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ROMANS 9:30–10:4:
AN EXTENDED PROCLAMATION OF PAUL’S SOTERIOLOGICAL JUSTIFICATION

^{9:30}What then shall we say? [We shall say] that Gentiles, although they were not trying to pursue righteousness, obtained righteousness—even [the] righteousness that [comes] from faith ³¹But Israel, although they were trying to pursue the law for righteousness, did not arrive at [that] law. ³²Why [did Israel not arrive at that law]? Because [they pursued the law] not by faith but as if [it could be attained] by works. They stumbled because of the stumbling stone. ³³Just as it is written,

“Behold he placed in Zion a stumbling stone and a rock of offense,
but the one who believes in him will not be put to shame.”

^{10:1}Brothers, indeed, my heart’s desire and prayer to God on their behalf [are] for [their] salvation. ²For I testify about them that they have a zeal for God, but [this zeal is] not in a manner consistent with knowledge. ³For, because they were ignorant of the righteousness of God and sought to establish their own [righteousness], they have not submitted to the righteousness of God. ⁴For Christ [is] the goal and culmination of the law for righteousness for everyone who believes.¹

The Pauline doctrine of justification has become the dividing line between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism ever since the Protestant Reformation began.² Despite the recent attempts to reconcile the two traditions,³ it is highly doubtful if the Reformation would be soon over unless either tradition compromises its core doctrines, especially the doctrine of justification.⁴ In the late 20th century, however, a new stream of scholarship, called “the New Perspective on Paul” (hence NPP), emerged to challenge the paradigm of the Protestant Pauline scholarship. NPP proponents argue that the Reformed understanding of the doctrine of justification is impartial, if not flawed, and they propose a “new perspective” on Paul’s justification.⁵

¹ All English Scriptures are the present author’s translation unless otherwise noted.

² To be more precise, Martin Luther expressed his understanding of justification by faith in *The Lectures on Romans*, which was written between 1515 and 1516. Cf. Martin Luther, *Luther’s Works: Lectures on Romans: Glosses and Scholia*, ed. Hilton C. Oswald, vol. 25 (Saint Louis: Concordia, 1972), x. For the influence of Luther’s understanding of justification on the theses, see B. B. Warfield, “The Ninety-Five Theses in Their Theological Significance,” *PTR* (1917): 501–29.

³ E.g., Charles W. Colson and Richard John Neuhaus, *Evangelicals and Catholics Together: Toward a Common Mission* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1996); Lutheran World Federation and Catholic Church, *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000).

⁴ Gregg R. Allison and Chris Castaldo, *The Unfinished Reformation: Why Catholics and Protestants Are Still Divided 500 Years Later* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), 143.

⁵ E.g., N. T. Wright, *What Saint Paul Really Said: Was Paul of Tarsus the Real Founder of Christianity?* (Oxford: Albatross Books, 1997), 113, asserts, “Briefly and baldly put, if you start with the popular view of justification, you may actually lose sight of the heart of the Pauline gospel.... This popular view of ‘justification by faith,’ though not entirely misleading, does not do justice to the richness and precision of Paul’s doctrine, and indeed distorts it at various points.” The early NPP scholarship tended to be more outspoken about the discontinuity between their understanding of justification and the Reformers’. Some NPP proponents, however, have changed their tone and now argue that the NPP thesis is compatible with the Reformed doctrine of justification. E.g., James D. G. Dunn, “New Perspective View,” in *Justification: Five Views*, ed. James K. Beilby and Paul R. Eddy (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2011), 176–77, says, “It also follows that the ‘new perspective’ should not be defined

From the Reformation, the main focus of the justification debate has centered around Romans 1–8.⁶ Most Reformers neglected Romans 9–11 in their discussion of justification due to its stress on predestination and considered the same chapters as “spasmodic.”⁷ Following this tradition, some modern Protestant commentators have also considered Romans 9–11 as the apostle’s parenthetical argument.⁸ With NPP scholarship, however, this neglected section received renewed and duly-deserved attention. NPP adherents propagate that Paul’s primary concern for the doctrine of justification is not soteriology, but socio-ecclesiology. Based on the concept of the Jewish “covenantal nomism,” NPP scholars aver that the central question of Paul’s justification is not “How a person gets right with God?” (soteriology), but “Who belongs to the covenant community?” (socio-ecclesiology).

For instance, E. P. Sanders, who is known to be the one who gave an impetus to the NPP movement, states, “The decisive proof of the actual meaning of ‘to be righteous’ in Paul’s letters will appear in the exegesis of Galatians 3. To avoid suspense: it turns out that ‘to be righteous by faith’ is a ‘transfer term,’ which indicates that, by faith in Christ, one enters the ‘in group,’ which we may call ‘the body of Christ.’”⁹ NPP proponents’ excessive emphasis on the horizontal aspect of justification has led them to give exceptional attention to Romans 9–11, which deals with many aspects of the socio-political/ecclesiastical relationship between Israel and the church.¹⁰

or regarded as an alternative to the ‘old perspective.’ The ‘new perspective’ does not pretend or think or want to replace all elements of the ‘old perspective.’ It does not regard the ‘new perspective’ as hostile or antithetical to the ‘old perspective.’ It asks simply whether the ways in which the doctrine of justification has traditionally been expounded have taken full enough account of Paul’s theology at this point.... For the ‘new perspective’ to be ‘right,’ or justified, it is not necessary for the ‘old perspective’ to be ‘wrong.’”

⁶ Especially, 1:16–17; 2:5–16; 3:9–20; 3:21–4:25; 5:1–11; 5:15–21; 6:12–23; 8:1–4, 28–39.

⁷ William S. Campbell, “Built on Tradition but Not Bound by Tradition: Response to Peter O’pitz,” in *Reformation Readings of Romans*, ed. Kathy Ehrensperger and R. Ward Holder (New York; London: T&T Clark, 2008), 168.

⁸ E.g., Charles Hodge, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, new ed. (Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, 2009), 462; William Sanday and Arthur C. Headlam, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1902), 225; C. H. Dodd, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans* (London: Fontana, 1959), 161–63; Peter Stuhlmacher, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans: A Commentary* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994), 144.

⁹ E. P. Sanders, *Paul: The Apostle’s Life, Letters, and Thought* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2015), 506. James Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, WBC (Dallas: Word, 1988), 159, similarly remarks on Romans 3:20: “The connection of thought in 3:20 does not run directly from ‘works of the law’ to ‘shall be justified’ and is not aimed directly at works of the law as a means to achieving righteousness and acquittal. The connection of thought is more indirect, of works of the law as a way of identifying the individual with the people whom God has chosen and will vindicate and of maintaining his status within that people. In a word, the hidden middle term is the function of the law as an identity factor, the social function of the law as marking out the people of the law in their distinctiveness (circumcision, food laws, etc.)” (emphasis original). N. T. Wright, *Pauline Perspectives: Essays on Paul, 1978–2013* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2013), 16–17, defines “righteousness” (δικαιοσύνη) as “covenantal faithfulness” and insists that Paul’s justification refers to a believer’s entrance into the covenant community.

¹⁰ Mark Reasoner, “Romans 9–11 Moves from Margin to Center, from Rejection to Salvation: Four Girds for Recent English-Language Exegesis,” in *Between Gospel and Election: Explorations in the Interpretation of Romans 9–11*, ed. Florian Wilk, J. Ross Wagner, and Frank Schleritt, WUNT 257 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 77. identifies C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, BNTC (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957), 175, as the first prominent commentator who argues for a thematic continuity between Romans chapters 1–8 and 9–11. Some NPP scholars have gone a step further in asserting that Romans 9–11 is the center of the letter. E.g., Krister Stendahl, “Paul Among Jews and Gentiles,” in *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles and Other Essays*, (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976), 4; James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, WBC (Dallas: Word, 1988), 696; N. T. Wright,

At the heart of this socio-ecclesiological section, however, Paul inserts 9:30–10:21, which clarifies and expands what it means to be soteriologically justified before God or what it means to be right with God as a sinner.¹¹ The current study is an attempt to offer a reasoned and detailed exegesis and exposition of Romans 9:30–10:4 to demonstrate that the text under consideration supports the reformational interpretation that Paul’s justification *primarily* concerns soteriology, focusing on the vertical relationship between God and man, and *secondarily* ecclesiology, regarding the horizontal relationship between Jews and Gentiles.

The Immediate Literary Context

Modern commentators are correct in treating Romans 9–11 as an integral part of Paul’s argument.¹² As in Romans 1–8, in chapters 9–11, Paul continues to expound on the gospel, but with a slightly different focus—how one should understand the gospel message in light of the controversial and intricate relationship between Jews and Gentiles.¹³ The tension between Jews

The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology (New York: T&T Clark, 1991), 234; N. T. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2013), 1157–58.

¹¹ Contra Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 576–632, and N. T. Wright, “Romans,” in *The New Interpreter’s Bible Commentary: Volume IX*, NIBC (Nashville: Abingdon, 2015), 556–76, who argue that 9:30–10:21 is primarily about the horizontal aspect of justification—the relationship between Jews and Gentile believers.

¹² But with a caveat. Douglas J. Moo, *The Letter to the Romans*, NICNT, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018), 572, argues that, though Romans 9–11 is a crucial section to understand the letter, the scholars who identify it as the climax or center of the letter have gone too far. He explains the reason in the following way: “Such an evaluation often arises from a desire to minimize the importance of the individual’s relationship to God in chaps. 1–8. But the individual’s standing before God is the center of Paul’s gospel, which offers salvation only on the basis of a personal response (1:16). If some earlier expositors of Paul were too preoccupied with his teaching about the individual’s relationship to God at the expense of his emphasis on the corporate relationship between Jews and Gentiles, many contemporary scholars are making the opposite mistake. Individual and corporate perspectives are intertwined in Paul.” See also, Dane C. Ortlund, *Zeal Without Knowledge: The Concept of Zeal in Romans 10, Galatians 1, and Philippians 3*, LNTS (London: T&T Clark, 2014), 118; George Carraway, *Christ Is God Over All: Romans 9:5 in the Context of Romans 9–11*, LNTS 489 (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 26.

¹³ A summary of Romans 1–8 is due here. After presenting the theme statement that the gospel reveals the salvific gift of God’s righteousness for everyone who believes from the Jew to the Gentile (1:16–17), Paul argues that all human beings are equal because both Jews and Gentiles are under the power of sin and cannot be justified before God by the possession or observation of the law (1:18–3:20). Paul’s brief defense of God’s faithfulness to the covenant with Israel in the middle of this section (3:1–8) hints at what is coming in later chapters (9–11) and approves the continuity of Paul’s argument throughout the letter. In the next section (3:21–4:25), Paul elaborates on the theological implications of the theme statement (1:16–17). The gift of God’s saving righteousness is available for sinners who have faith in the atoning death of Christ. Through this justifying act, God vindicates himself as a righteous judge (3:21–27). No one can boast about his or her justification since God justifies a person, whether Jew or Gentile, by faith apart from the works of the law (3:28–31). This doctrine of justification by faith apart from works is illustrated by Abraham, the father of all believers, regardless of their ethnicity (4:1–25).

