

Does Paul Respect the Context of his Quotations and Does it Matter?  
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In seeking to answer such a question, it is immediately evident that it turns on the word ‘respect’, and herein lies a difficulty. What does it mean to respect something, particularly something that others (in this case fellow Jews) regard as an authority? In Thomas Greene’s typology of imitation in Renaissance poetry, his first type is ‘reproductive imitation’, where the text is ‘beyond alteration and beyond criticism, a sacred original whose greatness can never be adequately reproduced’.<sup>1</sup> The source text is perceived as belonging to a ‘golden age’ which can only be honoured by reproduction ‘as though no other form of celebration could be worthy of its dignity’.<sup>2</sup> Although the complexities of textual transmission makes it hazardous to make definitive comments about the precise form of Paul’s source texts, there would be general agreement that Paul is not bound to them in this way. He is almost certainly responsible for removing the pronoun of Hab 2:4 (‘my’ from the Greek or ‘his’ from the Hebrew) in Rom 1:17 and Gal 3:11), and adding the  $\pi\acute{\alpha}\varsigma$  (‘all’) in his quotation of Isa 28:16 in Rom 10:11. If ‘respect’ is defined in modern publishing terms, where a quotation is expected to agree exactly with the source text, then Paul clearly does not ‘respect’ his scriptural quotations. It is important to note that this conclusion is not affected by the observation that Philo, Josephus and the Qumran authors did the same thing. It just means that they also did not ‘respect’ (in the modern publishing sense) the sources of their quotations.

Nevertheless, the observation that ancient writers were willing to alter the text of their quotations suggests that making this a criterion for ‘respect’ is not only anachronistic but futile. It would be the equivalent of saying that all modern authors are ‘slavish imitators’ because they reproduce all of their quotations exactly. However, it does put down a marker for our discussion. Those who claim that Paul respects the context of his quotations should make it clear to modern readers that they are not using ‘respect’ in this modern publishing sense. This in turn implies that if they wish to make such an assertion, then they should define the sense in which they do mean it. This is of course true of the opposite position, though in a different way. Those who claim that Paul does *not* respect the context of his quotations need to clarify whether they are asserting that Paul does not meet modern publishing conventions or that he crosses the line of some other definition of ‘respect’.

For many, this line is to do with perceived changes of meaning to the quoted text. We might accept that whereas we would quote a text accurately and then proceed to explain how we understand it (e.g. the commentary genre), the ancients were willing to telescope these two activities into a single modified quotation, followed by direct assertion. However, the reason that some scholars wish to assert that Paul does not respect the context of his quotations is because of the perceived differences in meaning that have

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<sup>1</sup> T.M. Greene, *The Light in Troy: Imitation and Discovery in Renaissance Poetry* (New Haven: YUP, 1982), p. 38.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

resulted. For example, the reader of 1 Cor 15:50-57 is initially impressed that Paul can find a scriptural text that predicts a future victory over death:

When this perishable body puts on imperishability, and this mortal body puts on immortality, then the saying that is written will be fulfilled: “Death has been swallowed up in *victory*.” “Where, O death, is your *victory*? Where, O death, is your sting?” The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the *victory* through our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor 15:54-57).

It is rather less impressive when one seeks the source of this ‘quotation’ and finds that it is a combination of Isa 25:8 and Hos 13:14, neither of which contain the word ‘victory’. Of course it is possible that Paul knew forms of these texts which did include the word ‘victory’ (νίκος) but it would be straining credulity to suggest that this was true for both of them. In all likelihood, Paul is responsible for adding the word to at least one of these texts and then identifies the source of this ‘victory’ with ‘our Lord Jesus Christ’. Those that would wish to claim that this does not constitute a lack of respect for the original texts might suggest that the validity of Paul’s argument does not depend on the particular word ‘victory’ but the assertion that death has been conquered. However, although there is debate about the precise meaning of Hos 13:14, there is general agreement that it is not asserting that death has been conquered:

Shall I ransom them from the power of Sheol? Shall I redeem them from Death? O Death, where are your plagues? O Sheol, where is your destruction? Compassion is hidden from my eyes... his fountain shall dry up, his spring shall be parched... Samaria shall bear her guilt, because she has rebelled against her God; they shall fall by the sword, their little ones shall be dashed in pieces, and their pregnant women ripped open (Hos 13:14-16).

