“Scripture and Other Voices in Paul’s Theology”
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A common approach to analyzing Scripture in Paul is to identify explicit texts and implicit allusions or “echoes” and to consider what they have to say about Paul’s theology. The underlying assumption is that Paul’s theological Sitz im Leben was exclusively that of the Jewish Scriptures, which can all too easily can result in a leap-frog hermeneutical approach that overlooks the rich tradition of “other voices” reflected in his theologizing. This paper will focus on those “other voices” and how they help us understand some of Paul’s texts that have been labeled as abstruse thinking or the result of an overactive imagination.

One need not investigate far into Paul’s use of Scripture to find quotation methods and interpretations that could be classified as some of his most embarrassing moments at best or at worst as worthy of academic failure by APA, M.I.A, Turabian or other accepted quotation standards. Several appear so confusing that it makes one wonder if Paul had taken a dictation break only to return and forget where he had stopped. For example, at 1 Cor 14:21 Paul states, “In the law it is written, ‘By people of strange tongues and by the lips of foreigners I will speak to this people; yet even then they will not listen to me,’ says the Lord.”

Yet, one looks in vain for a Scripture that corresponds to Paul’s citation. Isaiah 28:11-12 comes the closest, but it falls short by modern quotation standards. It is not “in the law,” and Paul’s citation does not match the MT or the Septuagint. Indeed, the differences are substantial. And there are significant omissions such as “to whom he has said, ‘This is rest; give rest to the weary; and this is repose.’”

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1 All quotations are from the NRSV unless otherwise indicated.

2 Isa 28:11-12: “Truly, with stammering lip and with alien tongue he will speak to this people, to whom he has said, ‘This is rest; give rest to the weary; and this is repose’; yet they would not hear.” Hans Conzelmann (1 Corinthians [ET Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978] 241-42) and C. K. Barrett (Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians [2nd ed.; Harper’s New Testament Commentaries; New York: Harper & Row] 322) give Rom 3:19 and John 10:34, 12:34; 15:25 as examples of the whole of Scripture designated “Law.” Yet, the Scriptures in Rom 3 are introduced by “as it is written” (3:3; 3:10) and not “as it is written in the Law” as at 1 Cor 14:21. The Johannine passages are not parallel: “Your law says” (10:34), “in our law” (12:34), and “written in their law” (15:25). Nor are the prophets quoted.


4 There is also a difference of person – OT third person “he,” while 1 Cor 14:21 has first person “I will speak,” and of tense – OT past “they would not hear,” while 1 Cor 14:21 has the future “they will not hear.”
In the context of Isaiah 28, the “strange tongues” of a foreign oppressor will be a sign to Jerusalem’s leaders of impending judgment. In a similar way, non-interpreted tongues will serve as a sign of judgment on the Corinthian leaders or believers—so we would expect. But Paul actually goes on and makes what appears to be a reverse theological application, “Tongues, then, are a sign not for believers but for unbelievers; for when outsiders or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are out of your mind”? (1 Cor 14:22-23). As Richard Hays sums up,

“[Paul] quotes an approximation of Isaiah 28:11-12 and then offers an exegetical comment on it. . . . [that] seems to stand in direct contradiction to the explanation that follows. . . . It seems best to acknowledge that Paul’s argument here is somewhat garbled—or at least that it rests upon a complex (and insufficiently explained) interpretation of a notoriously obscure Old Testament passage.”

The Voice of Proverbial Wisdom: 1 Corinthians 9:9 and 2 Corinthians 6:14

Other of Paul citations at first glance simply mystify. For example, at 1 Cor 9:9 Paul states, “For it is written in the law of Moses, ‘You shall not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain’ (οὐ κτημάτες βοῶν ἀλοίπων, 1 Cor 9:9).”6 This time Paul’s quotation is found in Mosaic Law: Deut 25:4. The MT has תורא תורא תורא תורא פומ , “to place a block over the mouth of an animal, to prevent it from using its mouth.”7 The Targumim have “to tie up the mouth of an ox” תורא תורא תורא תורא פומ . The LXX has οὐ φιμώδεις βοῶν ἀλοίπων. Paul’s citation has the hapax legomena κτημάτες instead of the slightly more familiar φιμώδεις. 8

Regardless, the point of the citation is clear: Laborers (including oxen) are to share in the fruits of their labor. And this is exactly Paul’s overall argument in 1 Cor 9: Those who are engage in the work of the ministry deserve to be compensated for their labor. In support, Paul draws on the contemporary analogies of the pay received by those in military service, the produce that the farmer enjoys, and the milk that the shepherd obtains (v. 7). The citation fits Paul’s overall argument in the chapter. “Do we not have the right to our food and drink?” he asks the Corinthians (v. 4). But his comments following the citation do not seem to do so:

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7κτημάτες (B* D* F G 1739) is to be preferred to φιμώδεις (despite strong external support in P56 K A B C, D256 K L P) since the latter can be explained as a copyists attempt to harmonize with the more familiar verb of the LXX Deut 25:4 than visa versa. See Bruce Metzger, A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament (2nd ed.; Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft: Stuttgart, 1994) s.v.

81 Cor 9:9 οὐ κτημάτες βοῶν ἀλοίπων; LXX οὐ φιμώδεις βοῶν ἀλοίπων; MT translated פומ בעור.
Do I say this on human authority? Does not the law also say the same? For it is written in the law of Moses, “You shall not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain.” Is it for oxen that God is concerned? Or does he not speak entirely for our sake? It was indeed written for our sake, for whoever plows should plow in hope and whoever threshes should thresh in hope of a share in the crop (1 Cor 9:8-10)

Richard Hays refers to 1 Cor 9:9 as “arbitrary proof-texting,” where Paul shows no indication of serious interaction with Scripture but simply appropriates the words without consideration of the original context. Stanley wonders if Paul chuckled as he applied Deut 25:4 to himself. Watson speaks of Paul’s “relatively casual use” of Scripture. What is one to make of Paul’s use of Scripture?

Richard Longenecker thinks that a solution lay in seeing Paul’s exegetical method as allegorical and as employing the rabbinic qal wathomer form of argumentation. Yet the “by how much more” (πολλῷ μᾶλλον) language that characterizes Paul’s a fortiori line of argument elsewhere is missing. For example, in 2 Cor 3:9, he argues, “If the ministry that condemns is glorious, by how much more (πολλῷ μᾶλλον) glorious is the ministry that brings righteousness.” We find the same type of argument in Matt 6:30: “If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will not he much more (πολλῷ μᾶλλον) clothe you? And, indeed Paul employs this very argument in 1 Cor 9:12. If others share this rightful claim on you, do not we still more (οὐ μᾶλλον)?” But Paul does not do so with the laboring oxen. He does not say: “If God cared about laboring animals, how much more does he care about laboring humans — especially those who labor among God’s people.”

Hans Conzelmann states that Paul’s exegesis is “allegorical” in accordance with the Hellenistic Jewish principle that God’s concern is with higher things. One does find such a principle at work in Philo, who treats regulations concerning sacrificial animals in allegorical fashion. For example, Philo states: “You will find that this exceeding accuracy of investigation into the animals, figuratively signifies the amelioration of your own disposition and conduct; for the law was not established for the sake of irrational

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9Richard Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale, 1989) 179. Hays seems to have modified his opinion in his commentary, calling 2 Cor 9:9 “an elegant metaphor” used “a fortiori” “in oracular fashion” (First Corinthians, 151). See also Collins, *First Corinthians*, 339.


animals, but for that of those who have intellect and reason” (Spec. Laws 1.260).\textsuperscript{14} Paul also engages in allegorical exegesis in such texts as Gal 4:21-31 (Hagar and Sarah). But the pattern is not found here. The muzelle, the ox, treading, and grain are not treated as figures for a higher reality. Instead, Paul states that God cares nothing for the oxen: “It is not for oxen that God is concerned, is he? Or does he not speak entirely for our sake? It was indeed written for our sake.”\textsuperscript{10} It is possible that there is a play on words. βοῶς (“ox”) and βοῶς (“livelihood, property”) are quite close. Paul would then be saying that God’s concern is not for the βοῶς but for the βοῶς of human beings, particularly those who harvest spiritually in God’s fields. But such a play on words is not the best fit in the context.

Paul does employ farming metaphors elsewhere. In 2 Cor 6:14-7:1, he takes the Deuteronomic law prohibiting the unequal yoking of an ox and a donkey (22:10) and applies it to the unequal yoking of a believer and an unbeliever: “Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers; for what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness . . . ?”\textsuperscript{15} What is to be noted, however, is the uniqueness of the Greek term ἑτεροτύμωτες. The MT has תַּנִּים (“together”) and the LXX Deut 22:10 has ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ (“in the same place,” “together”). In fact, ἑτεροτύμωτες is not found elsewhere in the NT. More, in the Greek Scriptures, it only appears in Lev 19:19 and the statute has to do with crossbreeding and not yoking: “You shall not let your cattle breed with a different kind (καταχείως ἑτεροτύμως).”

Deuteronomy 22:10 does surface in extra-biblical Jewish writers. Josephus simply reiterates the command, “You are to plough your land with oxen, and not to oblige other animals to come under the same yoke with them, but to till your land with those beasts that are of the same kind with each other” (Ant 4.228).\textsuperscript{16} Philo eschews his common allegorical method: “Sacred law takes such exceeding care to provide for the maintenance of justice, that it will not permit even the ploughing of the land to be carried on by animals of unequal strength, and forbids a husbandman to plough with a donkey and a heifer yoked to the same plough!” (Spec. Laws 4.205). Instead, he treats the text as an aphorism that applies to the human realm: “[This] I imagine is to teach the judges most forcibly, that they are never in their decisions to give the worse fate to the humbly born, in matters the investigation of which depends not on birth but on virtue and vice” (Spec. Laws 4.205). The same is true of Ps. Phocylides. ἑτεροτύμως is found in a series of exhortations about fair trade practices that are aphoristic in form: “Always dispense justice and let not your judgment be influenced by favor . . . Do not make a balance unequal but weigh honestly (μὴ κροûεῖν ἑτεροτύμως ἄλλῳ ἵππῳ ἔλκειν; 15).”

Both Philo and Ps. Phocylides support the possibility that Paul is also drawing on a current aphorism. Short maxims that draw on a common life experience such as μὴ .


\textsuperscript{15}Compare 2 Cor 6:14 Μὴ γίνεσθε ἑτεροτύμωτες ἄπιστοις and LXX Deut 22:10 οὐκ ἀμετράδεις ἐν μόσχῳ καὶ ὀνο καὶ πιπτὸ τὸ αὐτὸ.