The next three chapters (5–8) delineate the benefits of the gospel in which God’s righteousness is offered as a gift to those who believe. Believers, once alienated from God, are now reconciled to God through Christ’s atoning work and presently enjoy the eschatological hope (5:1–11). They are no longer under the power of sin and death but in the realm of grace and life (5:12–21). God’s justifying grace, however, is not the license to sin. Those who are justified by Christ’s atoning work are united with him in his death and resurrection (6:1–11). Therefore, they must consider themselves dead to sin but alive to God and live righteously as slaves of righteousness while rejecting the old, sinful lifestyle (6:12–23). Chapter 7 explains the relationship between believers and the law. Just like they are free from the power of sin and death, in union with Christ, believers are free from the law that takes advantage of human sinfulness (7:1–12). Is the law, then, sinful? The answer is absolutely, “No.” The law is rather “spiritual,” “holy,” “righteous,” and “good” (7:12, 14) because it is God’s standard that reveals the helplessness of their sinful human nature and leads them to the deliverer (7:13–25). Paul demonstrates that God’s answer to human sinfulness is

and Gentiles was already hinted in the letter's thematic statement: "to the Jew first and also to the Greek" (Ἰουδαίῳ τε πρῶτον καὶ Ἑλληνι) (1:16). Paul's previous argument that the Mosaic covenant does not guarantee salvation for Jews (2:17–29), and yet God is still faithful to his covenant with Israel (3:1–8), demands an additional explanation. Further, Gentile Christians now claim Israel's privileges as Abraham's children (4:9–25), God's adopted heirs (8:14–17, 23), God's elect (8:32), and possessors of God's glory (8:18–30; cf. 5:2). Those who understand Paul's arguments in Romans 1–8 might raise the following questions: "Has the church replaced Israel in God's plan of salvation?" "Has God failed to keep his old promises to Israel?" "Is God still faithful to Israel?" Paul answers these legitimate questions by explaining how the gospel demonstrates God's unending faithfulness, specifically, to Israel and, broadly, to the Gentile church in Romans 9–11.¹⁴ Hence, many scholars rightfully identify Romans 9:6a as the thesis statement of this section: "But the word of God has by no means failed" (Οὐχ οἶον δὲ ὅτι ἐκπέπτωκεν ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ).¹⁵

After expressing his excruciating anguish over his nation's miserable state despite the many privileges it has enjoyed (9:1–5), Paul defends God's faithfulness by proclaiming his inscrutable sovereignty in election (9:6–29). God chose one line of Abraham's descendants (Isaac and Jacob) above others (Ishmael and Esau), and he has the unassailable right in doing so (vv. 15–17). Paul also argues that God also chose to show his mercy to Gentiles with the support of the Old Testament (Hos 2:23 [v. 25]; 1:10 [v. 26]; Isa 10:22–23 [vv. 27–28]; Isa 1:19 [v. 29]).

In the next section (9:30–10:21), Paul's focus shifts from God's sovereignty to Israel's responsibility.¹⁶ Israel wrongly strove to establish their own righteousness instead of humbly

not the law but the Holy Spirit, who enables believers to keep the law and please God (7:13–8:13). The indwelling Spirit guarantees that believers will not face condemnation (8:1), that they are co-heirs with Christ (8:12–17), and that they will share God's glory (8:18–30). God's redemptive act is motivated by his love for believers, and nothing can separate them from his faithful love (8:31–39).

¹⁴ Johan C. Beker, *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), 331–32, says, "The relation of the church to Judaism is theologically important, because the church cannot be the people of God without its linkage with Israel as the people of God. 'For I tell you that Christ became a servant to the circumcised to show God's truthfulness, in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy' (Rom. 15:8–9). In other words, the gospel to the Gentiles has no foundation and no legitimacy unless it confirms the faithfulness of God to his promises to Israel. The church of the Gentiles is an extension of the promises of God to Israel and not Israel's displacement." See also, Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 539; Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 501; Brian J. Abasciano, *Paul's Use of the Old Testament in Romans 9.1–9: An Intertextual and Theological Exegesis* (London: T&T Clark, 2005), 36, 217; Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, BECNT, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2018), 592.

¹⁵ E.g., Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, 226. C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, ICC, vol. 2 (London; New York: T&T Clark, 1979), 472; Johann D. Kim, *God, Israel, and the Gentiles: Rhetoric and Situation in Romans 9–11*, SBLDS 176 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000), 6; Robert Jewett, *Romans: A Commentary* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2007), 556; Dane C. Ortlund, *Zeal Without Knowledge: The Concept of Zeal in Romans 10, Galatians 1, and Philippians 3*, LNTS (London: T&T Clark, 2014), 118; Moo, *Romans*, 574; Schreiner, *Romans*, 462.

¹⁶ Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, 342; C. K. Barrett, "Romans 9:30–10:21: Fall and Responsibility of Israel," in *Essays on Paul*, (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1982), 132–53; Richard H. Bell, *The Irrevocable Call of God: An Inquiry into Paul's Theology of Israel* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 222–23. Pablo T. Gadenz, *Called from the Jews and from the Gentiles: Pauline Ecclesiology in Romans 9–11*, WUNT2 267 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 141, interestingly offers a rhetorical arrangement of Romans 9:30–10:21 in the following way (Table 3.2.):

receiving the gift of righteousness through Jesus Christ, who is the τέλος of the law (10:4).¹⁷ The remainder of chapter 10 goes on to spell out a fundamental difference between the righteousness achieved by a legalistic endeavor and by faith.¹⁸ Israel has no excuse about their failure because the Old Testament already foretold about the way to receive the gift of righteousness. The last section (11:1–36) affirms the present existence of a Jewish remnant and God’s eschatological plan for the nation of Israel. God’s inscrutable wisdom and sovereignty promote humility among both Jews and Gentiles and eventually bring glory to his name.

Establishing the Text

9:30 Τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν; ὅτι ἔθνη τὰ μὴ διώκοντα δικαιοσύνην κατέλαβεν ^aδικαιοσύνην, δικαιοσύνην δὲ τὴν ἐκ πίστεως,

(a) Two witnesses (†⁴⁶ G012) add τὴν before δικαιοσύνην to specify the noun, but the external evidence is scant despite the antiquity of †⁴⁶ (ca. 200).¹⁹

9:31 Ἰσραὴλ δὲ διώκων νόμον δικαιοσύνης εἰς ^aνόμον οὐκ ἔφθασεν.

(a) Many witnesses add δικαιοσύνης after νόμον (esp. sig. **κ**²).²⁰ This correction implies that νόμον is closely related to the previous phrase νόμον δικαιοσύνης. Though some commentators think that the longer reading is original,²¹ the shorter reading is preferred as the original reading because some scribe could have accidentally replicated δικαιοσύνης due to the presence of the earlier phrase νόμον δικαιοσύνης.²²

9:30–10:3	Introduction in two parallel units
9:30–33	Contrast between the situation of Israel and the nations regarding righteousness. Israel has stumbled over the stone of stumbling.
10:1–3	Paul prays for Israel, which, being ignorant of God’s righteousness in Christ and seeking its own, has not submitted to God’s righteousness.
10:4	<i>propositio</i> : τέλος γὰρ νόμου Χριστὸς εἰς δικαιοσύνην παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι.
10:5–17	<i>probatio</i> in three stages
10:5–8	Comparison between righteousness based on the law and on faith.
10:9–13	Salvation by faith in the Lord Jesus available to all.
10:14–17	Proclamation of the gospel word of Christ and the response of faith.
10:18–21	Conclusion: Despite knowing the gospel, Israel has disobeyed, and has become jealous of the Gentiles who have accepted it.

¹⁷ A detailed treatment of 9:30–10:4 will be offered below.

¹⁸ Stephen Westerholm, “Paul and the Law in Romans 9–11,” in *Paul and the Mosaic Law*, ed. James D. G. Dunn (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 231–34.

¹⁹ *CNTTS*, BibleWorks 10.

²⁰ †⁴⁶vid **κ**² A B D06 F010 G012 Y 1 33 35 69 76 131 209 218 424 945 999 1243 1244 1245 1315 1448 1505 1573 1628 1646 1720 1739 1768 1874 1876 1877 1881 1900 1962 2400 2495 MT SBL TR. Cf. *CNTTS*, BibleWorks 10 and NA²⁸, BibleWorks 10.

²¹ E.g., H. A. W. Meyer, *Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Epistle to the Romans*, CECNT, ed. William P. Dickson, trans. John C. Moore, Edwin Johnson, and William P. Dicken, vol. 2 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1874), 163–64; Frédéric L. Godet, *Commentary on St Paul’s Epistle to the Romans*, trans. Alexander Cusin, vol. 2 (Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, 2009), 180.

²² Bruce M. Metzger and Bart D. Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 254.

9:32 διὰ τί; ὅτι οὐκ ἐκ πίστεως ἀλλ' ὥς ἐξ ἔργων· προσέκοψαν τῷ λίθῳ τοῦ προσκόμματος,

(a) A few late MT witnesses (1874 1877 2400) omit ὥς. The external evidence supports the presence of ὥς in the original reading. (b) A significant number of manuscripts add νόμου after ἔργων to assimilate to the Pauline phrase ἔργων νόμου (Romans 3:20, 28; cf. Gal 2:16 [3x]; 3:2, 5, 10).²³ However, the shorter reading must be preferred because it is more difficult reading and supported by a number of older witnesses.²⁴ The omission of νόμου theologically “indicates that the emphasis here is on ‘works’ instead of the ‘law.’”²⁵ (c) Many late Byzantine manuscripts add γὰρ before τῷ λίθῳ τοῦ προσκόμματος to make the reading smoother.²⁶ This addition must be rejected due to the palpable trace of the emending hands to make the reading more natural.

9:33 καθὼς γέγραπται· ἰδοὺ τίθημι ἐν Σιών λίθον προσκόμματος καὶ πέτραν σκανδάλου, καὶ ὁ πιστεύων ἐπ' αὐτῷ οὐ ἡκαταισχυθήσεται.

(a) Although the overwhelming number of late manuscripts support the longer reading (πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων),²⁷ πᾶς was most likely added later “to heighten the effectiveness of the quotation” and to imitate Romans 10:11 where Paul cites the same quotation with the addition of πᾶς (Isa 28:26).²⁸ (b) A few Western manuscripts (D06^c F010 G012) read οὐ μὴ ἡκαταισχυθήσεται (aor. pass. subj. 3rd sg.) instead of οὐ καταισχυθήσεται (fut. pass. ind. 3rd sg.) to accord to the LXX rendering of Isaiah 28:16. It is one of the common “harmonistic corruptions” scribes made to conform to the LXX reading.²⁹

10:1 Ἀδελφοί, ἡ μὲν εὐδοκία τῆς ἐμῆς καρδίας καὶ ἡ δέησις πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν εἰς σωτηρίαν.

(a) Some manuscripts (8^c Y 33 1505 2495) add ἐστὶν after αὐτῶν probably to clarify the grammar.³⁰ Many Byzantine witnesses make clear the referent of αὐτῶν by replacing αὐτῶν with τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ ἐστὶν.³¹ Metzger offers a possible reason for the addition of τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ: “The addition... may have occurred when this verse was made [into] the beginning of a lesson read in church services (cf. the reference to Israel in 9.31).”³² The shortest reading (as in the text of

²³ 8^c D06 Y 049 1 33 35 69 76 131 209 218 424* 489 927 945 999 1244 1245 1315 1319 1448 1505 1573 1628 1646 1720 1735 1768 1874 1876 1877 1900 1962 2400 2495 MT TR. *CNTTS*, BibleWorks 10.