Most commentators think the words of Hos 13:14b are a summons to Death and Hades to come and do their worst.<sup>3</sup> The following verses make it clear that the context is judgement and 13.14c (נחם יסתר מעיני) is almost certainly negative, whether it is ‘comfort’ (LXX παράκλησις; Vulgate: *consolatio*) or ‘repentance’ that is withheld.<sup>4</sup> Macintosh construes it differently, suggesting that the words represent what Ephraim *would* say if God were to ransom her from Sheol/Death, but what follows makes it clear that he is not going to do this.<sup>5</sup> Thus contrary to the original meaning of Hos 13:14, ‘Paul transforms the words into a taunt of Death personified, now rendered powerless by Christ’s resurrection’.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>3</sup> J.L. Mays, *Hosea* (OTL; London: SCM, 1969), p. 182.; H.W. Wolff, *Hosea* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974), p. 182.

<sup>4</sup> The noun only occurs here and most likely derives from נחם with the meaning ‘compassion’ or ‘repentance’. To derive a positive sense, it is necessary to take it to mean something like ‘vengeance’ and hence ‘vengeance is hidden from my eyes’ but most scholars reject this possibility and it contradicts what follows in 13:15-16.

<sup>5</sup> A.A. Macintosh, *Hosea* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1997), p. 546.

<sup>6</sup> R.B. Hays, *First Corinthians* (Interpretation; Louisville: John Knox Press, 1997), p. 275.

Is there an answer to avoid the accusation that Paul has shown a lack of respect for the original meaning of Hos 13:14? There appears to be three main suggestions. The first points out that although this particular text of Hosea concerns judgement, this turns to salvation in the closing verses of the book:

I will heal their disloyalty; I will love them freely, for my anger has turned from them. I will be like the dew to Israel; he shall blossom like the lily, he shall strike root like the forests of Lebanon. His shoots shall spread out; his beauty shall be like the olive tree, and his fragrance like that of Lebanon. They shall again live beneath my shadow, they shall flourish as a garden; they shall blossom like the vine, their fragrance shall be like the wine of Lebanon (Hos 14:4-7).

There is of course still a gap between this message of ‘better things to come’ and Paul’s assertion of resurrection and the conquest of death. But one could say that phrases like ‘They shall again live beneath my shadow’ are suggestive of new life, to which the resurrection of Christ (and later his followers) is its concrete fulfilment. If this is the case, then it would be unfair to say that Paul has not respected the message of Hosea (though he has gone beyond it), although to my mind, it is still a problem that the words that he actually quotes do not mean what he says they mean. Would it not have been better if he had quoted something from Hos 14:4-7 if he wanted support for his assertion that death will be conquered?<sup>7</sup> However, if Paul can assume that his readers would know that Hosea’s ultimate message is one of salvation (‘They shall again live beneath my shadow’), one could perhaps argue that Paul intends his quotation to be ironic. The original words were destructive but what follows shows that Death and Hades do not have the final word and that is what Paul expects his readers to deduce from his quotation.

A second explanation draws on the fact that this is a composite quotation. The words that immediately follow the quotation formula come from Isa 25:8, which in the Hebrew text, does indeed assert that death will be conquered:

On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines, of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines strained clear. And he will destroy on this mountain the shroud that is cast over all peoples, the sheet that is spread over all nations; he will swallow up death forever (בלע המות לנצח). Then the Lord GOD will wipe away the tears from all faces, and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the LORD has spoken. It will be said on that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, so that he might save us. This is the LORD for whom we have waited; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation (Isa 25:6-9).