Yeast maxims are particularly common. "A little yeast leavens the whole lump" appears twice in Paul (1 Cor 5:6; Gal 5:9). Jesus warns his disciples to "Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees" (Matt 16:6; Luke 12:1; cf Mark 8:15). And while the disciples did not initially understand the point of comparison, their response concerning bread indicates that the cultural understanding was there. Leaven maxims also appear in the Hebrew Scriptures: "They are all adulterers, burning like an oven whose fire the baker need not stir from the kneading of the dough till it rises" (Hos 7:4).

The same is true of 1 Cor 9:9. Much confusion regarding Paul's use of Scripture disappears, when the text is understood as a common saying of the day. The unfamiliar vocabulary supports a cultural aphorism. Κρυώ ("to muzzle") appears only here and in 1 Timothy 5:18 in the Greek Bible. The LXX has the more familiar φιμάω (Matt 22:12, 34; Mark 1:25; 4:39; Luke 4:35; 1 Pet 2:15). Αλοιφαπα is found only here and in 1 Tim 5:18 in the NT, and only in Isa 47:2 in the LXX. Βοῦς for "ox" occurs elsewhere in the NT only in 1 Tim 5:18, where two scriptural maxims are invoked, and in Luke 13:15, where Jesus uses Scriptural care for oxen on the Sabbath (Exod 23:4-5, 12) as a warrant for the physical well-being of humans on the Sabbath.17

Deuteronomy 25:4 is similarly confusing unless it is understood as a maxim. It too has no parallels in the legal materials of the Pentateuch or elsewhere in the OT.18 Nor does it fit the broader context of the chapter. It appears as an offhanded comment in the middle of a casuistic legal text that treats such matters as the number of lashes a judge can impose as punishment and the protocols for levirate marriage.19 There is nothing remotely close in proximity that commands the humane treatment of one's livestock. So, as a command, it does not fit, but as an aphorism, it does. Its aphoristic character has been duly noted by a number of commentators.20

17 Exod 20:10: "But the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God; in it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your manservant, or your maidservant, or your cattle, or your sojourner who is within your gates."

18 Exod 23:4-5: "If you meet your enemy's ox or his donkey going astray, you shall bring it back to him. If you see the donkey of one who hates you lying under its burden, you shall refrain from leaving him with it, you shall help him to lift it up"; Exod 23:12: "Six days you shall do your work, but on the seventh day you shall rest; that your ox and your donkey may have rest, and the son of your bondmaid, and the alien, may be refreshed."

19 Hays states that it is not surprising that Paul would have read Deut 25:4 as suggesting justice in human economic affairs, given that the rest of the chapter deals with such matters (First Corinthians, 151). Yet in Echoes of Scripture he states that there is no indication that Paul has wrestled seriously with Scripture; he "has simply appropriated [its] language to lend rhetorical force to his own discourse with minimal attention to the integrity of the semiotic universe of the precursor" (175). Hays appears to overlook the fact that Deut 25:4 does not fit the broader context and that the Greek of this verse lack a LXX "semiotic universe."

Classifying 1 Cor 9:9 as a proverb is pertinent to understanding Paul’s exegesis and theology. Merriam-Webster’s defines a proverb, as a “short, pithy statement of a general truth, one that condenses common experience into memorable form.” Although commonly expressed in apodictic “do not” form, proverbs express a general truth. They are not commands that must be obeyed, but the distilled wisdom of life’s lessons:

Do not love sleep or else you will come to poverty; open your eyes and you will have plenty (Prov 20:13)

Do not remove an ancient landmark or encroach on the fields of orphans (Prov 23:10)

Do not withhold discipline from your children; if you beat them with a rod, they will not die (Prov 23:13)

Because of comparative nature of the genre, determining the point of the comparison is crucial. The “early bird catches the worm” – an observed phenomenon in nature, applies to human behavior as well. If you do something before anyone else, you will have the advantage and therefore the success (all things being equal). Since Near Eastern cultures were primarily agrarian, it goes without saying that any self-respecting farmer knew that they would get more out of their oxen, if they were free to eat while treading. Husbandry proverbs can be found elsewhere. Proverbs 12:10-11 states, “The righteous know the needs of their animals, but the mercy of the wicked is cruel. Those who till their land will have plenty of food, but those who follow worthless pursuits have no sense.”21 So, at face-value Paul’s statement is easily grasped. The wise farmer learns from experience how to get the most productivity from their livestock.

The proposal here is that Paul is drawing on Scripture and “other voices” to develop his theological argument. In this case, the “other voice” is the conventional wisdom of his day. Conventional wisdom is not unique to Scripture. Proverbial sayings have had an integral role in all cultures that value the wisdom of age and experience. Maxims such as “A stitch in time saves nine,” “look before you leap,” and “the early bird catches the worm” are some of the sayings that circulated during my childhood and are still current today. Such maxims continue to be passed from one generation to the next. “You reap what you sow” and “a little leaven leavens the whole lump” are certainly not original to Paul. They are cultural maxims that Paul cites because they not only illustrate his point but also reflect shared communal values.

Lest the Corinthians miss his point, Paul goes on to spell it out:

21LXX Prov 12:10: δίκαιος οἰκτηρέω ψυχάς κτηνῶν πρὸς τὰ ἀδίκα ἄθλα τῶν ἀκακίων ἀναλήμματος. Compare “By means of creatures like this the legislator has handed down (the lesson) to be noted by men of wisdom that they should be righteous” (Letter of Aristeas 148-149 [2nd century BCE]).
μή τῶν βοῶν μέλει τῷ θεῷ ἢ δὲ ἡμᾶς πάντως λέγει δὲ ἡμᾶς γὰρ ἐγράφη ὅτι ὁφελέει ἐπ’ ἐλπίδι ὁ ἀροτριανὸς ἀροτριανὸς καὶ ὁ ἄλοιπον ἐπ’ ἐλπίδι τοῦ μετέχειν (1 Cor 9:9b-10).

The tenses are important. Paul does not say that God did not care about oxen (past tense), but that μέλει τῷ θεῷ (present tense). To focus on the ox is to miss the truism of the aphorism. Workers deserve to share in the fruits of their labor: “For it was written: ‘the plowman plows in hope and the thresher threshes in hope of sharing in the crop.’” It is not clear whether Paul is pointing backward or forward. Some take ἐγράφη óτι as “it [Deut 25:4] was written for our sake because the plowman should plow in hope and the thresher thresh in hope of sharing in the crop.” But ἐγράφη óτι could also be introducing a second quote. “For on our behalf it was written: ‘whoever plows should plow in hope and whoever threshes should thresh in hope of a share in the crop.” Watson rightly points to the parallel in Romans 4:23: Ὅτι ἐγράφη δὲ δὲ αὐτῶν μόνον ὥστε ἐλογίσῃ αὐτό. Collin argues that Paul joins Deut 25:4 to a saying of unknown origin that may derive from oral halakah or traditional lore.

There are several things that support a second quote. First, there is a change of tense. Paul employs his typical perfect passive formula γέγραπται to introduce Deut 25:4. But then he switches to the aorist passive ἐγράφη “it was written.” This is difficult to explain unless a second quote is in view. And there is a change of number. “Do not muzzle an ox (singular)” becomes “God does not care about oxen (plural).” Also, formulaic usage of γράφω followed by ὅτι is typically recitative. And, as noted earlier, the term ἄλοιπον is unique to 1 Cor 6:10 and 1 Tim 5:18, where the same quote is found.

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22The negative μή, can introduce a question expecting the answer “no”; “Surely God cares not about oxen, does he?” But it could be a simple statement of fact, “God does not care about oxen; rather, he speaks entirely for our sake. ἢ can continue the question (“or surely it is for our sake he says this”) or introduce a point of contrast (“rather he says this for our sake”). The force of πάντως is also at issue. Although “Does God not on our behalf say everywhere?” is lexically possible, actually is the better fit in the context: “Is it not on our behalf God actually says this?”

23Also Conzelman, 1 Corinthians, 155 n. 41.

24Although noting the aphoristic character, Watson attributes the maxim to Paul himself. He reads it as an interpretive paraphrase of Deut 25:4, which functions as an intermediate step between a legal injunction about animals and its application to the human sphere (Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith, 424).

25Johannes Weiss, Der erste Korintherbrief (KEG 5; Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1925) s.v.

26Collins argues that 1 Cor 9:9-10 is a “pastiche of two texts linked with one another by means of the verb ‘thresh’ in accordance with the gezerah shawah principle of biblical interpretation” (First Corinthians, 332, 340-41).

27τὸ γεγραπται ὥστε (Mark 7:6; 11:17; Luke 4:4; John 8:17); ὁ λόγος ὥστε ἐν τῷ νόμῳ αὐτῶν γεγραμμένος ὥστε (John 15:25); καθὼς γέγραπται ὥστε (Rom 3:10; 4:17; 8:36); ἐν τῷ νόμῳ γέγραπται ὥστε (1Cor 14:21); διότι γέγραπται [ὥστε] (1Pet 1:16).
As Collins and Watson note, construal as an adage fits the cadence of the text: “The plower ought in hope to plow and the harvester in hope to partake.” The structure is chiastic:

A ὧφείλει
B ἐπὶ ἐλπίδι
C. ὁ ἀρτομιῶν ἀρτομιῶν
C. καὶ ὁ ἀλοῦν
B. ἐπὶ ἐλπίδι
A τοῦ μετέχειν

Paul’s interpretive comments also fit a proverbial application. He does not comment on God’s past intention: “In saying this God did not care about oxen,” but rather on God’s present intention: “God does not care . . . he is speaking for our sake.” Δι’ ἡμῶν is placed first for emphasis: “On our behalf, it was written.” So Paul is not saying that God was not concerned about humane treatment of laboring livestock. There are other Mosaic laws mandating such treatment, including Sabbath rest for one’s ox, donkeys, and cattle (Exod 20:10; Deut 5:14), the equal yoking of farming animals (Deut 22:10), and relieving an animal of its burden (Deut 22:4) – even that of one’s enemy (Exod 23:5). Nor is Paul saying that God is concerned about fair labor laws. He merely states a truism: Just as the farmer expects to share in the fruits of his labor, so also the minister (who plows and harvests) has a right to expect compensation.

