testaments.

R. C. H. Lenski notes that Paul uses the language not to emphasize the content of the gospel but on the proximity of the word of God that communicates the gospel of righteousness.<sup>116</sup>

John Murray sees in Paul’s appeal to Deuteronomy references to Christ’s incarnation and resurrection, stressing that to question the availability of the message would be to discount the work of Christ.<sup>117</sup> While this is true, I am not sure that is Paul’s main thrust.

Sanday and Headlam, as noted earlier, see Paul’s use as a proverbial allusion to make a point.<sup>118</sup> James Dunn sees Paul interpreting Deuteronomy 30:11-14 as characterizing “righteousness from faith” which is in continuity with his own message of righteousness by faith.<sup>119</sup>

<sup>113</sup> Ellis, *The Old Testament in Early Christianity*, 84, n. 22; *Prophecy and Hermeneutic in Early Christianity*, 161.

<sup>114</sup> Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis of the Apostolic Period*, 104-06.

<sup>115</sup> Charles Hodge, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, reprint (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1886), 340.

<sup>116</sup> R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1961), 649.

<sup>117</sup> John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965, 1 vol., 1968), 53-54.

<sup>118</sup> W. Sanday and A. C. Headlam, *Romans*, 289.

<sup>119</sup> Dunn, *Romans*, WBC, 38B, 615. Dunn sees both continuity and discontinuity in Paul’s overall use of Deuteronomy 30:12-14; cf. “‘Righteousness from the Law’ and ‘Righteousness from Faith’: Paul’s Interpretation of Scripture in Romans 10:1-10,” 225-26.

Raymond Zorn argues for continuity between Moses and Paul. He believes that Moses taught justification by faith in Deuteronomy 30:12-14 and that Paul sees in that passage fulfillment of prophecy. He notes,

Paul, therefore, does not quote the Old Testament in the arbitrary interpretation of the allegorical form, nor simply in the loose fashion of familiar, suitable, and proverbial language, but effectively, *ad sensum*, in an organic relationship with that of prophecy and promise of the Old Testament which now had found fulfillment in the Christ of the Gospel he so eloquently proclaimed.<sup>120</sup>

Zorn's view is close to that of Shedd.

This survey of various interpretations of Deuteronomy 30:12-14 in Romans 10:6-8 has demonstrated a wide range of understanding. It includes views that Paul is doing exegesis of Moses and finding in it justification by faith. In addition there are others who simply see that Paul has found a discussion about righteousness, albeit ethical righteousness, and used it to make his point about the proximity of the word of God. Clearly there is much divergence of opinion on this issue among leading New Testament scholars as to what Paul is doing with Deuteronomy 30:12-14.

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<sup>120</sup> Raymond O. Zorn, "The Apostle Paul's Use of the Old Testament in Romans 10:5-8," *Gordan Review* 5 (1959): 34.

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