²⁴ 46vid 8* A B G 1739 it^{ar}, b, f, g, mon, o vg cop^{sa}, bo al. Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament: A Companion Volume to the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament (Fourth Revised Edition)*, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994), 462; Metzger and Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament*, 302–3; Schreiner, *Romans*, 534.

²⁵ Schreiner, *Romans*, 534.

²⁶ D06^c Y 049 1 33 35 69 76 131 209 218 424 489 927 945 999 1243 1244 1245 1315 1448 1505 1628 1646 1720 1735 1768 1874 1876 1877 1900 2400 2495 MT TR. *CNTTS*, BibleWorks 10. Metzger and Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament*, 279.

²⁷ Y 049 1 33 35 69 76 131 209 218 424 489 927 945 999 1243 1244 1245 1315 1319 1448 1505 1573 1628 1646 1720 1735 1739 1768 1874 1876 1877 1900 1962 2400 2495 MT TR. *CNTTS*, BibleWorks 10.

²⁸ Metzger, *A Textual Commentary*, 463.

²⁹ Metzger and Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament*, 262.

³⁰ Metzger, *A Textual Commentary*, 463; Schreiner, *Romans*, 534.

³¹ 049 1 35 69 76 131 209 218 424 489 927 945 999 1243 1244 1245 1315 1448 1628 1646 1720 1735 1768 1874 1876 1877 1900 2400 MT TR. *CNTTS*, BibleWorks 10.

³² Metzger, *A Textual Commentary*, 463.

NA²⁸) is preferred due to the numerous early and best witnesses (external evidence)³³ and the maxim *lectio brevior lectio potior* (“the shorter reading is the more probable reading”) (internal evidence).³⁴

10:3 ἀγνοοῦντες γὰρ τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην καὶ τὴν ἰδίαν ^a[δικαιοσύνην] ζητοῦντες στῆσαι, τῇ δικαιοσύνῃ τοῦ θεοῦ οὐχ ὑπετάγησαν.

(a) The decision for the bracketed δικαιοσύνην is difficult because of the evenly divided external evidence. Some early and important witnesses (i⁴⁶ & F G Y 33) contain δικαιοσύνην along with many late manuscripts³⁵ while other early and significant witnesses omit it.³⁶ The omitted reading is slightly more preferred because it is attested by two textual traditions—Alexandrian (A B 81 1739 1881) and Western (D P).³⁷ Meyer’s argument that “the very emphasis of the thrice-occurring word, so obviously intended (comp. 9:30), speaks for its originality” lacks compelling evidence.³⁸ It is more reasonable to conclude that δικαιοσύνην was added (as early as ca. 200 [i⁴⁶]) to clarify τὴν ἰδίαν.³⁹ However, whether δικαιοσύνην was added or omitted, the meaning remains the same since τὴν ἰδίαν, without doubt, refers to “Israel’s own righteousness” (cf. 9:31).⁴⁰

An Analysis of the Structure

Paul uses a rhetorical question, “What then shall we say? (Τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν;), to offer the conclusion of the previous argument about God’s sovereignty (9:19–29). A change in the dominant vocabulary from λογός (3x) and ἐπαγγελία (3x) (9:6–29) to δικαιοσύνη (11x) and πίστις/πιστεύω (13x) (9:30–10:21) suggests a shift in Paul’s argument.⁴¹ Further, the similarity between 9:30–32 and 10:20–21 functions as an *inclusio*, bracketing the argument of this

³³ &⁴⁶vid &* A B D06 F010 G012 1319* 1573 1739 1881 1962 SBL. *CNTTS*, BibleWorks 10. Moo, *Romans*, 649.

³⁴ Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, *The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism*, trans. Erroll F. Rhodes (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 281; cf. Metzger and Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament*, 303.

³⁵ 049 1 35 76 131 209 218 424 489 927 945 999 1243 1245 1315 1448 1505 1628 1646 1720 1735 1768 1874 1876 1877 1900 1962 2400 2495 MT TR. *CNTTS*, BibleWorks 10.

³⁶ A B D P 81 365 629 630 1506 1319 1573 1739 1881 SBL. *CNTTS*, BibleWorks 10; NA²⁸.

³⁷ Moo, *Romans*, 649.

³⁸ Meyer, *Romans*, 2:170.

³⁹ Moo, *Romans*, 649.

⁴⁰ Schreiner, *Romans*, 534.

⁴¹ John D. Harvey, *Romans*, EGGNT (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2017), 245. Cf. Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, 275. Cranfield, *Romans*, 2:503; Ernst Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, ed. and trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 276; Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 579; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1993), 576; Colin G. Kruse, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 392–93; N. T. Wright, “Romans,” 551; Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016), 835–36; Moo, *Romans*, 636–38; Schreiner, *Romans*, 522; John D. Harvey, *A Commentary on Romans*, KEL (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2019), 249–50.

section.⁴² The text under consideration (9:30–10:4) consists of two parts: 9:30–33 and 10:1–4.⁴³ Paul’s argument in the first part is built around the two questions: τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν; (9:30) and διὰ τί; (9:32), and the logic of the second part develops with the three occurrences of γὰρ (10:2, 3, 4).

An Analysis of the Syntax

9:30 Τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν;

Paul raises this rhetorical question six times in the letter to clarify his preceding arguments that may cause controversy (with the strong negation μὴ γένοιτο in 6:1–2; 7:7; 9:14; without the negation in 4:1; 8:31; 9:39).⁴⁴ This question has two functions: (1) introduction to the implication of Paul’s argument in 9:6–29;⁴⁵ and (2) transition to the next stage of his discussion by explaining the reason the faithful God rejected Israel while embracing Gentiles.⁴⁶

ὅτι ἔθνη τὰ μὴ διώκοντα δικαιοσύνην κατέλαβεν δικαιοσύνην, δικαιοσύνην δὲ τὴν ἐκ πίστεως,

Except for a few commentators who consider the ὅτι clause as a question that further explains the previous question,⁴⁷ almost all commentators and modern translations take this clause as a statement that answers the previous question. The anarthrous ἔθνη has no implied definite article and emphasizes the identity of Gentiles who are in opposition to Jews (v. 31).⁴⁸ The present tense of the anarthrous participle διώκοντα (pres. act. part. nom. neut. pl. of διώκω) is conative, denoting the imperfect nuance with the notion of attempt: “[Gentiles] *who were not*

⁴² Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 579; Moo, *Romans*, 636.

⁴³ Jan Lambrecht, “The Caesura Between Romans 9.30–3 and 10.1–4,” *NTS* 45 (1999): 142, acknowledges the verbal and thematic connections between 9:30–33 and 10:1–4 although his thesis is that the two passages are more disconnected from each other than they seem: “There are... a number of verbal and conceptional connections between 9.30–3 and 10.1–4. In both passages the term δικαιοσύνη occurs four (or three) times. The opposition between faith and works in 9.30–1 returns in 10.3 with ‘God’s righteousness’ and ‘their own’. The ‘one who believes’ of 9.33c reappears in ‘every one who believes’ of 10.4. The expression ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν in 10.1 (Paul’s heartfelt prayer ‘for them’ that they may be saved) takes up the implicit subject of the verb in 9.32c: “they” have stumbled’. In view of all these correspondences—and there would be even more if 10.5–13 were added in the analysis—one could feel justified in believing that 9.30–3 is the beginning of the second section. With Israel and Gentiles, with righteousness, faith, and works, the vocabulary and motifs from chapters 3–4 suddenly appear again, namely from 9.30 onwards.”

⁴⁴ Schreiner, *Romans*, 523.

⁴⁵ Moo, *Romans*, 636–37. Wright, “Romans,” 553, points out that Paul specifically refers back to 9:24: “even us whom he has called, not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles?”.

⁴⁶ Godet, *Romans*, 2:180; cf. Schreiner, *Romans*, 523.

⁴⁷ E.g., Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, 278–79; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 577–76; Christopher Bryan, *A Preface to Romans: Notes on the Epistle in Its Literary and Cultural Setting* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 165.

⁴⁸ Moo, *Romans*, 640. Cf. Maximilian Zerwick, *Biblical Greek: Illustrated by Examples*, 114, ed. Joseph Smith (Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1963), §171, 55. Longenecker, *Romans*, 839, has gone too far when he says that “the anarthrous plural ἔθνη... represents a qualitative use of the term as descriptive of the nature of the people referred to,” including “some adherents of other religions and some seemingly secular or ‘pagan’ Gentiles..., to whom God has revealed himself in mercy and saving grace... so have been accepted by God as his own people.” Longenecker here advocates for salvation apart from a gospel witness.

trying to pursue.”⁴⁹ The use of the participle is concessive: “*although* they were not trying to pursue righteousness.”⁵⁰

The second δικαιοσύνην is in apposition to the first with the ascensive conjunction δὲ (translated as “even”).⁵¹ The presence of the article τὴν allows ἐκ πίστεως function as an attributive prepositional phrase that modifies δικαιοσύνην: “righteousness that [comes] from faith.”⁵²

9:31 Ἰσραὴλ δὲ διώκων νόμον δικαιοσύνης εἰς νόμον οὐκ ἔφθασεν.

The contrastive conjunction δὲ indicates that Israel’s experience with righteousness contrasts with some Gentiles’. The present tense of the participle διώκων (pres. act. part. nom. masc. sg. of διώκω) is conative,⁵³ and its sense is concessive (like διώκοντα in v. 30).⁵⁴ The anarthrous noun νόμον is definite and refers to the Mosaic law as the “only object of [a] kind” (e.g., Rom 2:17, 25).⁵⁵ The sense of the genitive construction νόμον δικαιοσύνης has been understood in various ways.⁵⁶ The best option is an objective genitive,⁵⁷ denoting that the law’s object is righteousness or that the law promises righteousness if its demands are met: “the law *for* righteousness” or “the law *that promises* righteousness.”⁵⁸ The prepositional phrase εἰς νόμον (acc.) signifies destination: “Israel... did not arrive *at [that] law*.”⁵⁹

⁴⁹ J. H. Moulton and Nigel Turner, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek: Syntax*, vol. 3 (London; New York: T&T Clark, 1963), 63.

⁵⁰ Ellis W. Deibler, Jr., *A Semantic and Structural Analysis of Romans* (Dallas: Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1998), 230.

⁵¹ Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament: With Scripture, Subject, and Greek Word Indexes* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 670. Cf. Zerwick, *Biblical Greek*, §467, 157. See the diagram under 9:30–31 on page 11.

⁵² Moulton and Turner, *Grammar: Syntax*, 3:221; Harvey, *Romans* 1, 246.

⁵³ Harvey, *Romans* 1, 246.

⁵⁴ Deibler, Jr., *Romans*, 230; Schreiner, *Romans*, 522.