Proverbial parallels are not lacking. See, for example, Sir 6:19: “Come to her like one who plows and sows, and wait for her good harvest. For in her service you will toil a little while, and soon you will eat of her produce.” A proverb similar to 1 Cor 6:10 appears in the teaching of Jesus. “A worker deserves his food” (Matt 10:10 ἀξίως γὰρ ὁ ἐργάτης τῆς τροφῆς αὐτοῦ) and “wage” (Luke 10:7 ἀξίως γὰρ ὁ ἐργάτης τοῦ μισθοῦ αὐτοῦ). Matthew’s context is the sending out of the Twelve: Take “no bag for your journey, or two tunics, or sandals, or a staff; for the laborer is worthy of his food.” Luke’s context is the sending out of the seventy-two (or seventy): “Remain in that house, eating and drinking whatever they provide, for ‘the laborer is worthy of his wage.’”

The same proverb with a similar interpretive maxim appears in 1 Tim 5:18. The point of the proverbial “Do not muzzle an ox when it is treading grain” is identified as “a laborer deserves his wages.” It is introduced by the common Pauline formula, “the Scripture

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28 Collins, First Corinthians, 332, 340-41; Watson, Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith, 424 n.21.

29 Hays argues that “on our behalf” has the church in view, making Deut 25:4 a prefiguration of Paul and his Gentile congregations (Echoes of Scripture, 165-166). His rationale is a perceived parallel with Rom 4:23-24: “Now the words, ‘it was reckoned to him [Abraham],’ were written not for his sake alone, but for ours also.” Yet, Rom 4:23 has “not for [Abraham’s] sake alone,” while 1 Cor 9:10 is absolute: “not for the ox.”

30 Hays thinks that Paul had the Lucan tradition in mind even though it is not quoted explicitly (First Corinthians, 152).
says” (Rom 4:3, 9:17; 10:11; 11:2; Gal 4:30). Yet, only Deut 25:4 is technically “Scripture.” Some suppose that the author is applying ἡ γραφὴ to the words of Jesus.

But καὶ can just as well introduce an elaborative or clarifying statement.

So “a laborer deserves his wages” need not be a second Scriptural citation. It could equally be another “voice,” a wise saying of the day that both Jesus and the Pastoral used as a way of connecting with their respective audiences. Marshall wonders if the Lucan tradition and 1 Tim 5:18 reflect a basic principle which would have been accepted in the secular world and thus able to be applied with “authority” to the work of the ministry. Porter notes the aphoristic quality. It was already present in Euripides: “Dolon: So must I toil, but for my pains I should receive fitting wages (ὁ ἔξις μισθὸν φέρομαι); for set a reward on any deed, and it breeds a double favor” (Rhesus 161). It is also present in first century Ps. Phocylides: “Give to him who labors hard his [deserved] wage” (μισθὸν μοχθήσου ἔδω; Sententiae 19). This suggests that “a laborer deserves his wages” was a well-known maxim that Jesus, Paul and others drew upon, similar to “the early bird catches the worm.”

The Voice of Lyric Poetry: 2 Cor 4:13

Some instances of Paul’s use of Scripture leave one in doubt as to why he even bothered. At first glance, they don’t appear to add anything of substance or theological significance to Paul’s argument. 2 Corinthians 4:13 is often cited as one such text. Stanley identifies it as “one of the more obscure quotations in the Pauline corpus”:

But just as we have the same spirit of faith that is in accordance with scripture—“I believed, and so I spoke” (κατὰ τὸ γεγραμμένον ἐπίστευσα, διὸ ἐλάλησα)—we also believe, and so we speak, because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus, and will bring us with you into his presence.

Despite the scant three words, Ps 116:10 (LXX Ps 115:1) is commonly credited as the source of Paul’s words. The Greek matches the LXX exactly: ἐπίστευσα διὸ ἐλάλησα. In the Septuagint, these words begin a psalm: “I believed therefore I spoke, but I was greatly afflicted.” In the MT they come midway and carry a different import: “I kept my faith, even when I said, ‘I am greatly afflicted.’”

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13 H. Preisker speculates that the source is some book now lost that was received as Scripture and was on a par with the canonical OT (μισθὸς, TDNT 4.698 n. 5).


23 Stanley Porter suggests that this was an aphorism which children learned in a school setting (“Paul and Ancient Letter Writing,” in As It Is Written: Studying Paul’s Use of Scripture (ed., Stanley Porter and Christopher Stanley; SBL Symposium Series 50 [Atlanta: SBL, 2008] 105 n. 24).

24 Christopher Stanley, Arguing with Scripture, 98.
In the Septuagint, it is the psalmist’s faith that prompts him to speak out and consequently persecuted. In the MT, it is the psalmist’s faith that gets him through existing persecution that is verbalized as “I am greatly afflicted.”

LXX Ps 115:1 is identified as the source because the Greek ἐπίστευα διὸ ἐλάλησον is found only here in Scripture, although the individual words are common enough. Paul doesn’t cite these three words because they support his argument. Nor does he go on to exegete them. He simply states, “since we have the same spirit of faith . . . we believe, therefore we also speak.” There is no typological interpretation or pesher involved either: “That which the psalmist spoke back then is this which you see now [being fulfilled].” Nor is the text an apropos metaphor or contain some deep allegorical meaning that Paul proceeds to unpack.

Paul’s quotation of the psalmist’s three words is inexplicable unless one considers other hermeneutical possibilities. It is the psalmist’s lyric voice that, in my opinion, provides a reasonable explanation. What appears to prompt the quote is the recognition that Paul and the Psalmist have τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα τῆς πίστεως. The psalmist’s perspective on his circumstances parallels that of Paul’s. The psalmist’s “story” of an outspoken faith despite persecution resonates with Paul. They have a similar faith. The psalmist states, “For you have delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling. I walk before the LORD in the land of the living” (Psa 116:8-9). Paul says, “we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus” (2 Cor 4:14). They also have the same outspokenness despite the consequences. The Psalmist states, “I believed, therefore I spoke, but I was greatly afflicted.” Paul says, “We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair” (2 Cor 4:8). They had similar opponents. The psalmist states, “I said in my astonishment, ‘Every person is a liar.’” (LXX Ps 115:2). Paul says, “persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed” (2 Cor 4:9).

There are differences. The Psalmist speaks in first person singular, while Paul speaks in the plural “we.” His perspective is a corporate one, the perspective of apostolic suffering found throughout 2 Corinthians. And, although they have a common theology of divine deliverance, Paul’s reason for preaching the gospel is not because he knows that there is life beyond the grave. He does it so that others can be the beneficiaries: “Everything we do and say is for your benefit” (πᾶ γὰρ πάντα δι’ ἡμᾶς, v. 15). The God who raised Jesus will not merely raise the gospel preachers but also the Corinthians (καὶ ἡμᾶς σὺν ημῶν ἐγερεῖ) and “present us together with you” (καὶ παραστήσει σὺν ἡμῖν).

Speech-act theory applies. As Anna Wierziacka states, “At the moment of quotation, the quoting author takes on the persona of the original speaker, dramatically reenacting the

35πίστευα “to believe”, the conjunction διὸ “therefore,” and the verb λάλησον “to speak.”

36See, however, Stanley, who argues that the Ps 115:1 quote serves to justify Paul’s ministry (“Paul’s Use of Scripture, “in As It Is Written: Studying Paul’s Use of Scripture” (ed., Stanley Porter and Christopher Stanley; SBL Symposium Series 50 [Atlanta: SBL, 2008] 147).
original speech-event so that the two voices merge into one.” 37 This fits with both the means of delivery – Paul dictated his letters, and with the mode of receipt – the letter carrier read the letter aloud to the recipients. 38 Some have discounted this use of Scripture based on the fact that Paul’s predominately Greek lower-class audience would not be literate enough (let alone biblically literate) to grasp what Paul is doing. 39 Yet, biblical literacy need not be in written form. A culture with a strong tradition of oral communication and memorization should not be discounted. A seven year old church such as the Corinthian church would have heard the Scriptures preached each week. 2 Peter 3:15-16, which speaks of “all of Paul’s letters” and “some things in them hard to understand,” assumes general familiarity gained through some means of communication. The reference to “the ignorant and unstable” who “twist” Paul words “as they do the other scriptures” (τὰς λοιπὰς γραφὰς) shows general familiarity beyond that of a Bible story or two. 2 Timothy 3:16 also refers to πᾶς γραφή as “profitable for teaching, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness.” And, according to 1 Timothy 4:13, it is the role of the pastor “to attend to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, and to teaching” (τῇ ἀναγνώσει, τῇ παρακλήσει, τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ).

It is important to note that lyric poetry as a genre is intended to cause the listener to enter into the world of the singer. Lyric poetry as a genre evokes images, involves the senses, and stirs the listener’s emotions. The memorable character of lyric poetry is key. Most of us learned Psalm 23--"The Lord is my Shepherd I shall not want," not by reading it but by reciting it. It is the rare funeral that does not include its “spoken” words. The negro spiritual, which is still so much a part of our cultural heritage, is similarly emotive. “I have a home in glory land that outshines the sun” is not only theology in the making but encouragement in the living. And although most of the slaves in the South were illiterate, their hymns indicate that they were biblically and theologically well versed.

Not only would the psalmist’s words “I believed, therefore, I spoke” evoke the entire lyrical poem but the same could be expected of the hearer of Paul’s “spoken” words. Like the first line of a hymn, 2 Cor 4:13 is an example of a how a mere three words, when spoken out loud, can bring to mind not only all the lyrics but the music as well. It is important to recall that the singing of hymns, psalms and spiritual song were a vital part of the first century worship experience. The Passover liturgy is a reminder of how often Psalms 113-118 were sung and, hence, familiar. Jesus sung the Hallel with his disciples before crossing the Kidron Valley and ascending the Mount of Olives: “After they sang the Hallel (ὑμνήσατε), they went out to the Mount of Olives” (Mark 14:26). The Corinthian eucharist followed the Passover order of “bread,” “meal,” and “cup.” Paul reminds them, “When [Jesus] had given thanks, he broke [the bread]… In the same way he took the cup also, after the meal saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in

39 Stanley, Arguing with Scripture, 57-58.
my blood” (1 Cor 11:24-25). Two chapter later, Paul notes the inclusion of hymns in worship: “When you come together, each one has a psalm (ψαλμον), a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation” (14:26). Earlier in the letter he states, “Christ our Passover lamb has been sacrificed” (5:7) and informs them at the end of the letter that he will stay in Ephesus until Pentecost (16:8). While this could simply be Paul’s Jewish heritage surfacing, his exhortation to celebrate the Passover feast with sincere and true unleavened bread indicates something more substantial and intentional (ὁστε ἐορτάζωμεν ἐν ἄρτῳ καθελικριμενίᾳ καὶ ἀληθείᾳ; 5:8). Mention elsewhere of the singing psalms (ψαλμοί), hymns, and spiritual songs to God (Eph 5:19; Col 3:16) and the exhortation, “Are any cheerful? Let them sing psalms” (ψαλλέτω; Jms 5:13) indicates that the Psalter remained an integral part of worship and daily life. It is reasonable to suppose that LXX Psalm 115, as one of the Hallel songs, continued to play a liturgical role in the early church.40

Although I am in an ecclesial tradition that recites the Lord’s Prayer, I never see a tear shed, while parishioner say those familiar words. But, as a pianist, playing the Lord’s Prayer in the worship service causes parishioners to shed many a tear. It is not because the music itself moves them (although I professionally trained musician). It is a pairing of word and voice. As I play, they hear the words of Jesus and the voice of Mario Lanza.