Unfortunately, the LXX translator appears to have misunderstood the Hebrew of 25:8 (or was using a different Hebrew text) for it turns death into the subject of the action:

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<sup>7</sup> One thinks of the debate about whether the quotation of Ps 22:1 in Matthew and Mark (‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’) is intended to evoke the positive message of Ps 22:22ff.

κατέπιεν ὁ θάνατος ἰσχύσας ('death swallowed powerfully'). Scholars agree that this cannot be Paul's *Vorlage* and suggest that either he had access to a text like that of the later Theodotion<sup>8</sup> or that he was making direct use of the Hebrew text. Thus Hays argues that Paul is quoting the Hebrew text of Isa 25:8, which 'does envisage God's ultimate destruction of the power of death, and the reader who follows the allusion to its source will find a richly evocative portrayal of God's universal salvation for "all peoples"'.<sup>9</sup> This is then expanded with words from the LXX of Hos 13:14, which are thereby drawn into the frame of reference created by the Isaiah quotation. Therefore the question of whether this shows respect or lack of respect for the meaning of Hos 13:14 turns on the question of whether such composite quotations, which are fairly frequent in the NT and Jewish literature, are regarded as a valid form of exegesis.<sup>10</sup>

A third solution is simply to recognise that Paul has given the text a christological or messianic interpretation. Such an interpretation was not available prior to the Christ-event (2 Cor 3:15 - referring to the veil whenever Moses is read) and is not identical to the historical-grammatical meaning of the text. Unlike modern readers, Paul's concern was not to determine the meaning of the text *prior* to the revelation of Christ, for what use would that be to his congregations? The task of the first-century exegete was to determine the meaning of the text in the light of present circumstances, that is, what God is perceived to be doing. For those at Qumran, such an interpretative stance led them to find references in Scripture to their own history and key personnel. For Paul, it was to find references to the Christ-event and its consequences, one of which was victory over death. This is not to say that Paul regarded such interpretation as arbitrary or imposed. As Gignilliat states in his recent monograph, 'For Paul, Christological reading of the OT is the *only* correct interpretation of Israel's Scripture'.<sup>11</sup> Thus for some scholars, the question of whether Paul showed respect or lack of respect for his quotations depends on whether the claim that Jesus Christ is the fulfilment of Israel's scriptures is true or not. Gignilliat even goes so far as to state that Paul has given us the 'plain sense' of the scriptural texts:

Again, if the true subject matter of Scripture is God's Trinitarian action as expressly demonstrated in Jesus Christ, then to read the OT as a pre-figuration of God's activity in Christ is a reading that is listening to the plain sense of the text in God's providential ordering of his revelation.<sup>12</sup>

Now while I understand that an important theological point is being made here, it seems to me that it only obscures the question we are trying to answer. Paul respects the context

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<sup>8</sup> Which according to the margin of Codex Marchalianus (Q), agrees exactly with Paul, though it appears with the active verb (κατέπιεν) in the Syrohexapla. The argument for Paul's knowledge of such a reading would be that Theodotion hardly got it from 1 Corinthians.

<sup>9</sup> Hays, *First Corinthians*, p. 275.

<sup>10</sup> There is little doubt that Paul would have the necessary skills to translate the Hebrew of Isa 25:8 and append the Greek of Hos 13:14 but could he have assumed that his readers would notice? For some scholars, this is a formidable obstacle to accepting this solution.

<sup>11</sup> M. Gignilliat, *Paul and Israel's Servants. Paul's Theological Reading of Isaiah 40-66 in 2 Corinthians 5.14-6.10* (LTSN, 330; London & New York: T&T Clark, 2007), p.24.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*, p. 159.

of his quotations providing ‘respect’ is not carrying its normal everyday meaning but is being used in a specialised (christological) sense. Similarly, Paul gives us the ‘plain sense’ of his quotations providing ‘plain sense’ does not mean what most people would assume it means (eg. that Hos 13:14 is talking about death inflicting judgement) but is being used in this special theological sense. I would prefer to avoid the misunderstanding that is likely to occur if the statement that ‘Paul always respects the context of his quotations’ is not qualified by a statement about the specialised way that ‘respect’ is being used. If either of my respondents quotes a sentence of this paper and suggests that what I *really* mean (in the light of some higher theological schema) is the exact opposite, I would not be impressed by the level of respect shown to my work. It is bound to be a source of confusion to a modern audience to use ‘respect’ and ‘plain sense’ in these ways.