⁵⁵ A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (Nashville: Broadman, 1934), 794. Cf. Longenecker, *Romans*, 841; Moo, *Romans*, 643.

⁵⁶ According to Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 578, “The uprightness of/from the law” (Chrysostom), “the law that teaches uprightness” (Aquinas, Huby, and Lagrange), “the law that demands unrighteousness” (Schlier), or “the law that promises uprightness” (Schlier, Cranfield, Käsemann, Meyer, and Rhyne).

⁵⁷ Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Der Brief des Paulus an die Römer, Kapitel 6–16*, HTA (Witten; Giessen: Brockhaus; Brunnen, 2016), 357. Contra scholars who understand νόμον as “principle” or “rule.” E.g., Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, 279; John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans: The English Text with Introduction, Exposition and Notes*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), 2:43.

⁵⁸ Moo, *Romans*, 644; Schreiner, *Romans*, 525. Cf. Cranfield, *Romans*, 2:508; Käsemann, *Romans*, 277. Otfried Hofius, *Paulusstudien II* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002), 162, following John Calvin, transposes the two words and defines it as “die rhetorische Figur der Hypallage.” Yet, it is highly doubtful if Paul is utilizing hypallage here because hypallage is “almost always” a poetic device, and this section is not poetry. Herbert Weir Smyth, *A Greek Grammar for Colleges* (New York; Cincinnati; Chicago; Boston; Atlanta: American Book Company, 1920), 678, defines hypallage as follows: “Hypallage (ὑπαλλαγή exchange) is change in the relation of words by which a word, instead of agreeing with the case it logically qualifies, is made to agree grammatically with another case. *Hypallage is almost always confined to poetry*” (emphasis added).

⁵⁹ Cf. NASB.

9:32 διὰ τί; ὅτι οὐκ ἐκ πίστεως ἀλλ' ὡς ἐξ ἔργων· προσέκοψαν τῷ λίθῳ τοῦ προσκόμματος,

The elliptical idea that completes the question διὰ τί; is as follows: “Why [did Israel not arrive at that law]?” The implied thought in the causal ὅτι clause is “*Because* [it pursued the law] not by faith...” The οὐκ ... ἀλλ’ combination emphasizes the contrast between the two ways of obtaining righteousness—by either faith or works.⁶⁰ The use of both ἐκ + genitive constructions (ἐκ πίστεως and ἐξ ἔργων) is means.⁶¹ The asyndetic sentence (προσέκοψαν τῷ λίθῳ...) gives “a special solemnity” to verses 32b–33 because “asyndeton between sentences, while common in hortatory passages like chapter 12, is rare in the parts of the epistles which contain continuous argument.”⁶² Schreiner suggests an implicit “therefore” between verses 32a and 32b.⁶³ Τῷ λίθῳ is a dative of cause,⁶⁴ and τοῦ προσκόμματος is a genitive of product: “They stumbled *because of* the stone that *makes people stumble*.”

9:33 καθὼς γέγραπται·

Paul uses this introductory formula to Old Testament quotations thirteen times in the letter. Γέγραπται (perf. pass. ind. 3rd sg. of γράφω) is an intensive perfect, signifying the “present and binding authority” of Old Testament Scripture.⁶⁵ The perfect tense, hence, is translated as the present tense: “just as it *is written*.”

ἰδοὺ τίθημι ἐν Σιών λίθον προσκόμματος καὶ πέτραν σκανδάλου, καὶ ὁ πιστεύων ἐπ’ αὐτῷ οὐ καταισχυνθήσεται.

Paul cites a conflation of Isaiah 28:16 and 8:14, insinuating the identity of “the stumbling stone”—the divine Messiah, who is to be believed upon (cf. 10:4, 11). The use of both προσκόμματος and σκανδάλου is a genitive of product: “a stone that *makes people stumble* and a rock that *makes people fall*.” The second καὶ is contrastive: “but” (NET).⁶⁶ The present participle ὁ πιστεύων emphasizes the Messiah-believer’s continual faith in him.⁶⁷ The future tense of καταισχυνθήσεται (fut. pass. ind. 3rd sg. of καταισχύνω) is predictive (“the one who believes *will not be put to shame*”), and its voice is a divine passive, implying that it is God who will protect the believer from eschatological shame.⁶⁸

⁶⁰ Harvey, *Romans* 1, 247.

⁶¹ Deibler, Jr., *Romans*, 231.

⁶² Cranfield, *Romans*, 2:510–11.

⁶³ Schreiner, *Romans*, 527.

⁶⁴ Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 167, explains the difference between the dative of means and the dative of cause: “The dative of *means* indicates the *how*; the dative of *cause* indicates the *why*; the dative of *means* indicates the *method*; the dative of *cause* indicates the *basis*” (emphases original).

⁶⁵ Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 576, offers “a very loose paraphrase” of γέγραπται when it is used with an OT citation: “Although this scripture was written long ago, its authority is still binding on us” (emphasis original).

⁶⁶ Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 671; Zerwick, *Biblical Greek*, §455β, 153.

⁶⁷ Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 620–21.

⁶⁸ Harvey, *Romans* 1, 248.

10:1 Ἀδελφοί, ἡ μὲν εὐδοκία τῆς ἐμῆς καρδίας καὶ ἡ δέησις πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν εἰς σωτηρίαν.

Combined with the vocative ἀδελφοί, the particle μὲν intensifies the emotion of Paul's desire for Israel's salvation (the pronoun αὐτῶν refers back to "Israel" in 9:31).⁶⁹ Καρδίας is a genitive of source, alluding that the apostle's passion for his nation's spiritual well-being is out of heartfelt sincerity (cf. Rom 9:1–3). The sense of ὑπὲρ with genitive αὐτῶν is advantage: "on their behalf."⁷⁰ The preposition εἰς with σωτηρίαν indicates that the goal or purpose of Paul's prayer for Israel is their salvation.⁷¹

10:2 μαρτυρῶ γὰρ αὐτοῖς ὅτι ζῆλον θεοῦ ἔχουσιν ἀλλ' οὐ κατ' ἐπίγνωσιν.

The connective γὰρ introduces the reason Paul earnestly prays for Israel, and the ὅτι clause is the content of the reason—salvation has not come to Israel because they have ignorantly sought God. Paul uses the noun ζῆλον to describe Israel's positive desire to please God.⁷² Θεοῦ is an objective genitive, denoting Israel's "zeal for God."⁷³ The tense of ἔχουσιν (pres. act. ind. 3rd pl. of ἔχω) is "extending-from-past present," highlighting that Israel is still having such a zeal for God.⁷⁴ The problem is not that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not "in conformity to" or "in a manner consistent with" (κατ') proper knowledge.⁷⁵

10:3 ἀγνοοῦντες γὰρ τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην καὶ τὴν ἰδίαν [δικαιοσύνην] ζητοῦντες στήσαι,

Γὰρ introduces the reason why Israel's zeal was not in a manner consistent with knowledge. Both adverbial participles ἀγνοοῦντες (pres. act. part. nom. masc. pl. of ἀγνοέω) and ζητοῦντες (pres. act. part. nom. masc. pl. of ζητέω) are casual and explain why Israel did not submit to God's righteousness: "because they were ignorant of the righteousness of God and sought to establish their own [righteousness]." The tense of both participles is the customary present, referring to Israel's ongoing state of ignorance and pride.⁷⁶ The genitive τοῦ θεοῦ is placed between τοῦ and δικαιοσύνην for emphasis.⁷⁷ A genitive of origin or source fits best for the use of τοῦ θεοῦ, denoting that God is the provider of saving righteousness.⁷⁸ The addition of the definite article to δικαιοσύνην reflects the monadic nature of the phrase ("the one-of-a-kind righteousness that comes

⁶⁹ BDAG, s.v. "μέν." According to Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 67–68, the vocative without ὦ generally has no special significance, but the contextual evidence outweighs the general grammatical rule.

⁷⁰ Contra Murray J. Harris, *Prepositions and Theology in the Greek New Testament: An Essential Reference Resource for Exegesis* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 209, who see it as reference.

⁷¹ Harris, *Prepositions and Theology*, 88.

⁷² Ortlund, *Zeal Without Knowledge*, 115, 126, 171.

⁷³ Friedrich Blass, Albert Debrunner, and Robert W. Funk, *Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 90.

⁷⁴ Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 519, says, "The present tense may be used to describe an action which, begun in the past, continues in the present. The emphasis is on the present time. Note that this is different from the *perfect* tense in that the perfect speaks only about the *results* existing in the present time. It is different from the progressive present in that it reaches back in time and usually has some sort of temporal indicator, such as an adverbial phrase, to show this past-referring element" (emphases original).

⁷⁵ Harris, *Prepositions and Theology*, 152.

⁷⁶ Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 521–22.

⁷⁷ Deibler, Jr., *Romans*, 234.

⁷⁸ Ortlund, *Zeal Without Knowledge*, 130.

from God”).⁷⁹ The direct object τὴν ἰδίαν comes before the verb for emphasis.⁸⁰ The aorist infinitive στήσαι is complementary to ζητοῦντες: “they... sought *to establish* their own [righteousness].”

τῇ δικαιοσύνῃ τοῦ θεοῦ οὐχ ὑπετάγησαν.

Israel’s ignorant and prideful attempt to be right with God results in their rejection to submit to God’s righteousness. The monadic phrase τῇ δικαιοσύνῃ τοῦ θεοῦ comes before the verb for the “emphasis on ‘God’s’ [righteousness] in contrast to ‘their own.’”⁸¹ The verb ὑπετάγησαν (aor. pass. ind. 3rd pl. of ὑποτάσσω) is a constative aorist; with οὐχ it stresses the fact of Israel’s disobedience to God.⁸² With the dative τῇ δικαιοσύνῃ, the passive voice has a middle sense: “they *have not submitted* to the righteousness of God.”⁸³

10:4 τέλος γὰρ νόμου Χριστὸς εἰς δικαιοσύνην παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι.

Γὰρ indicates that verse 4 is a further explanation of verse 3: “[the Israelites were wrong to fail to submit to God’s righteousness by seeking to establish their own righteousness] because Christ has brought a culmination to the law to provide righteousness for believers.”⁸⁴ The implied verb between the subject Χριστὸς and the predicate nominative τέλος is the equative verb ἐστίν. The anarthrous τέλος is definite.⁸⁵ Νόμου is a genitive of object: “the law *is fulfilled and culminated* [by Christ].”⁸⁶ Εἰς is telic and, with its object δικαιοσύνην, the preposition implies that the purpose of Christ’s being the goal and culmination of the law is to bring the gift of righteousness to everyone who believes in him.⁸⁷ The participle πιστεύοντι is a dative of advantage: “*for* everyone who believes.”

⁷⁹ Harvey, *Romans* 1, 249.

⁸⁰ Deibler, Jr., *Romans*, 234.

⁸¹ Deibler, Jr., *Romans*, 234.

⁸² Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 557.

⁸³ Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 583.

⁸⁴ Moo, *Romans*, 654; Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, PNTC (Cambridge; Grand Rapids: Apollos; Eerdmans, 1988), 379.

⁸⁵ Virtually all English versions.

⁸⁶ Harvey, *Romans* 1, 249.

⁸⁷ Harris, *Prepositions and Theology*, 88, 90.