Lyric poetry shapes a person’s self-understanding. LXX Psalm 115 shaped Paul’s theological understanding as a suffering servant. As Wright rightly says, LXX Psalm 115 is a prayer of one who is suffering terribly, but who trusts in God and is delivered.41 That makes it a prayer common to all human experience and which would resonate cross-culturally. As the Psalmist recounts how his faith gave him the courage to speak out despite the crippling opposition that resulted, the community of faith hears another “voice” and enters into the life-experience of the psalmist.

The Voice of Tradition History/Jewish Folk Lore

Galatians 3:19

Scholars have long noted details in Paul’s engagement with the OT narratives that go beyond what is found in Scripture. Some have attributed these details to Paul’s creativity. Yet, these same details can be found in other biblical accounts and extrabiblical Jewish materials.42

In some cases what is implicit in Exodus narrative is made explicit in their retelling. One example is διασαχεῖς δι’ ἐγγέλων in Gal 3:19. In answer to the question, Τί ὁ ὁ νόμος; Paul responds, “it was added because of transgressions . . . ordained through


41 N. T. Wright, Justification (Downers Grove: IVP, 2009) 33.

42The Midrashim show the felt need to fill in the gaps left in the biblical narratives regarding events and personalities.
angels (διασταγεῖς δη’ ἀγγέλων) by the hand of the mediator (ἐν χερὶ μεσίτου). The NRSV translates the Greek as “ordained through angels by a mediator.” But the aorist διασταγεῖς is likely a divine passive. God is the agent; angels are his instrument. The NRSV “by a mediator” is literally “by the hand of the mediator.” 42 Two nouns in regimen (Apollonius’ Canon) remain definite (particularly in fixed prepositional phrases) regardless of the presence or absence of the article. 43 There are, of course, exceptions. But in these cases, it is typically the article with the nomen rectum that is dropped, particularly with names. That is not so here. The Greek of verse 20, which includes the articles, confirms a definite μεσίτου: ὁ δὲ μεσίτης ἐνός οὐκ ἔστιν. The possessive genitive “by the mediator’s hand” takes on the character of a title. Τί οὖν ὁ νόμος points to the Sinai narrative.

No angels appear in the Sinai narrative and Paul offers no explanation for his statement. Some suppose that Paul added “angels” to show the inferiority of the Mosaic Law to the Abrahamic promise. 45 If this were the creative hand of Paul at work, a case for theological inferiority could definitely be made. However, the presence of angels at Mt. Sinai is a recurring theme in Scripture. The MT of Deut 33:2 has, “With [God] were myriads of holy ones, from his right a fiery law for them.” The LXX renders the Hebrew יְהוָה מְרַבֵּה כּלָּיִם as ὁι μυριάδων Καῦς ("with myriads of holy ones") 46 and as ἐκ δεξιῶν αὐτοῦ ἀγγέλων μετ’ αὐτοῦ ("on his right were angels with him"). The Syriac version does the same. The Göttingen critical edition surmises that the Greek translator had לְמִדְרָשָׁת instead of לְמִדְרָשָׁת in his text. The psalmist’s Sinai account also reflects the presence of angels: “With mighty chariotry, twice ten thousand, thousands upon thousands, the Lord came from Sinai into the holy place” (Psa 68:17). The LXX translates the MT מְלִית as ὁ κύριος ἐν αὐτοῖς. The Göttingen critical edition has “with his angels” per Deut 33:2.

A Sinai angelic tradition appears three times in the NT: Acts 7:53, Gal 3:19, and Heb 2:2. Acts 7:53 has: “You are the ones that received the law as ordained by angels, and yet you have not kept it” (ὁῖτινεσ ἐλάβετε τῶν νόμων εἰς διασταγὰς ἀγγέλων καὶ οὖκ

41Watson thinks “by the hand of the mediator” is an echo of the phrase “by the hand of Moses” in Lev 26:46 (Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith, 317).


44Some retain קאֲנָן as a transliterated proper noun. But the Jewish association of קאֲנָן with holiness (as in Aquila’s translation ἀπὸ μυριάδων ἀγγέλων) makes “holy ones” a probable rendering. See John Wevers, Notes on the Greek Text of Deuteronomy (Septuagint and Cognate Studies; Atlanta: SBL, 1995) 540 n. 3.
The two nouns in regimen διαταγής ἄγγελον leave no room for ambiguity. The Law is “the ordinance of the angels.” This Jewish tradition is also found in Heb 2:2, where Mosaic Law is identified as “the word spoken through angels” (ὁ δὲ ἄγγελον λαληθεὶς λόγος). The aorist λαληθεὶς is likely a divine passive similar to Gal 3:19. God is the agent; the angels are his instruments (δὲ ἄγγελον). Εἰ with the indicative of reality (ἤγενετο βέβαιος) assumes the factual character of what is being reported: “Since the word spoken through the ordinance of the angels was firm and every transgression or disobedience received a just penalty...” The line of argumentation is an a fortiori one: “How will we escape if we turn our backs on a salvation so much greater” (τῇλικαύτης). This makes the Law “good” but salvation through Christ “so much greater.”

The Law διαταγής δὲ ἄγγελον is a familiar tradition that appears in a wide range of Jewish materials. Jubilees 1:27-28 has, “[God] said to the angel of the presence, “Write for Moses from the first creation until my sanctuary is built in their midst forever and ever.” Philo calls the angels “lieutenants of the Ruler of the universe” and states, “the sacred scripture calls them angels; for indeed they do report (διαγγέλλουσι) the injunctions of the father [God] to his children [Israel], and the necessities of the children to the father (Dreams, 1.141-142). Some suppose that τῷ πατρὶ διαγγέλλουσιν is a reference to human messengers rather than to angels. But the broader context makes it clear that Philo is speaking of angels. Indeed, he states that ὁ δὲ τερός λόγος ἄγγελος εἶς ἐπὶ παλαιῷ. Josephus asserts, “We learn about the most excellent of our doctrines and our most holy things in the laws received from God through angels (ὁ δὲ ἄγγελον παρὰ τῷ θεῷ; Ant 15.136).”

There is no essential inferiority of Mosaic Law here. The presence of angels and the mediation of Moses in the giving of the law were understood by Jewish writers in Paul’s day to signify the great glory of Mosaic law. The same is true of Gal 3:19. The contrast is between the mediator Moses who represents “the many” of Israel and the “one” God who represents himself. Although Gal 3:20 is terse and hence difficult, Paul’s basic point is clear. While Moses is Israel’s mediator, the angels are not Yahweh’s mediator. God may chose to use them. But he is “one,” perhaps as opposed to Greco-Roman polytheistic culture. ὁ δὲ θεός εἷς ἔστιν likely echoes the Shema of Deut 6:4 “Hear Oh

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47See note 44 and discussion above.

48Εἰ with the indicative of all tenses denotes a simple conditional assumption with emphasis on the reality of the assumption (BDF, A Greek Grammar, 371).

49Watson thinks that the evidence for an angelic presence at Sinai is less clear than is often thought (Hermeneutic of Faith 280 n.17). But, given the witness of the LXX, the Psalter, Acts, Paul, Hebrews and a range of other Jewish authors, the evidence is quite substantial.

50Watson supposes that ὁ δὲ ἄγγελον is a reference to Scripture writers rather than to angels (Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith, 280 n. 17). But such a usage is unprecedented.
Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One.” Galatians 3:20 matches the syntax of the LXX: κύριος ὁ θεός ἡμῶν κύριος ἡμῶν εἰς ἔστιν. Hence, Yahweh needs no mediator.\(^{51}\)

However, Israel did. They sent Moses up Mt. Sinai because their fear was too great. “Go near and listen to all that the LORD our God says; then tell us whatever the LORD our God tells you. We will listen and obey” (Deut 5:27). The LXX Deut 5:5 identifies Moses as μέσον “mediator” and his role is defined as εἰς τήν ἀνά μέσον κύριου καὶ ἡμῶν (“to stand between the Lord and you”). The need for mediating angels because of human frailty is found in other Jewish materials. In T.12 Patr. 7.6.2, Israel is commanded to “Draw near to God and to the angel who intercedes for you because he [the angel] is the mediator between God and human beings (οὕτως ἐστι μεσίτης θεοῦ καὶ ἀνθρώπων).” Philo similarly notes that it was Israel, and not God, that was in need of mediators. For God himself:

who knows everything has no need of interpreters. But because it is the lot of us miserable mortals to use speech as a mediator and intercessor, because of our standing in awe of and fearing the Ruler of the universe, and the all-powerful might of his authority, we are in need of mediators (τῶν μεσιτῶν [Exod 20:19]) to speak for us. God, however, proffers us of his own accord, without employing the ministrations of any other beings. (Dreams 1.143-45).

Hence, angels as mediators does not reflect the inferiority of the Law but rather the frailty of humans. God with his “myriads of angels” is at once a picture of the Shekinah glory and the inability of humans to bear that glory. Paul’s statement in Gal 3:19 is therefore in theological accord with his Jewish contemporaries.\(^{52}\)

2 Corinthians 3:7-18

The Exodus tradition appears again in 2 Cor 3:7-18. There are details here as well that do not appear in the MT narrative. This time Moses descends Mt. Sinai with the tablets of the Law in hand. Israel stands in fear of him because of the skin of his face “shone.” This shining is attributed to being in Yahweh’s presence. Moses communicates the Law to Israel and then covers his face. But when he enters the tabernacle to speak with Yahweh, he removes the veil. On exiting, he waits to cover his shining face until he communicates Yahweh’s commands to Israel. There is every indication in the Exodus narrative, that, whether veiled or unveiled, Moses face continued to shine.