On the other hand, I am not happy with the sweeping statement that ‘Paul does not respect the context of his quotations’, for it suggests a frivolous, superficial writer who had little interest in the texts that he quotes. It seems clear to me that Paul has thought long and hard about the relationship between what has been revealed in the Christ-event and the scriptures he has known and studied all his life. In some ways, that is the problem. Paul does not explain how he got from Hosea’s oracle of judgement to an assertion of the conquest of death and even if he were asked, it is possible that he would not have been able to answer. He might have pointed to the positive message of Hos 14:4-7 or the assertion of Isa 25:8 or to Christ’s resurrection, or it may be as Hays remarks:

In short, there is no evidence in the letters that Paul – in contrast to other ancient authors such as Philo – ever sat down with the biblical text and tried to figure out what it might mean by applying an exegetical procedure abstractable from the particular text that he was reading. Rather, he seems to have leaped – in moments of metaphorical insight – to intuitive apprehensions of the meanings of texts without the aid or encumbrance of systematic reflection about his own hermeneutics.<sup>13</sup>

Since I have recently been working on a chapter entitled, ‘The Minor Prophets in Paul’,<sup>14</sup> I will use as a second case study the quotation of Hos 2:23/1:10 in Rom 9:25-26. The disturbing idea in Rom 9:13 that God’s purposes involve loving some (Jacob) and hating others (Esau) is softened by the quotation from Exod 33:19 (Rom 9:15), that such purposes are governed by mercy and compassion (‘I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion’). However, the negative aspect returns in Rom 9:18 (‘So he has mercy on whomever he chooses, and he hardens the heart of whomever he chooses’), which becomes explicit in Rom 9:22 (‘What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience the objects of wrath that are made for destruction...’). The sentence is not completed and is perhaps rhetorical (‘even if God had destined some to destruction, it would still be none of your business’). Be that as it may, Paul’s focus is primarily

<sup>13</sup> R.B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: YUP, 1989), p. 161.

<sup>14</sup> For the forthcoming volume, M.J.J. Menken & S. Moyise (eds), *The Minor Prophets in the New Testament* (London & New York: T&T Clark, 2009).

positive, stating that God has acted ‘in order to make known the riches of his glory for the objects of his mercy’, a group composed of Jews and Gentiles (Rom 9:23-24).

There then follows a series of quotations drawn from Hos 2:23 (LXX = 2:25), Hos 1:10 (LXX = 2:1) and Isa 10:22/1:9, which appear to treat his statement (‘not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles’) in reverse order. Hosea provides the support for the inclusion of Gentiles (‘Those who were not my people I will call “my people,”’) and Isaiah provides the support for Jews (‘Though the number of the children of Israel were like the sand of the sea, only<sup>15</sup> a remnant of them will be saved’). Alternatively, it is possible that Ἡσαΐας δὲ κράζει is not disjunctive (‘but Isaiah cries out’) and that both sets of quotations are intended to support the statement that the ‘objects of mercy’ consists of both Jews and Gentiles.<sup>16</sup> Either way, the question is how Paul thinks the Hosea quotations support the inclusion of Gentiles into the people of God?