Pauline Terminology

Δικαιοσύνη⁸⁸

There are some 230 occurrences of δίκ- word group in the New Testament.⁸⁹ This word family appears more than 100 times in the Pauline letters, and Romans and Galatians, in turn, contain more than half of these occurrences. The New Testament uses the noun δικαιοσύνη in three main ways: (1) quality of just and upright conduct according to God's or religious standards;⁹⁰ (2) quality/practice of judicial justice and fairness;⁹¹ and (3) state of judicially/forensically right relationship with God [offered as a gracious gift].⁹² Following the LXX, in which δικαίω is used to declare one's righteous standing,⁹³ Paul uses the same verb to show Abraham's right standing before God (Rom 4:2). It does not mean that God imparted his righteousness to Abraham but imputed it to him (Rom 4:3, 5, 6, 9; Gal 3:6).⁹⁴ Abraham was "declared righteous" (NET) or considered to be in a right relationship with God because of his faith.⁹⁵ Δικαιοσύνη is God's gracious gift for believers (Rom 5:17, 21; cf. Gal 2:21). This righteous standing before God cannot be realized by "works of the law" (Rom 3:20, 28),⁹⁶ but by faith in the person and work

⁸⁸ According to Charles Lee Irons, *The Righteousness of God: A Lexical Examination of the Covenant-Faithfulness Interpretation*, WUNT2 386 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015), 111–24, the nouns דִּקְיָה (masculine) and דִּקְיָה (feminine) have three main senses in the OT: "legal righteousness," "ethical righteousness," and "correctness." The first category "pertains to the realm of the judicial court, whether it is a human king or judge, a Messianic figure, or God himself who is depicted as judging, administering justice, executing judgment, or vindicating someone who has been falsely accused or opposed." And this is the most common usage (44.6%) (p. 112). Though the second category ("ethical righteousness") is also significantly used (41.3%), Irons maintains that the two categories are not independent of each other, but closely related (p. 117–19).

⁸⁹ Δικαιοσύνη (58x in Paul [33x in Romans] out of 91x in the New Testament); δίκαιος (17x in Paul out of 80x in the New Testament); δικαίω (27x in Paul [15x in Romans] out of 39x in the New Testament).

⁹⁰ Matt 3:15; 5:6; Rom 3:5, 25; 6:18–20, etc.

⁹¹ Acts 17:31; 1 Pet 2:23; Heb 11:33; Rev 19:11.

⁹² Rom 1:17; 3:21–22; 4:3, 5, 6, 9, 11, 13, 22; 5:17, 21; 9:30; 10:3–4, 10.

⁹³ Human, Deut 25:1; Isa 5:23; and divine, Ex 23:7; 1 Kings 8:32; 2 Chron 6:23; Ps 82:3; Isa 50:8.

⁹⁴ For arguments for the necessity of the doctrine of imputed righteousness, see D. A. Carson, "The Vindication of Imputation: On Fields of Discourse and Semantic Fields," in *Justification: What's at Stake in the Current Debates*, ed. Mark Husbands and Daniel J Treier (Downers Grove, IL; Leicester, England: InterVarsity; Apollos, 2004), 46–78; Thomas R. Schreiner, "Justification: The Saving Righteousness of God in Christ," *JETS* 54 (2011): 31.

⁹⁵ The nature of justification, whether the justified are *made* righteous (transformative understanding) or *reckoned/declared* righteous (purely forensic understanding), has been widely discussed among biblical interpreters since the Reformation. The case of Thomas R. Schreiner is recent and noteworthy. The first edition of his commentary on Romans argues that "the righteousness of God" (δικαιοσύνη θεου) in Romans 1:17 is both forensic and transformative (Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, BECNT [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998], 66–71). His second edition of the same commentary, however, presents a different perspective and concludes that the phrase signifies a forensic aspect of the believer's right standing before God (Schreiner, *Romans*, 66–75). Cf. Schreiner, *Paul, Apostle of God's Glory*, 206–9.

⁹⁶ Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 355; *The Partings of the Ways: Between Christianity and Judaism and Their Significance for the Character of Christianity* (London: SCM, 2006), 180, wrongly asserts that the phrase "works of the law" does not refer to the keeping of the entire law but the observation of certain Jewish regulations. For arguments against Dunn's interpretation, see Schreiner, *Paul, Apostle of God's Glory in Christ*, 111; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, "Paul's Jewish Background and the Deeds of the Law," in *According to Paul: Studies in the Theology of the Apostle*, (New York: Paulist, 1993), 18–35; Seyoon Kim, *Paul and the New Perspective: Second Thoughts on the Origin of Paul's Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 68, 82–83.

of Christ who has perfectly met the divine standard by fulfilling every aspect of God's requirement and expectation of the law (Rom 1:17; 4:11, 13–14; 9:30–32; 10:4–6, 10; cf. Phil 3:9; Tit 3:5).⁹⁷ Paul's use of δικαιοσύνη in Romans 9:30–10:4 also refers to the status of a right relationship with God, which is graciously offered to those who believe his Messiah apart from works.

Δικαιοσύνη θεου

Paul presents three different aspects of “the righteousness of God” in Romans (Rom 1:17; 3:21–26; 10:3; cf. 2 Cor. 5:21).⁹⁸ First, God's righteousness is revealed in his “distributive justice.”⁹⁹ Humanity receives God's reward or punishment according to its response to his revelation (1:18–32) and according to its works (2:2–11). His judgment upon sinners is always just (3:1–20).

Second, God's righteousness reflects his faithfulness in his keeping the covenant with the nation of Israel. Paul rejects the ideas that God's promise for Israel has failed (9:6), that there is injustice with God, and that God should not find fault with Israel (9:19). God's judgment upon Israel does not indicate that God broke the covenant he made with Israel. The problem is not God's unfaithfulness but Israel's sinfulness (9:1–29) and failure to submit to God's righteousness by believing in Jesus, the Messiah (9:30–10:4). Moreover, God has always kept a remnant among Israel, with whom he faithfully keeps his covenant promises (9:27; 11:5). Also, he will publicly display his faithfulness to the nation after “the full number of the Gentiles has come in” (11:25–32 NRSV).

Third, God's righteousness is found in the way of his salvation. The provision of redemption through Christ's death manifests God's gift of righteousness that is offered to everyone who believes (1:16–17; 3:21–26).¹⁰⁰ By faith, Abraham received the gift of righteousness and was declared righteous (4:1–25). This gift of God's righteousness is not a result of the observation of the law (3:21), but the obedience of Christ (5:17; 10:3–4).

When the phrase δικαιοσύνη τοῦ θεοῦ is understood as a relational concept as in the Old Testament (Ex 23:7; 1 Kgs 8:32; 2 Chron 6:23; Ps 82:3; Isa 50:8), it is not impossible to combine all three to understand the meaning of the phrase. Combining the aspects of activity and status, Moo reasonably and concisely defines the phrase as follows: “God's being in the right, his action of making people right before him, *and* the resultant status of those made right.”¹⁰¹ This definition corresponds with the meaning of the phrase in the Old Testament and keeps intact “the nuances of both divine activity and human receptivity” and “highlights the end result of the process of justification in the believer's status of righteousness.”¹⁰²

⁹⁷ A. Andrew Das, *Paul, the Law, and the Covenant* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 32–36.

⁹⁸ Kruse, *Romans*, 78–80; Moo, *Romans*, 73–75.

⁹⁹ Kruse, *Romans*, 79.

¹⁰⁰ Kruse, *Romans*, 79. Cf. Schreiner, *Romans*, 70.

¹⁰¹ Moo, *Romans*, 75 (emphasis original).

¹⁰² Moo, *Romans*, 75.

Πίστις

The New Testament uses πίστις and its cognates in three major senses: (1) the act of believing/trusting or relying on someone or something; (2) a collection of beliefs or Christian doctrines (e.g., Phil 1:27; Tit 2:2; Jas 2:17; Jude 3, etc.); and (3) faithfulness, trustworthiness or loyalty that elicits trust (e.g., Rom 3:3; Gal 5:22; Rev 13:10; 14:12). Paul predominately uses the word with the first sense in his letters. One of the prominent themes in Romans is that anyone can receive the gift of righteousness “by faith” apart from “works [of the law].”¹⁰³

For Paul, “believing” (πιστεύω) (Rom 4:3, 5) is in opposition to “working” (ἐργάζομαι) because, while “working” relies on one’s own capability, “believing” relies on another’s (Rom 4:4; cf. Rom 3:20, 28; 9:32; Gal 2:16; 5:4–5; Eph 2:8–9). “Working” is doing, which causes the doer to be boastful. “Believing,” however, is receiving, which causes the receiver to be humble. Therefore, πίστις is *the* prerequisite for everyone who wants to establish a positive relationship with God. Πίστις in God and his promises “gives glory to him” (δοῦς δόξαν τῷ θεῷ) because he is believed to do the impossible (Rom 4:20). However, it does not mean that Paul separates “faith” from “works” to the point that the latter is of no concern. He, instead, teaches that genuine “faith” is the source of “obedience,” which involves “works.” As “the apostle of the Gentiles” (ἐθνῶν ἀπόστολος) (Rom 11:13), Paul preached the gospel to all nations in order that they may have “faith” in its message, and, in turn, bring forth “obedience” to God in their lives.¹⁰⁴

A Brief Exposition of Romans 9:30–10:4

The rhetorical question, “What then shall we say?” (9:30a), indicates that Paul is about to expound on theological ramifications of the issue he just dealt with—the dramatic turn of salvation history concerning God’s electing grace for Gentiles and his judgment on Jews (9:6–29, esp. vv. 24–29). This turn transpired in the event of the Messiah’s gospel (10:4–13). Also, the question smoothly brings the focus of Paul’s argument from God’s sovereignty to human responsibility.¹⁰⁵ Romans 9:30–10:4 (broadly, 9:30–10:21), then, is not a mere detour or

¹⁰³ Rom 3:28, 30; 4:5, 11, 12, 13, 16; 5:1; 9:30–32; 10:6; cf. Gal 2:16; 3:8–14, 22–24; 5:5; Phil 3:9.

¹⁰⁴ Paul makes this point clear by bookending Romans by the genitive phrase “for the obedience of faith” (εἰς ὑπακοήν πίστεως) (1:5; 16:26). This phrase is to be understood as a genitive of source (“obedience that comes from faith”).