Paul’s recounting of Exodus 34 in 2 Cor 3:7-18 contains a number of “add-ons” and differences. First, Paul speaks several times of the “glory” (not merely the shining) of

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\(^{51}\)For further discussion, see Linda Belleville, “‘Under Law’: Structural Analysis and the Pauline Concept of Law in Galatians 3:21-4:11,” JSNT 26 (1986) 53-78.

\(^{52}\)For other examples of Jewish traditions in the NT, see Peter Enns, “‘The Moveable Well’ in 1 Cor 10:4: An Extrabiblical Tradition in an Apostolic Text” BBR 6 (1996) 23-38.
Moses' face. Second, he refers to this glory as "in the process of fading" (present active participle τὴν καταργομένην). Third, Paul states that it was Moses' habit to cover his face (imperfect ἔτιθει) so that the Israelites could not stare intently down to the end of that which is fading (πρὸς τὸ μὴ ἀτενίζασι τοὺς υἱοὺς Ἰσραήλ εἰς τὸ τέλος τοῦ καταργομένου). Fourth, Paul says that whenever Moses is read the same veil remains (ἄλλ' ἐκεῖ σφέρον ἡμῖν ἐὰν ἀναγνωσκῆται Μωϋσῆς, κάλυμμα ἐπὶ τὴν καρδίαν αὐτῶν κεῖται).

The shining face of Moses' and the donning of a veil are not explicitly recalled elsewhere in Scripture. Nor are the language of "glory," its fading character, and Moses' deliberate veiling of his face before speaking to Israel. The proposals for explaining the these "add-ons" are many. Some think posit a midrash that finds its source in Paul's own fanciful thinking. Yet, these details are matter-of-factly stated, indicating Corinthian knowledge of them in some form. Others speak of a pre-Corinthian homily or midrash that Paul composed at an earlier point and now makes use of. Still others suppose that Paul is using an existing Jewish midrash and adding the appropriate Christological details. An increasingly accepted proposal is that Paul is responding to a midrash composed by Jewish opponents.

53The Greek word καταργεῖο is rare in both extra-biblical Greek and the LXX. In the NT it is used almost exclusively by Paul (25/27 times). As a compound of κατά (causative), alpha privative, and ἐργας ("not working," "idle"), it has the basic meaning "to cause to become idle," "to render inoperative," or "inactive." See Luke 13:7 ("to render useless") and Heb 2:14 ("to render powerless"). See LSJ s.v. Paul's point is that although the brilliance of Moses's face was overpowering, it was a brilliance that immediately began to fade, symptomatic of the transient character of the ministry that it represented.

54For example, Barrett states that Paul's exegesis is probably not based on traditional Jewish themes but is a new Christian interpretation, and that there is no reason to think of it as anything but Paul's own work (Second Corinthians, 115). Compare W. D. Davies, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism (4th ed., Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980) 107, n. 2; R. Le Deaut, 'Traditions targumiques dans le Corpus Paulinien? ' (Hebr 11, 4 et 12,24; Gal 4,29-30; II Cor 3,16,' Bib 42 (1961) 44, n. 5.


56H. Windisch (Der zweite Korintherbrief [9th ed., Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1924] 110-112) was the first to make this suggestion.

57See Martin McNamara, Targum and Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972) 112.

I have argued elsewhere that the glorious face of Moses, its fading, and the veiled face of Moses to prevent Israelite gaping was a well-established tradition by Paul’s time. Traditional parallels clearly exist for what is commonly attributed to Pauline creativity – another “voice” that needs to be considered in articulating Paul’s theological understanding.59

It is important to note that the MT merely says that “the skin of Moses’ face shone,” while the LXX has “the appearance of the skin of his face ἐπεφάνισθη ἡ χαρά τοῦ προσώπου τοῦ Μωυσέως μετὰ τῆς πτώσεως τοῦ προσώπου.” The English versions translate “the glory of Moses’ face shone,” while the LXX has “the appearance of the skin of his face” and adds the term “glory.” Pseudo-Jonathan identifies the source for the splendor as the glory: “And Moses did not recognize that the splendor of the image [=‘features’] of his face shone which came to him from the splendor of the glory of the Shekinah of Yahveh.” Targum Onkelos and the Fragmentary Targum go further to state that Moses’ face not merely “shone” but that “the splendor of his face increased”:

TO: Moses did not know that the splendor of the glory of his face increased
FT: that the splendor of his face increased

Israel’s inability to look at it Moses’ glorious face and Moses’ act of veiling his face are commonly found in Jewish materials. Philo’s description approaches that of Paul’s, “Its brightness was so dazzling that [the Israelites] were unable to continue gazing at him” (Mos. 2.70). Since there is nothing in the Exodus narrative that would warrant such a statement, it is probable that Philo is dependent on a Jewish tradition current in his day. The Samaritan Memar Markah 6.3 similarly states that God’s form “dwelt on him [Moses] terrifying all who beheld” and “no one was able to stand before it.” It also mentions the Mosaic veil that served to magnify the glory: “[Moses] wore the shining light for which was prepared a great veil from on high to magnify it” and “the shining light which abode on his face is with him in his tomb” (MM 5.4; 6.6).60

Rabbinic materials abound in references to Moses’ glory, Israel’s inability to gaze at it, and Moses’ act of veiling his face. A brief reference to Moses’ veil occurs in Pesiq. R

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60 A. Diez Macho dates Neofiti 1 as early as the first or second century A.D. For discussion, see Martin McNamara, Targum and Testament, 79-85; Stephen A. Kaufman, “On Methodology in the Study of the Targums and Their Chronology,” JSNT 23 (1985) 123.

10:6, which states, “when Moses came down to meet Israel, they saw his radiance surpassing and brilliant... so that no one could look at Moses until Moses put a veil over his face” (R. Jonathan of Beth Grubin, PAI). Reference to the veiling of Moses’ face also appears in Midr. Hagadol (to Exod. 34:33) where the statement is made: “As soon as he noticed (the brilliance) in himself, immediately then he placed a veil on his face” (as opposed to Exod 34). Rabbinic tradition also has the Mosaic glory diminishing. But unlike Paul, it is because of Israel’s sin that it does so. For example, R. Abihu states that after Israel sinned, “Moses was not able to look in the face of even the most ordinary of them [the angels],” whereas before Israel sinned, the angels had fled from Moses’ face (Cant. Rab 3.7.5). And R. Eleazar (T II) claims that when Israel sinned, God said to Moses on Mt. Sinai: “Have I given you greatness save for the sake of Israel? Hence descend from your greatness, for Israel has sinned and why do I want you.” Then “straightaway Moses became powerless and had no strength to speak” (b. Ber. 32a).

Pseudo-Philo refers to both the splendor of Moses’ face and Moses’ act of veiling. In LAB 12.1 Moses descends from Mt. Sinai “covered with invisible light”—a light so great that it “surpassed the brightness of both the sun and the moon.” And the transformation of Moses’ face was so complete that the Israelites “saw him and knew him not, but when he spoke then they knew him.” That this facial transformation was ephemeral is clear from LAB 19:16 where the author speaks of Moses’ death as the time when his countenance “was changed gloriously and he died in glory.”

The cause for the temporal nature of this facial glory can be inferred from the authors' attachment of the shining face tradition to the first Sinai descent and the Golden Calf narrative to the second descent—the reverse of the biblical account, an order suggesting that the passing of Moses' glory was thought to be a direct consequence of the sin of Israel. Pseudo-Philo’s Exod 34 commentary concludes with the statement, “when Moses knew that his face had become glorious he made a veil to cover his face.” Since the author follows this statement with an account of the sin of the people (the reverse of the biblical narrative) and does not refer prior to Moses’ death either to the facial glory or to any future activity of veiling or unveiling (as the biblical account does), the implication is that Moses covered his face to prevent a sinful people from gazing on the divine glory.62

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62 Contrary to Watson (Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith, 301 n. 54), G. W. E. Nickelsburg (Jewish Literature Between the Bible and the Mishnah [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981] 267-68) and M. R. James (The Biblical Antiquities of Philo [London: SPCK, 1917] 29-33) date this work in the closing decades of the first century A.D. James argues that it is a product of the same school as 2 Baruch and 4 Ezra (46-58). Watson contests a first century date based on LAB 19.7, which refers to “the place where [Israel] will serve me 740 years.” But he overlooks 22.8, where mention is made of “sacrifices which were decreed even until this day,” indicating that the Temple still stood in Pseudo-Philo’s day. As Harrington points out, 740 years of uninterrupted Temple worship could refer to the capture of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, Antiochus Epiphanes, or Pompey (“The Biblical Text of Pseudo-Philo’s Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum,” CBQ 33 [1971] 1-17).
A similar waning of glory appears in the Qumran Scrolls but in connection with the Teacher of Righteousness. The sealing up of the Law within the Teacher of Righteousness results in the light of his face “dimming into darkness” and his “brightness” changing into “blackness” (1QH 5.29-32). Here too, the fortunes of this glory are tied to the Teacher's role as mediator of divine revelation and teacher of the Torah. They are so closely tied that, when the Teacher is forced by his opponents into hiding, he can claim the Torah is hidden as well (1QH 5.11-12). This close association is further evident in the easy shift that is made in 1QH 6.9 and 16.12 between the splendor of the Teacher and the glory and splendor of the Law or the covenant.

Although it might be questioned whether the predominantly Gentile Corinthians would be conversant with rabbinic or other Jewish traditions, Paul's Jewish opponents must be factored in. Paul’s rhetoric throughout these chapters has a clearly visible opponent in sight. His primary aim in the use of Jewish traditions is not to elucidate the biblical text but to forward his polemic—a polemic concerned with providing his recipient with reliable standards of apostolic accreditation. So Paul is not concerned with Moses and the Exodus generation per sé. Instead, they are tools for developing his opening statement in verse 12: “We are very open in our ministerial behavior” (v. 12). Not so his opponents, whose ministry—once glorious but now fading away is reflected in the fading glory of Moses’ face and in his attempt to veil the remnants of that glory (v. 13). By contrast, the permanent character of the gospel ministry is reflected in the ever increasing glory of its ministers and in their openness to subject this increasing glory to public scrutiny (v. 18).

Paul’s use of the Sinai narrative and Jewish traditions is a selective one. He introduces only those features of the text that meet his purpose and adapts them to fit his particular situation. So the fact that Paul makes sustained use of Exod. 34:28-35 says nothing about the primary importance of this text. It merely indicates that various aspects of Moses' behavior and the Israelites' response provide a good foil for what Paul wants his readers to understand.