Taken out of context, Hos 2:23 (‘Those who were not my people I will call “my people,” and her who was not beloved I will call “beloved.”’) looks like a good supporting text. If the Jews are God’s people (Rom 9:4-5) and Jacob/Israel is the one loved (Rom 9:13), then the Gentiles can aptly be described as ‘not my people’ and ‘not beloved’. The quotation implies a reversal of fortunes, that those who were not God’s people have become God’s people, precisely what Paul wishes to claim for his Gentile mission. However, the quotation from Hos 1:10 (‘And in the very place where it was said to them, “You are not my people,” there they shall be called children of the living God’) appears to undermine this, for the specificity of ‘in the very place’ (ἐν τῷ τόπῳ) is a reminder that the original was not referring to Gentiles but to Jews of the northern kingdom. Before we can attempt to unravel this, there are a number of textual difficulties that require our attention.

According to the text of Rahlfs and Göttingen, Paul has made three significant changes to Hos 2:23. Firstly, he has changed the verb from ‘I will say’ (ἐρῶ) to ‘I will call’ (καλέσω), probably to reverberate with the language of election in Romans 9. This has necessitated a change from the dative (ἐρῶ τῷ οὐ λαῷ μου) to the accusative (καλέσω τὸν οὐ λαόν μου), and direct speech (λαός μου εἶ σύ) to indirect speech (λαόν μου). Second, Paul reverses the order of the clauses so that ‘not my people’ directly follows ‘I will call’. Since 1 Pet 2:10 does the same (‘Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy’), Paul may have been influenced by early Christian tradition but the third change makes it unlikely that Paul and 1 Peter are using a common text. Instead of ‘not mercy’ and ‘mercy’, Paul has ‘not beloved’ and ‘beloved’.<sup>17</sup> This might be to coincide with the earlier quotation of Mal 1:2 (‘I have *loved* Jacob, but I have hated Esau’), in which case

<sup>15</sup> The use of the word ‘only’ in the NRSV is prejudicial. It does not correspond to anything in the Greek and implies that Paul thought that *only* a few of his kinfolk would be saved. It is evident from Romans 11 that Paul did not think that. See Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*, p. 68.

<sup>16</sup> C.D. Stanley, *Arguing with Scripture. The Rhetoric of Quotations in the Letters of Paul* (New York: T&T Clark, 2004), p. 158.

<sup>17</sup> This is assuming with Rahlfs and Göttingen that the reading of B V 407 (καὶ ἀγαπήσω τὴν οὐκ ἠγαπήμενην) is not original but is the result of assimilation to Romans.

Paul's point might be that those like Esau (= Gentiles) are no longer hated but loved. Or, as Dunn and others have suggested, it might simply be that Paul 'wanted to retain ἐλεέω in a consistently positive sense throughout these chapters'.<sup>18</sup>

As for Paul's quotation of Hos 1:10, the texts printed by Rahlfs and NA<sup>27</sup> are identical. However, the Göttingen edition considers the phrase 'there they shall be called' (ἐκεῖ κληθήσονται) to be an assimilation to Romans and the text of BQC (κληθήσονται καὶ αὐτοὶ) to be original. If this is the case, then Paul is responsible for adding ἐκεῖ, which further emphasises the specificity of 'place' in the Hosea quotation. Since this makes the application to Gentiles more difficult,<sup>19</sup> it could be argued that Rahlfs is more likely to be the original in this instance. Alternatively, a number of explanations have been offered for why this should not be taken as a reference to 'place'. For example, Cranfield notes that the Hebrew (במקום) could be translated 'instead of' rather than 'in the place', a view supported by BDB (s.v. במקום) and Wolff.<sup>20</sup> It is more difficult to argue that Paul's Greek (ἐν τῷ τόπῳ) means this though Cranfield cites an example from the third century (CE) historian Herodian.<sup>21</sup> Wagner, on the other hand, thinks the reading found in p<sup>46</sup>FG (εὖν κληθήσονται) is original and represents Paul's modification of the LXX's ἐρρέθη αὐτοῖς ('it was said to them'). The effect is to change the emphasis from a specific place to, 'Wherever people are estranged from God, there God is now actively calling out a people from himself'.<sup>22</sup>