¹⁰⁵ Scholars have debated whether Paul intends to explain faith in the gospel as the basis on which God chooses some for salvation and others for condemnation (e.g., Ben Witherington and Darlene Hyatt, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*, SRC [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004], 254–55, 258–59.) or to show that one’s faith in or rejection of the gospel is the simple result of God’s predestination (e.g., Schreiner, *Romans*, 497.). In light of Romans 9:16 (“So then it *does not depend* on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy” NASB), the truth might be closer to the latter position. However, Paul does not seem to be interested in reconciling the tension between divine sovereignty and human responsibility in chapters 9–11. Cf. Moo, *Romans*, 637.

excursus but a crucial part that complements the previous section (9:6–24)¹⁰⁶ and, in a sense, functions as the theological foundation for chapters 9–11 due to its Christo-centric content.¹⁰⁷

In 9:30b–31, Paul answers the question in two coordinate clauses: (1) “That Gentiles, although they were not trying to pursue righteousness, obtained righteousness—even [the] righteousness that [comes] from faith” (v. 30b); and (2) “but Israel, although they were trying to pursue the law for righteousness, did not arrive at [that] law” (v. 31). An evident irony is that Gentiles got what they were not pursuing, and Jews did not get what they were pursuing. Paul’s remark that Gentiles did not pursue righteousness does not indicate that there were no ethical Gentiles. Some Gentiles, in fact, ardently pursued a moral life. This fact implies that the righteousness Gentiles did not seek but received is not ethical righteousness but a divinely-given righteousness—forensic righteousness.¹⁰⁸ Jews, however, sought the law for ethical righteousness (“the law of righteousness,” v. 31) and failed to obtain forensic righteousness, which signifies the gift of the right standing before God.¹⁰⁹ Stephen Westerholm suggests a helpful distinction between the two kinds of righteousness in Paul’s language: “ordinary dikaïosness” and “extraordinary dikaïosness.”¹¹⁰ The “ordinary dikaïosness” is the ethical

¹⁰⁶ Wright, “Romans,” 551. Contra Gadenz, *Called from the Jews*, 31–32; Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 75. It is noteworthy that Moo has changed his mind about the place of 9:30–10:21 in Paul’s main argument in chapters 9–11. In the first edition of his Romans commentary, Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, NICNT, 1st ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 618, says that 9:30–10:21 is “something of an excursus from Paul’s main argument in chaps. 9–11.” But, in the second edition, he nuances the statement and acknowledges a more natural flow of Paul’s argument from 9:6b-20 to 9:30–10:21 (Moo, *Romans*, 637).

¹⁰⁷ Francis Watson, *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith* (London; New York: T&T Clark, 2004), 21, says, “Thus, the Isaianic ‘stone’ passage [9:33] serves to introduce a passage where references to ‘Christ’ (Rom. 10:4, 6, 7) and to Jesus as ‘Lord’ (10:9, 12) are prominent. The divine electing decision is realized in the disjunction between non-Christian Israel, which continues zealously to pursue the soteriological programme of which Moses wrote in Leviticus 18:5 (Rom. 10:1–5), and the community of Jews and Gentiles that acknowledges God’s raising of Jesus to universal lordship (Rom. 10:6–13). If Romans 9 focuses on the scriptural announcement of God’s electing decision, Romans 10 speaks retrospectively of its concrete realization in the death and resurrection of Christ, and in the faith and the offence to which this gives rise. In the light of Romans 10, it is possible to see that all of the texts cited in Romans 9 are christologically (and ecclesiologically) relevant. Yet, to repeat the point, the christological reference is highly indirect.” Cf. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, 1163, interestingly develops an unconventional chiasm of Romans 9–11 and concludes that 10:5–13, which is filled with Christological language, is at the center of Paul’s argument in these chapters.

¹⁰⁸ Moo, *Romans*, 641; Kruse, *Romans*, 394. Here, “forensic” righteousness refers to “legal” righteousness declared by God the Judge for the unrighteous because of the work of the Messiah (cf. 10:4). Therefore, “forensic” righteousness is also “alien” righteousness.

¹⁰⁹ Paul presents the Jewish tendency to gain ethical righteousness by observing the law here and other places (Rom 2:13; Gal 2:21; Phil 3:6, 9). The use of the verbs διώκω (“pursue,” vv. 30, 31), καταλαμβάνω (“to seize,” v. 30), and φθάνω (“to arrive at,” v. 31) along with the language of “stumbling” (προσκόπτω, προσκόμματος and σκανδάλου) in verses 32 and 33 suggests a race metaphor (cf. Phil 3:12–14). Katja Kujanpää, *The Rhetorical Functions of Scriptural Quotations in Romans: Paul’s Argumentation by Quotations*, NovTSup 172 (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2019), 134. Cf. Robert Badenas, *Christ, The End of the Law: Romans 10.4 in Pauline Perspective*, JSNTSup 10 (Sheffield, UK: JSOT Press, 1985), 101–2. The race metaphor perhaps contributes to the interpretation of the ambiguous noun τέλος (10:4) as both goal and end since, as soon as a foot-racer reaches the goal, the race ends.

¹¹⁰ Stephen Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New on Paul: The “Lutheran” Paul and His Critics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 262–84. Watson, *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith*, 332, suggests a similar distinction between the two kinds of righteousness: “There is for Paul a clear boundary between ‘the righteousness which is by the law’ and ‘the righteousness of faith’ (10:5–6), and between ‘works’ and ‘faith’ (9:32). The antithetical structure

righteousness that the Jews sought through the law (9:30 [the first “righteousness”], 31; 10:5), and the “extraordinary *dikaïosness*” is the forensic righteousness the Gentiles received from God by faith (9:30 [the last two occurrences]; 10:4, 6).¹¹¹

Scholars have understood νόμον in verse 31 in three major ways:¹¹² (1) principle or rule,¹¹³ (2) the Old Testament Scriptures,¹¹⁴ or (3) the Mosaic Law.¹¹⁵ The first option is implausible because, according to Moo, νόμος can be understood as a “principle” or “rule” only when it is contrasted to the Mosaic Law (e.g., 3:27; 7:23; 8:2); however, such a contrast is absent here.¹¹⁶ The second option is to be rejected because νόμος has a negative nuance in verse 31, whereas Paul never refers to Scripture negatively elsewhere.¹¹⁷ The νόμον then must refer to the Mosaic Law—“the body of commands that God gave to the people of Israel through Moses at Sinai.”¹¹⁸ The phrase νόμον δικαιοσύνης is an objective genitive and can be rendered as “the law for righteousness” or “the law that promises righteousness.”¹¹⁹ Longenecker’s translational note well catches the nuance of the phrase: “a law of righteousness [i.e., a ‘legalistic’ or ‘nomistic’ form of righteousness] in connection with the Mosaic law.”¹²⁰ The Jews strove to meet the demands of the law to attain ethical or “ordinary” righteousness.¹²¹

Israel ran hard to reach the goal of righteousness, but they failed. Why did they fail? Paul answers in verse 32: “Because [they pursued the law] not by faith but as if [it could be reached] by works.” Paul has repeatedly emphasized in the letter that “faith,” not “works,” is the means by which forensic or “extraordinary” righteousness is realized (1:16; 3:22–31; 4:5–20; 5:1–2; cf. 10:6, 11–13). This truth highlights that anyone, whether Jew or Gentile, can receive the gift of righteousness regardless of his or her ability or ethnicity. Despite the simplicity of this truth, the Jews sought to fulfill the law by works. At this point, however, it must be pointed out that Paul

of Paul’s language appears to rule out the possibility that the one could develop into the other in some kind of linear process. While it is true that believing Gentiles have attained precisely the goal that Israel sought by way of the law (9:30–31), that of righteousness, the passage as a whole emphasizes the disjunction between the two righteousnesses. There is a righteousness by faith and a law of righteousness (9:30–31), a righteousness of God and a righteousness of one’s own (10:3), and the form of righteousness that Paul rejects is identical to ‘the righteousness that is by the law’, articulated in the Leviticus citation (10:5). In its proclamation that ‘the person who does these things will live by them’, the law promotes the pursuit of a righteousness of one’s own, arising from an uninformed zeal for God that is ignorant of God’s saving action in Christ (cf. 10:2–3).”

¹¹¹ Irons, *The Righteousness of God*, 316, following Westerholm’s language, says, “Normally, δικαιοσύνης when predicated of humans means ‘ordinary ethical righteousness,’ a usage that is common in both the LXX and in Jewish literature.... When the reference is to ‘extraordinary righteousness,’ the context makes this clear (as well as added phrases like ‘of faith’) and, in any case, even ‘extraordinary righteousness’ presupposes the ordinary meaning as its foil.”

¹¹² Moo, *Romans*, 642–43.

¹¹³ E.g., Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, 279; Murray, *Romans*, 2:43.

¹¹⁴ E.g., Badenas, *Christ, the End of the Law*, 104–5; Cranfield, *Romans*, 2:508.

¹¹⁵ E.g., Schnabel, *Römer*, 357; Longenecker, *Romans*, 827; Moo, *Romans*, 643.

¹¹⁶ Moo, *Romans*, 642.

¹¹⁷ Moo, *Romans*, 643.

¹¹⁸ Moo, *Romans*, 643.

¹¹⁹ Moo, *Romans*, 644; Schreiner, *Romans*, 525. Cf. Cranfield, *Romans*, 2:508; Käsemann, *Romans*, 277.

¹²⁰ Longenecker, *Romans*, 827.

¹²¹ Contra Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 576, who says, “The trouble with Israel is that they have confused the law and the righteousness it speaks of with works like circumcision which serve to make righteousness a function of Jewish identity rather than of God’s gracious outreach to and through faith.”

does not suggest that the keeping of the law itself is evil.¹²² The fundamental problem with the legalistic approach to the law, according to Paul, is that it is always a result of rejecting God's gracious provision of salvation: "They stumbled because of the stumbling stone" (9:32b). They chose *the law of God* instead of choosing *the God of the law*, who has graciously provided the Messiah, the sole provider of righteousness that the law strictly requires (10:3–4). Jews were mistaken to think that it was "the law that promises righteousness" (9:31). They forgot that the law was given to show their sinfulness and to lead them to the Messiah (3:20; 7:7–12; cf. Gal 3:19) and that they as fallen sinners could not meet the law's demands to achieve the righteousness the law promises (3:23; 7:14–25; 10:5; cf. Lev 18:5).¹²³

In Romans 9:33, Paul cites a combination of Isaiah 28:16 and 8:14 to demonstrate that Israel has pursued a wrong kind of righteousness—their own righteousness (9:31; 10:3, 5)—and failed to grasp the right kind of righteousness—God's righteousness that comes by faith (9:30, 32; 10:3, 6).¹²⁴ The apostle explains that Israel's failure was due to "the stumbling stone" (τῷ

¹²² Numerous biblical imperatives presume that keeping the law of God is good and commendable.

¹²³ Brice L. Martin, *Christ and the Law in Paul*, NovTSup 62 (Leiden: Brill, 1989), 137.

¹²⁴ There is a reason why Paul cites more OT quotations in Romans than the rest of his other letters combined. The apostle had not visited the church of Rome at the composition of the letter and, consequently, needed to firmly establish his apostolic authority for those who might doubt his credentials and, consequently, reject his message (Rom 1:13) and his plan for further Gentile mission (15:22, 24, 28–29). Paul's use of the OT helped the Roman believers to embrace his apostolic authority since the authoritative Scripture is in agreement with his gospel message (Christopher D. Stanley, *Arguing with Scripture: The Rhetoric of Quotations in the Letters of Paul* [London; New York: T&T Clark, 2004]) 169–70). Furthermore, OT quotations reinforced the apostle's rhetorical persuasiveness. Concerning the rhetorical value of Paul's OT quotations, see Stanley, *Arguing with Scripture*, 3, 38, 65, 183; G. K. Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament: Exegesis and Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012), 9–11; Kujanpää, *The Rhetorical Functions*, 1, 16. Modern rhetorical criticism can be useful to some degrees. E.g., Stanley Kent Stowers, *The Diatribe and Paul's Letter to the Romans*, SBL 57 (Chico: CA: Scholars, 1987), 93–115, 155–74; George Alexander Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation Through Rhetorical Criticism* (Chapel Hill; London: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 141–56.