*The Voice of Jewish Folk Lore: 1 Corinthians 10:4*

The Exodus tradition appears a third time in Paul. At 1 Cor 10:1 Paul states:

> I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock was Christ. Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them, and they were struck down in the wilderness. Now these things occurred as examples for us, so that we might not desire evil as they did. Do not become idolaters as some of them did, as it is written, “The people sat down to eat and drink, and they rose up to play.” We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and fell in a single twenty-three

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64 Watson’s treatment provides helpful clarification ( *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith*, 274-313).

65 This means that 2 Cor. 3:7-18 is not a running commentary on Exod. 34:28-35 as some have assumed.
thousand day. We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did, and were destroyed by serpents. And do not complain as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer. These things happened to them to serve as an example, and they were written down to instruct us, on whom the ends of the ages have come (vv. 1-11).

The only explicit Scripture quote is found in verse 7: “Do not become idolaters as some of them did; as it is written, ‘The people sat down to eat and drink, and they rose up to play’” (LXX Exod 32:6). But that Paul is drawing on more than the Exodus Golden Calf narrative can be seen in his references through the chapter to Moses and Israel passing through the sea, being led by a cloud, fed spiritual food and drink, and struck down in the wilderness (among others). As Watson shows, portions of Exodus and the breadth of Numbers 11-25 are in evidence. Paul himself makes this plain in verse 11, where he states, “Now these things happened to them as an example and were written down to instruct us.” It is also clear that more than Exod 32:6 is in view from the thrice repeated plural ταῦτα ἑγερθήσαν (‘these things occurred’ v. 6), ταῦτα ουρέθησαν (‘these things happened’ v. 11) and ταῦτα ἑγράφη (‘these things were written,’ v. 11).

1 Corinthians 10 has a paratactic focus. Paul references the poor choices made by the wilderness generation as a warning about continuing involvement in idolatrous and sexually immoral associations. His moral exhortation begins at verse 6: “Now these things occurred as examples for us, so that we might not desire evil as they did. Do not become idolaters as some of them did . . . We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did” (vv. 6-8). The consequences for Israel were the death of twenty-three thousand in a single day (v. 8), destruction by serpents on another occasion (v. 10) and death at the hands of “the Destroyer” on still another (v. 11). What happened to the wilderness generation is invoked by Paul because the Israelites, like the Corinthians, had enjoyed unprecedented spiritual privileges and blessings: “In every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind . . . so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift (1 Cor 1:5-7). But the receipt of such divine blessings did not assure a


67 See Watson, Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith, 354-411.

68 Stanley et alii identify the Corinthian spiritual blessings as the bread and the wine of the Eucharist. Just as Israel was nourished by divinely provided manna and water, so the Corinthians were nourished by the bread and wine of the Eucharist (Arguing With Scripture 87). Yet, this assumes a sacramental understanding of the Lord’s Supper that is not in evidence. And it doesn’t take into account the other named Exodus blessings of the divine cloud and passage through the sea as well as baptism into Moses. Some go even further and argue that Paul is responding to a Corinthian belief that baptism and the Eucharist ensured their salvation. See Barrett, First Corinthians, 224 and Gordon Fee, The First Epistle to the Corinthians (NICNT; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987) 443. Meeks correctly identifies the point of comparison as the Israelites’ eating and drinking to Baal and the Corinthians eating and drinking to idols.
positive end for the Israelites and neither will the Corinthian spiritual blessings do so for them.\textsuperscript{69}

One might ask what Gentile Corinth has to do with Jewish Jerusalem? Why does Paul even bother to invoke Israelite history? The rationale is his inclusive statement in verse 1 “for our [common] ancestors” (ὅτι οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν). Although “our ancestors” could include only Paul and his Jewish kinsmen, the hortatory subjunctives that follow show Jew-Gentile inclusion: “Let us not engage in sexual immorality (μηδὲ πορνεύωμεν) as some of [our ancestors] did . . .” (vv. 8-11). Paul assumes thereby that the story of Israel is the Corinthians’ story as well.\textsuperscript{70} The matter-of-fact character of his statements supports Corinthian knowledge of their common heritage and of these Scripture narratives as their shared tradition.

The basis for the Corinthian’s inclusion is found in Paul’s second hortatory subjunctive, “Let us not test Christ as some of them did.” There is some textual variation. Τὸν Χριστὸν has the weighty and diverse support of P\textsuperscript{46} D F G Byz and Old Latin, Vulgate, Syriac, and Coptic versions, while τὸν κύριον finds support in K B C P and Θέος in A and 81. Τὸν Χριστὸν is preferred not simply on the basis of external evidence but also as the more difficult reading. The difficulty of explaining how the ancient Israelites in the wilderness could have tempted Christ probably prompted some copyists to substitute either the ambiguous κύριον or the unobjectionable Θεὸν.\textsuperscript{71} If so, then “We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did” has profound ecclesial significance.\textsuperscript{72}

Some have raised doubts about the Corinthian’s theological self-understanding, given Paul’s opening words, “I do not want you to be unformed concerning.” To be sure, Paul typically uses the epistolary formula οὐ θέλω γὰρ ἡμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν to disclose new information.\textsuperscript{73} Yet, the wilderness narrative is not what is being presented as new. Paul’s explanation only begins in verse 6 “Now these things occurred as examples (or “as types”) for us (ταῦτα δὲ τύποι ἡμῶν), so that we might not desire evil as they did” and

\textsuperscript{69}Some go further and posit Paul’s use of a pre-existing midrash on Numbers. There is some justification for this. There are a number of words that only occur here and in Numbers. See Collins, First Corinthians, 364.

\textsuperscript{70}Stanley understands “our ancestors” to be a rhetorical versus theological move on Paul’s part (Arguing With Scripture, 75-76, 86). Paul doesn’t really see himself and his Gentile converts as having a common ancestry. He includes the Corinthians merely as a means to gain a hearing. Yet Abraham (and his descendants) as the common ancestor of both Jewish and Greek believers is a core Pauline conviction in Romans 4 and Galatians 3. For further discussion, see Hays, Echoes of Scripture, 95-96.


\textsuperscript{72}As Hays has argued (Echoes of Scripture, 91-104).

\textsuperscript{73}See Rom 1:13; 11:25; 1 Cor 12:1; 2 Cor 1:8 and the positive formulation “I want you to know” in 1Cor 11:3; Col 2:1.
then again at verse 11: “Now (δε) these things happened as an example (or “typically” τυπικώς) and were written down for our instruction (ἐγράφη δε πρὸς νουθετών τιμῶν). Paul’s application starts at verse 14 with the command, “Therefore, my dear friends, flee from the worship of idols.”

The key lies in understanding what is meant by the Greek terms τύποι (v. 6) and τυπικώς (v. 11). Some take τύπος in the hermeneutical sense of typology - a prefiguration of something yet to come; an OT shadow that finds its substance in the NT. When the “substance” becomes a reality, the “shadow” no longer has a purpose and fades into the sunset. While this certainly is what Paul says elsewhere about the Mosaic Law and the Jewish sacrificial system (e.g., Gal 3:19, 24 “until the seed comes . . . until Christ”), this is not what τύπος means here. Israel’s golden calf incident is not a foreshadowing of Gentile idolatry and sexual immorality. Others argue that God’s provision of manna, quail and water are the “type”—a foreshadowing of the bread and wine of the Eucharist. Yet, no explicit typology is drawn between the two in these verses.

Instead, Paul’s four-fold prohibition (“Do not . . . let us not . . . let us not . . . Do not”) leading up to the command at verse 14 to “flee idolatry” makes 1 Cor 10 paraenetic in form and function. This accords with the semantic range for τύπος, which includes “the impression made by the blow (mark, trace).” What happened to Israel leaves an ethical impression and hence provides a set of “moral” footprints whose track should not be followed. Paul’s statement, “it was written down for us,” indicates as much. The act of writing assured a story’s value as a lesson for subsequent generations. One can, therefore, speak of certain Scripture passages as a τύποι texts – texts that leave a “moral impression.”

Paul recalls two exodus and two wilderness narrative events. “Our ancestors were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea” (vv 1-2) is a highly condensed summary of Israel’s deliverance from Pharaoh’s army via passage through the Red Sea and of God leading via a cloud as Israel made its way to Mt. Sinai (Exod 13:12-22; 14:21-22). “All ate the same spiritual food and all drank the same spiritual drink” (vv. 3-4) recalls how God provided for


75See, for example, Hays, who argues that Israel’s story is a prefiguration of the church with its sacraments (Echos of Scripture, 95). See also W. F. Orr and J.A. Walther. 1 Corinthians. (Anchor Bible; Graden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1976) 245; Gordon Fee, The First Epistle to the Corinthians (NICNT; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987) 446-447.

76See n. 66 and discussion above.

77Raymond Collins, First Corinthians. (Sacra Pagina 7; Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1999) 367. Also Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, 168.

78LSJ s.v.

79Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, 157
Israel’s physical needs in the wilderness through manna from the sky, quail from the land, and water from a rock (Exod 16:1-36; 17:1-7; Num 20:2-13; 21:16-17). Yet Paul goes on to matter-of-factly state that the source of Israel’s water supply was “from the spiritual rock that followed them” through the wilderness,” and that “the rock was Christ.” Did Paul’s creative thinking get out of hand and lead him to impulsively fill in the blanks? After all Moses strikes a rock at the beginning of their wilderness journey (Exod 17:6) and then forty years later he strikes another rock (Num 20:8-11). How did Israel get its water in between? Perhaps Paul surmised that there must have been a rock that traveled with Israel and provided their water in the wilderness -- a “rolling stone.” Some think that Paul got his inspiration from the Deut 32, where God is said to be Israel’s “Rock” five times. Yet, when Paul does cite Scripture, it is the Greek Old Testament (or similar Greek text) was the Bible of his Greek speaking converts. And, while the MT has ἄραν ("rock"), the LXX oddly enough has θεός instead.

It is important to notice that God’s provision of water by means of a “rolling stone” can be found in a wide-range of Jewish materials, beginning with the Psalter and continuing through rabbinical literature. It is this “other voice” of tradition history (Jewish folk-lore) that easily accounts for Paul’s “rolling stone” statement in 1 Cor 10:4. Tradition history filled in the “narrative blanks” between the first rock striking and the second one forty years later. The start of this tradition can be found in Psalm 78:15-16. The first part recalls both rock strikings: “He split rocks open in the wilderness, and gave them drink abundantly as from the deep.” But what was Israel’s ongoing source of water? The Psalmist says, “[The Lord] made streams come out of the rock, and caused waters to flow down like rivers (ἐξηράγει ὕδωρ ἐκ πέτρας καὶ κατήραγεν ὡς ποταμοῦ ὕδατα)—a detail not found in the Wilderness tradition. The Septuagint has a single rock (unlike the

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80Πνεumaticός can mean that the food and water have “typological” significance. In this case the manna/quail and water would be “types” of the bread and blood of the Eucharist. But there is no explicit connection drawn between the two here. It is more likely that Πνεumaticός refers to food and water that is supernaturally provided--supplied by an act of God. It is unlikely that Πνεumaticός is to be understood as “sacramental” as Koch does (Die Schrift als Zeuge, 215-216). See n. 66.

81Deut 32:4 “The Rock, his work is perfect”; 32:15 “scoffed at the Rock of his salvation” 32:18; “You were unmindful of the Rock that bore you” 32:20; “unless their Rock had sold them” 32:31; “For their rock is not as our Rock” 32:37. Compare, “he suckled him with honey out of the rock and oil out of the flinty rock” 32:13; “Where are their gods, the rock in which they took refuge” 32:37.

MT); which may well be the basis for further embellishments: Moses “split open a rock in the wilderness (διέφρηξεν πέτραν ἐν ἑρήμῳ).”83 By the Hellenistic period “a rock” had become “the rock” which quenched Israel’s thirst: “On you they called when they were thirsty, and from the rocky cliff water (ἐκ πέτρας ἀκροτόμου ὄωρ 84) was given them, from hard stone a remedy for their thirst (Wis 11:4 NJB).85 The picture is that of a specific rock standing in-wait to provide water for Israel, whenever they called upon God. By Paul’s day, the tradition is fully formed. Philo speaks of “Moses who smote the precipitous rock which poured forth water in a stream, so that it not only then furnished a relief from thirst, but also supplied for a long time an abundance of drink for so many myriads of people” (Mos. 210-211).86 Pseudo-Philo goes further: “It [the water] followed them in the wilderness forty years and went up to the mountain with them and went down into the plains” (LAB 11.15). The presence of a moving source of water in Pseudo-Philo demonstrates that such a tradition was roughly contemporaneous with Paul.87

Further embellishments can be found in post-Pauline rabbinic materials. The rock becomes a well that traveled up hill and down dale with Israel: “The well which was with the Israelites in the wilderness was a rock, the size of a large round vessel, surging and gurgling upward, as from the mouth of its little flask, rising with them up onto the mountains, and going down with them into the valleys (T.Sukka 3.11[196]).88 It is found in the Targumim as well: “The well which the leaders of the people dug . . . went down with them to the valleys, and from the valleys it went up with them to the high country. And from the high country to the descents of the Moabite fields, at the summit of the height” (Tg.Ong. Num 21:16-20). The change from “rock” to “well” is probably due to the influence of Num 21:16-17, “From there they continued to Beer; that is the well of which the LORD said to Moses, ‘Gather the people together, and I will give them water.’ Then Israel sang this song: “Spring up, O well!—Sing to it.” Pseudo-Philo includes both rock and well traditions. “Now he led his people out into the wilderness; for forty years he rained down for them bread from heaven and brought quail to them from the sea and brought forth a well of water to follow them (LAB 10:7; see above).

But why does Paul even bother to reference this piece of Jewish lore? What does this “other voice” contribute to his paraenetic exhortation? The fact that Paul supplies no source or explanation suggests that the Corinthians were well aware of this part of the


84This ὄωρ ἐκ πέτρας becomes definite with the addition of the genitive ἀκροτόμου.

85LXX ἐδίψησαν καὶ ἐπεκαλέσαντο σε καὶ ἔδωθε αὐτοῖς ἐκ πέτρας ἀκροτόμου ὄωρ καὶ ἑκατά δίψης ἐκ λίθου σκληροῦ. πέτρας ἀκροτόμου is a steep rock cliff and not “flinty rock” as translated in the RSV and NRSV. LSJ s.v.


87A first century date for Pseudo-Philo is scholarly consensus. See n. 61.

88Compare b.Taan 7a; Midr..Num 1.2; b.Shabb. 35a.
story. Paul may well have included it in his preaching and teaching prior to the writing of 1 Corinthians. Is it possible that Paul was not conscious of what he was doing? Some see in Paul's seemingly offhanded reference a use of “interpreted Bible.” Paul was not consciously adducing an existing exegetical tradition but, rather, simply telling the biblical story in the form he had learned it as a child.\(^9^9\) Yet, his interpretive comment “and Christ was the rock” indicates clear intentionality on Paul’s part. It could well be, as Willis proposes, that the tradition was simply “in the air” during Paul’s day.\(^9^0\) Or it could have been one of the Bible stories that Jewish children learned and that Paul, in turn, passed along to his Gentile converts. The telling of stories was as much part of Jewish culture as it is of our culture. “My father was a wandering Aramean” is the start to the Passover Haggadah (\textit{m.Pes.} 10.4).\(^9^1\) “Tell me the old, old story” is the first line of a familiar hymn today.

Paul’s inclusion of an old, old story does not require a word for word reproduction of a specific biblical text. Authors usually tell a story to make a point or to illustrate a biblical truth. Every story has a point, and the traveling rock story does make an important theological one. It attests to God’s constant care for and provision of his people. God’s greatness and faithfulness is highlighted by Paul in the opening verses of chapter 10. No one is excluded. “All” is repeated four times. \textit{All} passed through the Red Sea on dry ground. God didn’t lose one Israelite in the process. \textit{All} were led by means of a divine cloud. None fell by the wayside. \textit{All} ate the miraculously provided food. \textit{All} drank the miraculously provided water. Israel’s God was so committed to his people that he gave them a watering hole—a rock that followed them throughout the wilderness years. Yet, despite God show of greatness and faithfulness, Israel turned away and worshipped other so-called gods. “Do not become idolaters as some of them did; as it is written,” Paul states. “The people sat down to eat and drink, and they rose up to play.” In other words, the tradition of the “traveling rock” highlights the enormity of Israel’s sin. What adds further to sin’s enormity is Paul’s statement “this rock was Christ.”

\textit{The Voice of Re-Read Scripture: The Χριστός Factor}

1 Cor 10:4

As Gordon Fee states, “the rock that followed [Israel]” is one of Paul’s more intriguing uses of the OT.”\(^9^2\) However, even more intriguing is Paul’s identification of the

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\(^9^1\) Martin McNamara thinks in terms of an extra-biblical tradition with which Paul takes so much for granted that he has forgotten that his Gentile converts might not be as well informed in such Jewish lore as he himself was (\textit{Palestinian Judaism}, 241). Enns pushes it one step further and posits that such Jewish lore actually represented Paul’s his own understanding of the event (“The Movable Well,” 33 n. 18).

\(^9^2\) Gordon Fee, \textit{The First Epistle to the Corinthians} (NICNT; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987) 443.
wilderness rock with Christ himself: “Now that rock was Christ.” In so saying, Paul
moves from a theology of God’s faithfulness (πιστοτωρεία ἢκολουθοῦσας πέτρας) to
Christology (ἡ πέτρα δὲ ἦν ὁ Χριστός). While, a traveling rock can be deduced from the
Wilderness tradition, Christ as that rock cannot. Where is it written? It isn’t. So, is this
Paul’s real flight of fancy or creative genius at work? Or is there a valid Scriptural basis
for Paul’s rock Christology?

Allegorical interpretations of “rock” and “well” Scriptures are well-established in Jewish
writers. Philo’s allegorical interpretation of the wilderness rock as the Wisdom of God
is perhaps the closest parallel to Paul’s interpretive move in 1 Cor 10:4: “For the cliff
rock is the Wisdom of God, which being both sublime and the first of things he quarried
out of his own powers, and of it he gives drink to the souls that love God (Alleg. Interp.
2.86). But the precedent is already there in the Wisdom literature of the Apocrypha:
“Wisdom prospered their works by the hand of a holy prophet They journeyed through
an uninhabited wilderness . When they thirsted they called upon you [Wisdom] and
water was given them out of flinty rock and slaking of thirst from hard stone” (Wis
11:1-5). Even so, there is no Jewish author who makes the interpretive move that Paul makes.

Some see in Paul’s comment an example of Jewish pesher. Pesher was certainly a well-
established Jewish exegetical methodology in Paul’s day. Inanimate objects in the
Scripture are interpreted as animate: “The stone (λίθον) that the builders rejected” (LXX
Ps 117:22) is identified in the NT as “Jesus”: In Acts 4:11 “‘The stone’ is this one, Jesus”
(οὐτός ἐστιν ὁ λίθος; Acts 4:11). Paul does this himself. Yahweh in the “old covenant”
becomes the Spirit in the new covenant. Moses unveiled his face when he entered the
tabernacle to come before the Lord (πρὸς κύριον; 2 Cor 3:16). “Now this Lord today,”
Paul states, “is the Spirit” (ὁ δὲ κύριος τὸ πνεῦμα ἐστιν v. 17). However, in the case
of 1 Cor 10:4, Paul does not say that the wilderness rock back then is now to be
understood as Christ. He says the rock back then was Christ.

Paul’s interpretive move is unprecedented. Is it an attempt, following his Damascus road
encounter, to see “Christ” under every rock of Scripture? Perhaps the “Lord he saw
providing for Israel’s needs was the second member of the Trinity and the detail of a
“rolling stone” is collateral Christological damage.

Hays is probably close to the mark in seeing a “re-reading of the Exodus narrative in light of
Christology” — the Χριστός factor, Jewish folk lore interpreted through the lens of
salvation history. It is fairly easy to see how Paul got there. First there is the Exodus

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93See, for example, CD 6.4: “The ‘well’ is the Law [Num 21:16-17].”

94See Longenecker, Biblical Exegesis, 38-45.

95Linda Belleville, “‘The Lord is the Spirit’: A Look at Paul’s Exegetical Methodology in 2 Cor 3:16-18.”

96Hays, First Corinthians, 151. Although this is not Hays understanding in his earlier work Echoes of
Scripture.
tradition of God caring for Israel in the wilderness through a rock which Moses struck once at the beginning of their journey and then again at the end. Second, there is the Psalter tradition of God providing for Israel’s ongoing water needs by means of a river that gushed forth from the rock. Third, there is the logical conclusion that in order for Israel’s God to provide a steady water source, the rock must have followed them during their journey. After all, God provided direction for Israel by means of a traveling cloud by day and a traveling pillar of fire by night. Why not a traveling rock? If God was a traveling cloud, who was the traveling rock? Ἡ πέτρα ἐκ ἦν ὁ Χριστός! While it might be uncommon logic for moderns, it would not be so for a Jewish rabbi, who was trained in the rabbinic interpretive method of associating words, phrases and concepts found throughout Scripture (“pearl stringing”).