Nevertheless, it is highly doubtful if modern rhetorical criticism is as useful as rhetorical critics claim it is in interpreting Paul's letters. For three reasons. First, the fact that rhetorical critics can interact with other scholars who do not utilize modern rhetorical criticism in the discussion of the organization of Romans 9–11 proves that rhetorical criticism is not as necessary as rhetorical critics claim in identifying the overall outlines and argument of Romans 9–11. E.g., Gadenz, *Called from the Jews*, 31–32, considers Romans 9:30–10:21 as a "detour," and yet Moo, who does not utilize rhetorical criticism like Gadenz, also identifies the same section as an "excursus" in the first edition of his Romans commentary (p. 32n44). Second, although rhetorical criticism needs to be one of many factors in one's interpretive process, rhetorical critics sometimes dismiss an obvious textual theme because of the findings from their rhetorical analysis. For example, while Gadenz attempts to "to keep in mind a variety of criteria—semantic, literary, and rhetorical—in determining the arrangement" of a biblical text (p. 169), it is evident that his rhetorical analysis trumps a distinct textual theme when he proposes the major theme in Romans 9–11 in the following way: "Rather than view the *propositio* in 9,6a regarding the faithfulness of God's word as the thesis that governs the whole three-chapter section, it is more consonant with the rhetorical progression of the argumentation to understand as the main issue of Rom 9–11 the question of Israel's salvation in light of the rejection of Jesus as the Messiah by the majority of Israelites" (p. 225). In other words, in Gadenz's terms, Paul's major concern in Romans 9–11 is socio-ecclesiology concerning the relationship between Israel and other nations rather than theodicy: Οὐχ οἷον δὲ ὅτι ἐκπέπτωκεν ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ (9:6a). His claim, however, is unconvincing since Paul does not fully develop the concept of socio-ecclesiology until chapter 11. Gadenz unjustly tries to justify his proposition by considering 9:6–29 and 9:30–10:21 as "digressions" through rhetorical analysis (p. 33). As discussed above, these two sections are integral to Paul's overall argument in chapters 9–11. Third and most importantly, Paul himself claimed that he did not utilize human wisdom and rhetorical skills in his speech and, logically, his writing (2 Cor 2:1–5). Bell, *The Irrevocable Call of God*, 34–35, rightfully argues that the major influence behind Paul's persuasiveness was not Greco-Roman rhetoric but the Old Testament.

λίθῳ τοῦ προσκόμματος), upon which they stumbled (9:32b). The expression καθὼς γέγραπται emphasizes that Paul’s assessment of Israel’s failure is not just his but God’s.

The majority of 9:33 is from Isaiah 28:16, and the middle part is from Isaiah 8:14a.¹²⁵ In the original context, Isaiah 28:16 uses stone imagery as a positive illustration. Nevertheless, Paul replaces the positive adjectives of Isaiah 28:16 (a stone that is “tested,” “precious,” and “settled”)

Table 1. Comparison between Romans 9:33 and the original OT references¹²⁶

Rom 9:33	Isa 28:16 (LXX)	Isa 28:16 (MT)	Isa 8:14a (LXX)	Isa 8:14a (MT)
καθὼς γέγραπται·	διὰ τοῦτο οὕτως λέγει κύριος	לִכְּזֶה הָאֵלֶּיךָ יְהוָה	καὶ ἐὰν ἐπ’ αὐτῷ πεποιθῶς ¹²⁷ ᾗς ἔσται σοι εἰς ἀγίασμα	וְהָיָה לְמִקְדָּשׁ
ἰδοὺ τίθημι	ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ ἐμβαλῶ	הִנֵּנִי דֹפֵן		
ἐν Σιών	εἰς τὰ θεμέλια Σιων	בְּצִיּוֹן		
λίθον προσκόμματος	λίθον πολυτελεῖ ἐκλεκτὸν ἀκρογωνιαῖον ἔντιμον εἰς τὰ θεμέλια αὐτῆς	אֶבֶן בְּחֵן בְּאֵן יִקְרָה מוֹסָד מוֹסָד	καὶ οὐχ ὡς λίθου προσκόμματι συναντήσεσθε αὐτῷ	וְלֹא אֶבֶן נִגָּן
καὶ πέτραν σκανδάλου, καὶ ὁ πιστεύων ἐπ’ αὐτῷ οὐ καταισχυνθήσεται.	καὶ ὁ πιστεύων ἐπ’ αὐτῷ οὐ μὴ καταισχυνθῇ	הַמִּבְטָחִין לֹא יִשְׁחָתוּ	οὐδὲ ὡς πέτρας πτώματι [καὶ ἐὰν ἐπ’ αὐτῷ πεποιθῶς] ¹²⁸	וְלֹא צִוֹר מְבֹשָׁל

¹²⁵ See table 1 below. The language of 1 Peter 2:6–8, which also cites Isaiah 28:16 and 8:14a, largely agrees with Rom 9:33. Some scholars aver that the similarity indicates a common ancestry source shared by both authors. E.g., Christopher D. Stanley, *Paul and the Language of Scripture: Citation Technique in the Pauline Epistles and Contemporary Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 120–21. However, Mark A. Seifrid, “Romans,” in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. Gregory K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids; Nottingham: Baker, 2007), 652, maintains that the addition of Psalm 118:22–23 in 1 Peter 2:6–8 suggests that Paul and gospel tradition influenced 1 Peter. For a detailed hypothesis on the possible influence of Romans 9:33 on 1 Peter 2:6, see Kujanpää, *The Rhetorical Functions*, 141–45.

¹²⁶ Paul largely deviates from the LXX and Hebraizes his Greek language. For a detailed discussion on the wording of Romans 9:33 in relation to its original references, see Kujanpää, *The Rhetorical Functions*, 135–41.

¹²⁷ The idea of the emboldened phrase corresponds to Rom 9:33c (καὶ ὁ πιστεύων ἐπ’ αὐτῷ...).

¹²⁸ This phrase is from the beginning of Isaiah 8:14a.

with the negative expressions of Isaiah 8:14a: “a stumbling stone and a rock of offense.” As a result, Paul can express the paradoxical reality of the stone that refers to the Messiah, who brings the arrival of salvation and judgment and “the conjunction of election and rejection” (Rom 9:6–29).¹²⁹ Seifrid explains how Paul’s conflation of the two Isaiah passages emphasizes a high Christology in light of the broader context of Romans 9 and 10:

According to the former text [Isa 8:14a], it is the Lord himself who becomes the stone of stumbling for his people. According to the latter [Isa 28:16], primary citation text, the stone is placed by the Lord in Zion and thus is distinct from him. Paul clearly uses this text in 10:11 to refer to Jesus as the Lord, the one upon whom one believes.... The simultaneous identity of Jesus with God and distinction from God correspond to Paul’s earlier use of the text in 9:33. Paul thus returns in 9:33 to his opening identification of Jesus as God in 9:5 and develops it throughout this section as he names Christ as God’s righteousness and the one in whom the promise of salvation is fulfilled.¹³⁰

Moreover, Paul openly identifies Jesus as Yahweh of the Old Testament in 10:13 (cf. Joel 2:32).¹³¹

Besides, the revision of Isaiah 28:32 with 8:14 enables Paul to illustrate “the concrete form of the divine decision both to make ‘my people’ out of ‘not my people’ and to address a corresponding word that concludes and cuts short to the innumerable sons of Israel (9:25–29).”¹³² Paul’s language, “the one who believes in him will not be put to shame” (9:33), speaks of the way Gentiles obtained “extraordinary” righteousness “by faith” (9:30, 32) while Israel’s stumbling upon “the stumbling stone” (9:33) speaks of the way they pursued “ordinary” righteousness “by works” (9:32) to establish their own (10:3). The promise of the eschatological salvation from shame (“he will not be put to shame” [οὐ καταισχυνθήσεται]) refers to the future vindication of believers, who receive the gift of righteousness by faith in the Messiah (10:3–4).¹³³ Paul’s use of the Old Testament demonstrates that God has already foreordained the way to receive the gift of righteousness or “salvation” (10:1)—by faith apart from the works of the law.¹³⁴ Further, the Old Testament quotation shows that Israel’s rejection of the Messiah was already predicted in the Old Testament. Paul’s use of the Old Testament language, thus, is “not only a stylistic asset but also enhances the credibility of the argumentation.”¹³⁵

¹²⁹ Seifrid, “Romans,” 651. Some scholars consider the stone as the law (e.g., Barrett, “Fall and Responsibility of Israel,” 144.), both the law and Messiah (e.g., Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant*, 240–44), or the gospel (e.g., Francis Watson, *Paul, Judaism, and the Gentiles: Beyond the New Perspective*, 2nd ed. [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007], 329). Nevertheless, the immediate context (10:11), where the last portion of Isaiah 28:16 is cited again, indicates that both the stone and Jesus are one and the same as the object of Christian faith.

¹³⁰ Seifrid, “Romans,” 651. Carraway, *Christ Is God Over All*, 142, likewise states, “Paul thought the stone in Romans 9:32–33 represented both Christ and God the Father... Paul was not reluctant to apply texts to Jesus alone that in the Old Testament applied to YHWH. There is no reason to think he did not do that here. Thus, the stumbling block here should be identified as Christ.”

¹³¹ Carraway, *Christ Is God Over All*, 109–10, 125.

¹³² Watson, *Paul, Judaism, and the Gentiles*, 324.

¹³³ Seifrid, “Romans,” 652.

¹³⁴ Cf. Rom 1:16–17; 3:21–26; 7:1–6; 8:2–4; 10:2–4, 5–8; cf. Gal 2:16–21; 3:1–4, 13–14; 5:11; 6:12–14.

¹³⁵ Kujanpää, *The Rhetorical Functions*, 148.

As meditating on the current fate of his fellow citizens, the apostle, with an emotional outburst, exclaims: “Brothers, indeed, my heart’s desire and prayer to God on their behalf [are] for [their] salvation!” (10:1; cf. 9:1–3). The vocative ἀδελφοί could signal a transition from a topic to another; however, it is here more of a transition from one aspect of the same topic to another.¹³⁶ The content of Paul’s heartfelt desire and prayer for Israel’s salvation clarifies what he meant when he said, “I could wish that I myself were accursed, *separated* from Christ for the sake of my brethren” (9:3 NASB).¹³⁷ The same soteriological theme is teased out in detail in the rest of chapter 10 (esp. vv. 9, 10, 13). The presence of this soteriological theme in chapter 10 carries the main argument of chapters 1–8 into chapters 9–11 and organically intertwines the salvation theme with the themes of theodicy and ecclesiology.

In Romans 10:2–4, Paul takes one step further to elaborate on the fundamental reason behind Israel’s failure to receive salvation: “they have a zeal for God, but [this zeal is] not in a manner consistent with knowledge” (v. 2). In other words, Israel’s zeal for God was not the problem in itself.¹³⁸ The issue was that their zeal was undiscerning.¹³⁹ Ortlund succinctly summarizes Israel’s quandary of having the undiscerning zeal as follows:

In brief, the zeal of Rom. 10.2 is a Jewish ardency to keep Torah which, when divorced from knowledge of the gift nature of God’s righteousness, funnels into the misplaced attempt to establish one’s own righteousness. This zeal is thus rendered worthless and even reinforcing of one’s opposition to God and his gospel due to ignorance of, and refusal to submit to, God’s righteousness freely available in Christ.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁶ Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 579; Moo, *Romans*, 650.

¹³⁷ It is highly significant that Paul prays for the salvation of his kinsmen right after arguing that their stumbling was planned and carried out by God. This fact instructs those who give up on evangelizing others based on their misconception of God’s sovereignty. Murray, *Romans*, 2:47, well says, “In the preceding chapter the emphasis is upon the sovereign and determinative will of God in the differentiation that exists among men. God has mercy on whom he wills and whom he wills he hardens. Some are vessels for wrath, others for mercy. And ultimate destiny is envisioned in destruction and glory. But this differentiation is God’s action and prerogative, not man’s. And, because so, our attitude to men is not to be governed by God’s secret counsel concerning them. It is this lesson and the distinction involved that are so eloquently inscribed on the apostle’s passion for the salvation of his kinsmen. We violate the order of human thought and trespass the boundary between God’s prerogative and man’s when the truth of God’s sovereign counsel constrains despair or abandonment of concern for the eternal interests of men.”

¹³⁸ In the Pauline corpus, zeal mostly conveys a positive sense (e.g., 2 Cor 11:2; Phil 3:6). Ortlund, *Zeal Without Knowledge*, 115, 126, 171. Schreiner, *Romans*, 530, states, “Paul was doubtless reflecting on his own life as a Jew, a life fueled by zeal for the Torah and for the one God of Israel (Gal. 1:13–14; Phil. 3:4–6; cf. Acts 9:1–5; 22:3–5; 26:4–5). In this regard Paul and other Jews were following a venerable tradition of zeal for God that was illustrated in the life of Phinehas (Num. 25:6–13; Sir. 45:23–24; 1 Macc. 2:26, 54; 4 Macc. 18:12), Simeon and Levi (Jdt. 9:2–4; cf. Jub. 30.4–20), Elijah (1 Kings 19:10, 14; Sir. 48:2; 1 Macc. 2:58), and the Hasmoneans (1 Macc. 2:19–27, 50, 54, 58; Josephus, *Ant.* 12.6.2 §271).”

¹³⁹ Godet, *Romans*, 2:193–94, remarks on the meaning of οὐ κατ’ ἐπίγνωσιν: “He does not use the word γνῶσις, *knowledge* (in the ordinary sense of the word), for the Jews certainly do not lack religious knowledge. The compound term ἐπίγνωσις, which he employs here, rather signifies *discernment*, that understanding which puts its finger on the true nature of the thing. They have failed to discern the true meaning and the true scope of the legal dispensation; they are ardently attached to all its particular rites, but they have not grasped their moral end.”

¹⁴⁰ Ortlund, *Zeal Without Knowledge*, 136. Against the NPP understanding of the Jewish zeal as the zeal for promoting Jewish set-apartness from Gentiles, Ortlund claims: “While the New Perspective has crucially illumined the neglected and important element of Jewish set-apartness vis-a-vis the nations in understanding the backdrop to Paul’s references to zeal, some New Perspective advocates, and Dunn in particular, have over-centralized its horizontal dimension. This results in an imbalanced view of Jewish zeal as referenced by Paul. In the Old

Why, then, was the Jewish zeal undiscerning? Paul answers, “For, because they were ignorant of the righteousness of God and sought to establish their own [righteousness], they have not submitted to the righteousness of God” (v. 3). The surrounding context (9:30–10:13) helps to define the meaning of “the righteousness of God” as forensic/extraordinary righteousness or the right status graciously granted by God through faith.¹⁴¹ Israel’s lack of knowledge about this truth led them to attempt to establish “their own [righteousness]”¹⁴² and, this prideful attempt eventually caused them to reject God’s gracious provision of forensic righteousness through the Messiah for eschatological salvation.¹⁴³

The flow of Paul’s argument in 9:30–10:21 culminates in verse 4.¹⁴⁴ Israel’s attempt to establish their own ethical righteousness and failure to submit to God’s forensic righteousness was an insult to God because they rejected his provision of the Messiah, who is “the goal and culmination of the Mosaic law for righteousness for everyone who believes.” The theologically freighted term *τέλος* has been interpreted in three main ways: (1) goal, purpose, or result,¹⁴⁵ (2)

Testament, the intertestamental Jewish literature, and our three Pauline texts, zeal is generally that which pleases God and expresses obedience to God’s will—not that which, in the first instance, distinguishes from gentiles. While this latter concern is present, it is in the background; in the foreground is a broader zeal to obey God. The vertical dimension is primary; the horizontal, secondary. The form of Pauline zeal is ethnic or social; the substance of this zeal is ethical or moral” (p. 5).

¹⁴¹ Contra Wright, “Romans,” 558, who defines “the righteousness of God” only as “a shorthand... for the entire sweep of covenantally loyal actions God has undertaken from Abraham to the Messiah,” and Käsemann, *Romans*, 281, who understands the same phrase as God’s saving “power.” It is true that the phrase involves the concepts of God’s covenantal faithfulness and saving power since apart from them no provision of salvation is possible. However, in this context, the phrase refers to “the gift of righteousness from God.” Irons, *The Righteousness of God*, 325, says, “Although Rom 10:3 itself does not say that *δικαιοσύνην* comes by *πίστις*, this is the unmistakable message of the entire context: ‘the righteousness that is by faith...’ (9:30); ‘because they did not pursue it [righteousness] by faith..., but as if it were by works’ (9:32); ‘Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes’... (10:4); ‘the from-faith righteousness’... (10:6); and ‘with the heart one believes resulting in righteousness’... (10:10). Repeatedly, Paul says that righteousness comes by faith, not by works.” Irons also examines how Paul uses the phrase “the righteousness of God” in Romans 10:3 and Philippians 3:9 and concludes that on both occasions (along with Rom 1:17 and 3:21), Paul uses the phrase in “the same gift-from-God sense” (p. 334–36). See also, Moo, *Romans*, 651; Schreiner, *Romans*, 530–31.

¹⁴² Contra the NPP scholars who argue that “their own [righteousness]” signifies Israel’s own ethnic righteousness that distinguished them from Gentiles. Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 587; Jewett, *Romans*, 617–18; E. P. Sanders, *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2009), 44–45; Wright, “Romans,” 559; Wright, “Romans 9–11 and the ‘New Perspective,’” in *Between Gospel and Election: Explorations in the Interpretation of Romans 9–11*, ed. Florian Wilk, J. Ross Wagner, and Frank Schleritt, WUNT 257 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 40–42. This phrase refers to the attempt of individual Jews who tried to get right with God through the keeping of the law. Godet, *Romans*, 2:194; Murray, *Romans*, 48; Cranfield, *Romans*, 2:515; Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New on Paul*, 312–13; Ortlund, *Zeal Without Knowledge*, 129–31; Moo, *Romans*, 652–53; Schreiner, *Romans*, 531.

¹⁴³ The fact that Paul criticizes Jews for establishing their own righteousness and rejecting God’s explicitly demonstrates that Paul is here arguing against Jewish legalism. Contra Sanders, *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People*, 154–55, who thinks that Paul’s criticism of Jews is not against their legalism but their failure to recognize the shift in salvation history—Jesus, not the law, is the way of salvation, and Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 595–96; Wright, “Romans,” 558–59, who argue that Paul’s criticism is not against Jewish legalism but their nationalism.

¹⁴⁴ This verse deserves greater attention; however, due to space strain, the discussion will be terse.

¹⁴⁵ Meyer, *Romans*, 2:172; Badenas, *Christ, the End of the Law*, 7–80; Cranfield, *Romans*, 2:519–20; Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, 75–77; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 584; Bryan, *A Preface to Romans*, 168; Jewett, *Romans*, 619–20; Irons, *The Righteousness of God*, 326; Wright, “Romans,” 560–61; Carraway, *Christ Is God Over All*, 132; Frank Thielman, *Romans*, ZECNT (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2019), 489.

end, culmination, or termination,¹⁴⁶ or (3) both goal and end.¹⁴⁷ Despite the claim that the sense of the word must be either “goal” or “end,”¹⁴⁸ it is reasonable to conclude that τέλος has both meanings. As discussed above,¹⁴⁹ Paul’s use of race metaphor helps to understand the interpretation of the ambiguous noun τέλος (10:4) as both goal and end since, as soon as a foot-racer reaches the goal, the race ends.¹⁵⁰ The purpose (εἰς) of the Messiah’s being the goal and culmination of the law is to bring the gift of righteousness to everyone who believes in his person and work. This teaching is an extension of Paul’s soteriological justification that the gift of forensic righteousness is available to everyone who humbly places his faith in the person and work of the Messiah and forsakes any attempt to achieve his own ethical righteousness.

Conclusion

In sum, unlike the NPP scholars’ claim that 9:30–10:21 is primarily part of Paul’s teaching on socio-ecclesiological justification, the apostle in this passage continues to carry the momentum of his previous discussions of soteriological justification—how a person can be right with God by faith apart from a legalistic endeavor.¹⁵¹ This truth, of course, carries significant implications for the relationship between Jews and Gentiles in the church. Nevertheless, Romans 9:30–10:4, along with the previous passages, undoubtedly demonstrates that Paul’s justification is *primarily* soteriological (highlighting the vertical relationship between God and man) and *secondarily* ecclesiological (focusing on the horizontal relationship between Jews and Gentiles).

¹⁴⁶ Hodge, *Romans*, 527–59; Godet, *Romans*, 2:195–96; Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, 284; Murray, *Romans*, 49–50; Käsemann, *Romans*, 282–83; Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 589; Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 380–81; Martin, *Christ and the Law*, 129–44; Stuhlmacher, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, 155–56; Deibler, Jr., *Romans*, 234; John Paul Heil, “Christ, the Termination of the Law (Romans 9:30–10:8),” *CBQ* 63 (2001): 484–98; Watson, *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith*, 332; Bell, *The Irrevocable Call of God*, 70–71; Harvey, *Romans* 2, 252.

¹⁴⁷ Barrett, “Fall and Responsibility of Israel,” 146–47; Beker, *Paul the Apostle*, 106–7; Jason C. Meyer, *The End of the Law: Mosaic Covenant in Pauline Theology*, NACNT (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2009), 212; Kruse, *Romans*, 402–5; Ortlund, *Zeal Without Knowledge*, 119–20; Longenecker, *Romans*, 849–50; Schnabel, *Römer*, 375–79; Moo, *Romans*, 656–59; Schreiner, *Romans*, 531–32.

¹⁴⁸ Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 584.

¹⁴⁹ See fn. 109.

¹⁵⁰ Cf. Moo, *Romans*, 659; Schreiner, *Romans*, 532.

¹⁵¹ Especially, 1:16–17; 2:5–16; 3:9–20; 3:21–4:25; 5:1–11; 5:15–21; 6:12–23; 8:1–4, 28–39.

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