Yet, I think there is more. I am not suggesting that Paul’s interpretive move provides us with a warrant for finding Christ under every “rock” of Scripture as some have done. I think that 1 Cor 10:4 may provide us with an example of re-read Bible— not in light of Paul’s newly found Christology, but rather as a product of his incarnational theology. This is an hermeneutical angle that I do not think has been sufficiently explored. It has been well established that Paul reads Scripture through the lens of “Christ crucified” and “Christ as Lord.” But what about through the lens of the “Word-become-flesh”? Salvation history by its very nature is incarnational. God relates to his people in very tangible ways—a cloud, a voice, a pillar of fire, all visible manifestations of his care-giving nature. Why not Christ? The incarnation is central to Paul’s thinking elsewhere: “[Christ] who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness” (Phil 2:6-7). So why not in 1 Cor 10:4 as well?

There is an interpretive precedent. The Fourth Gospel recounts, “On the last day of the festival, the great day, while Jesus was standing there, he cried out, “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, and he who believes in me, as the scripture has said, ‘out of its [or “his”] belly (ἐκ τῆς κοιλίας αὐτοῦ) shall flow rivers of living water’” (John 7:37). While, this text has its own exegetical challenges, it is clear that the Wilderness tradition is in view. A case has been made by Johannine scholars that Exod 17:6 and Num 20:11 were among the scriptures read during the Feast of Tabernacles. The MT Exod 17:6 has נַפְלָה ("from within") and the LXX has ἐξ αὐτῆς [τὴν πέτραν], the interior cavity of the rock from which the wilderness water sprung forth. The Johannine ἐκ τῆς κοιλίας αὐτοῦ ἱέρωμον ὕδατος ζωτικοῦ. can thus be translated “out of its [the rock’s] cavity will flow rivers of running water.” It would not be much of a “leap” (to use the language of Richard Hays) for Paul, if familiar with this saying of Jesus, to identify the wilderness rock with Christ. Oscar Cullmann, in fact, proposes this very thing, arguing that Paul was dependent on a saying like John 7:37.

There is also some contextual support for an incarnational rock. Paul’s references to Christ in 1 Cor 10 call for consideration. Paul exhorts the Corinthians not to put Christ to

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97 See, Longenecker, Biblical Exegesis, 114-117.
98 Oscar Cullmann, I Corinthians NIDNTT 6.97.
the test, as some of [the Israelites] did, and were destroyed by serpents (v. 21; as the accepted variant, see above). He also warns, “You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons. Or are we provoking the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he?” (v. 22) – a clear reference to Christ. Theologically, “the cup of blessing that we bless” is “a sharing in the blood of Christ” and “the bread that we break” is “a sharing in the body of Christ” (v. 16). Part of this “sharing” included a call to remembrance: “Do this in remembrance of me.” (1 Cor 11:24). That this “remembrance” would have included the life of Jesus (including the incarnation) is a reasonable conjecture.

2 Corinthians 3:7-18

Similar to 1 Cor 10:4, there are elements of 2 Cor 3:7-18 that can’t be accounted for on the basis of Jewish traditions or interpretations. Three of the most intriguing ones are the rationale for Moses’ face veil, the fading glory of his face, and the veil that remains over Moses down to this very day. And, here, the Ἐρωστός factor is quite clear—Paul reading Scripture through the lens of salvation history.

His interpretive move this time is from plight to solution. Paul’s plight is the lack of response among the Jews of his day to the gospel message. It is a plight that he struggled to understand throughout his ministry. In Roman 9:2-3 he states, “I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my own people, my kindred according to the flesh.”

His opponents rationale for Paul’s plight can be teased out of the references in 2 Cor 10 to his “despicable speaking ability” and his “rumpled appearance” (v. 10)—he simply didn’t have what it took to be a successful evangelist. Paul explanation is quite different; his is a theological rationale: Israel’s lack of response to Paul’s gospel preaching is due to Moses putting a veil over his face to keep the people of Israel from gazing down to the last glimmer of his fading facial glory (vv. 13). Whether Moses’ motive was negative or positive is moot. The result was, “But [the Israelites] minds became dull” (v. 14a; ἔποροθή ἐκ ἀρχῆς progressive aorist). Paul statement finds no basis in the Exodus narrative. All Exod 34:30 says is that Israel was initially afraid to approach Moses. Nor are there any parallels in Jewish tradition.

So how did Paul arrive at this conclusion? He reached it by looking at Israel in his own day. “For to this day,” Paul says, “the same veil remains when the old covenant is read” (literally “over the reading of the old covenant” [ἐπὶ τῇ ἀναγνώσει τῆς παλαιᾶς διαθήκης] v. 14b). The “same” veil is the veil that Moses used to cover the splendor of the Mosaic covenant reflected on his face. Only, instead of lying over Moses’ face, it now lies over the Mosaic covenant (ἐπὶ + dative). That Paul can speak of Moses’ facial splendor and the glory of the “old” covenant in the same breath is not surprising since to the average Jew, Moses and the Torah were virtually interchangeable. Indeed, Paul can

992 Cor 10:10 “For they say, ‘His letters are weighty and strong, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible.’”

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easily shift between the two, as "the reading of the old covenant" and "the reading of Moses" in verses 14-15 show.

Paul's rationale for the Jews' lack of response in his own day is based on a theological interpretation of the Sinai narrative that arises out of his Christian ministry experience. What else would explain the current condition of Israel's blindness to the glorious truths of the new covenant, save that this blindness was already there at the outset, so that Israel was never properly prepared for the fulfillment of God's promises in Jesus Christ. Moses' veil prevented them from seeing the fading glory and understanding its significance -- that the Mosaic covenant was only temporary (v. 11) and already at its inception was becoming "old" (v. 14b). Their blindness is theological. Jewish authors are unanimous in this respect. None entertain the possibility that the Mosaic covenant is anything but eternal and life-giving. Israel's blindness is also spiritual. But "to this day," Paul says, "when Moses is read a veil covers their heart" (v. 15). Their inability down through the centuries to discern the truths of salvation history is due to an absence of God's enlightening Spirit: "But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. Now this Lord is the Spirit" (vv. 16-17).\footnote{Linda L. Belleville, "Paul's Polemic and the Theology of the Spirit in Second Corinthians," \textit{CBQ} 58 (1996) 281-304.}

The theological implications are profound. The impact of the gospel is felt even at the institution of the Mosaic covenant on Mt. Sinai. For the splendor of that covenant began to pale right at the start, in view of the greater splendor to come. Also, Moses' act of veiling is read in the light of new covenant truth. The Mosaic covenant had come with great glory (witness Moses' face). But it immediately began to fade in view of the greater, permanent glory of the new covenant (v. 11).

Once again, it is important not to lose sight of the fact that Paul's line of thinking is rhetorically driven. His apostolic credibility is being questioned by an opponent. This means that the Exodus tradition is utilized by Paul with a view to developing a polemic of apostolic credibility -- not only here but throughout chapters 1-7. In developing his line of defense, Paul brings Scripture and Jewish traditions to bear on the opponent at hand. Yet not Scripture per sé, but, rather, Scripture and tradition filtered first through the lens of salvation history.

Much could still be said about Paul's midrashic method of text interpretation and his polemic use of Scripture in the rest of this chapter -- and I have done so at length elsewhere.\footnote{Belleville, \textit{Paul's Polemical Use of the Moses-Doxa Tradition in 2 Corinthians} 3:7-18;} But I will leave that for another time and draw some conclusions.

CONCLUSIONS

I have also attempted to demonstrate that Pauline texts typically labeled as the product of an overactive imagination can be accounted for on the basis of "other voices." There is
the other voice of proverbial wisdom in 2 Cor 6:14 and 1 Corinthians 9:9. Both Philo and Ps. Phocylides show that “do not be unequally yoked” was a current aphorism (2 Cor 6:14). Similarly, confusion regarding Paul’s use of “do not muzzle an ox when it is treading grain” (1 Cor 9:9) disappears, if understood not as a command but as a proverbial saying. The point would then be simple: A laborer in the gospel ministry deserves financial support.

There is the other voice of lyric poetry in 2 Cor 4:13. When understood as a commonly sung Hallel psalm, Paul’s three word citation of LXX Psalm 115:1 becomes understandable. As the Psalmist recounts how his faith gave him the courage to speak out despite the crippling opposition that resulted, both Paul and the community of faith hear another “voice”—a prayer common to all human experience.

There is the “other voice” of tradition history—Mosaic law was given through angels by the hand of the mediator (Gal 3:19), and the “other voice” of Jewish folklore as the wilderness rock becomes a rolling stone that attests to God’s constant care for and provision of his people (1 Cor 10:4). The 2 Cor 3 glorious face of Moses, Israel’s inability to look at it, and Moses’ act of veiling his face are also commonly found. Philo’s description approaches that of Paul’s, “Its brightness was so dazzling that [the Israelites] were unable to continue gazing at him” (Mos. 2.70. Since there is nothing in the Exodus narrative that would warrant such a statement, it is probable that Philo and Paul are dependent on the same (or similar) Jewish tradition.

Finally, there is the “other voice” of the Χριστός factor in 1 Cor 10:4 (“the rock was Christ”) and 2 Cor 3:13-15 (“their minds become dull; for even until this day a veil remains over the reading of the old covenant, not revealing that in Christ its glory is in the process of fading away”). Paul’s rationale for the Jews’ lack of response in his own day is based on a theological interpretation of the Sinai narrative that arises out of his Christian ministry experience. Israel’s blindness to the “glorious” truths of the new covenant was already there at the outset. Moses’ veil (which remains until today) prevented Israel from seeing the fading glory and understanding its significance—-that the Mosaic covenant is only temporary (v. 11) and already at its inception was becoming “old” (v. 14b). 1 Cor 10:4 can also be seen as a re-reading of the Exodus narrative through the lens of Paul’s incarnational theology. Salvation history by its very nature is incarnational. God relates to his people in very tangible ways—a cloud, a voice, a pillar of fire, all visible manifestations of his care-giving nature. Why not Christ?

Studies of Paul’s use of Scripture need to go beyond the standard labels of “peshat” (literal), “pesher” (typology, prefigurement), midrash (commentary), and allegory (metaphor) and consider the rich tradition history in which he stands, where it surfaces and how it informs (or does not inform) his theology. The all-too-common leap-frog hermeneutical approach to Paul’s Scripture use overlooks the “other voices” and what they have to say about Paul’s theology.