We return to the question of how Paul can apply these texts from Hosea to both Jews and Gentiles, about which Wagner says: 'The shocking nature of this interpretive move should not be minimized.'<sup>23</sup> There are three main explanations: (1) Paul saw in Hosea a principle of reversal that he could apply to the Gentiles; (2) Paul interpreted Hosea in the light of contemporary interpretation that had already applied it to the Gentiles; and (3) Paul interpreted Hosea in the light of Christian revelation and/or a specific hermeneutical strategy. For the first, Dunn notes that 'it is hardly likely that Paul means to imply that the Gentiles who have responded to God's call have shown themselves to be the lost and dispersed ten northern tribes. It is simply that scripture proves that those who were not God's people can by God's gracious act become his people.'<sup>24</sup> This is not necessarily a case of Paul arbitrarily substituting Gentiles for Jews. It is clear from Romans 11 that Paul thinks the 'hardened Israel' of his own day will be restored and that this is in accord

<sup>18</sup> J.D.G. Dunn, *Romans 9-16* (WBC, 38B; Dallas: Word Books, 1988), p. 571.

<sup>19</sup> Unless one agrees with Munck that Paul is thinking of the eschatological pilgrimage of the Gentiles to Zion, as seen in such passages as Isa. 2.2-4; Mic. 4.2; Zeph. 3.9; Zech. 2.11. See J. Munck, *Paul and the Salvation of Mankind* (London: SCM Press, 1959), pp. 306-307.

<sup>20</sup> Wolff, *Hosea*, p.27, who says: 'במקום אשר' (literally, "in the place where") need not denote a location, which would be meaningless in this context. Here where the passive construction places all the emphasis on the changing of the name, the expression means "instead of," especially since the relative clause is also in the imperfect.'

<sup>21</sup> C.E.B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans. Vol II: Commentary on Romans IX-XVI* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1979), p. 501.

<sup>22</sup> J.R. Wagner, *Heralds of the Good News. Isaiah and Paul 'In Concert' in the Letter to the Romans* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), p. 85.

<sup>23</sup> Wagner, *Heralds*, p.82.

<sup>24</sup> Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, p. 575.

with Scripture. Thus Paul agrees with the thought of Hosea but additionally applies it (by analogy) to the Gentiles.

Second, Goodwin believes that the use of the ‘living God’ tradition in such texts as Dan 5:23/6:27 LXX, Bel 5 Theod and *Sib. Or.* 3:762-3, along with *Jos. Asen.* 19, shows that Paul was not alone in seeing a reference to Gentiles in Hosea. He notes that the ‘living God’ tradition occurs in ‘stylized formulations of idol polemic’ and as an ‘epithet in its missionary language and in texts portraying Gentiles acknowledging the power of Israel’s God’. He boldly concludes:

The Jewish and early Christian evidence thus suggests that ‘sons of the living God’ was a text already linked to Gentiles and Gentile conversion... Paul, then, in Rom 9:26, can apply Hos 2:1 LXX to Gentile converts with no explanation or clarification because the application was already familiar. Paul operates with a precedent that links Hos 2:1 LXX with Gentile converts and can thus assume his reader’s familiarity with this association.<sup>25</sup>

This is, however, an overstatement. It is one thing to show that Gentiles could sometimes be associated with the ‘living God’ tradition; quite another to claim that ‘Paul operates with a precedent that links Hos 2:1 LXX with Gentile converts’. There is no such precedent and Paul’s exegesis must have looked ‘shocking’ to anyone familiar with the book of Hosea, even if it might be understandable given his missionary outlook.

Third, Hays considers the application to Gentiles as more direct than the word ‘analogy’ suggests. Paul with ‘casual audacity’ performs a ‘hermeneutical coup’ with his ‘revisionary interpretation’ and ‘scandalous inversions’ of the text: ‘It is as though the light of the gospel shining through the text has illuminated a latent sense so brilliant that the opaque original sense has vanished altogether.’<sup>26</sup> It would be wrong to conclude, however, that Paul has simply read the text in the light of the gospel, for Romans 11 shows that he also believes in its message of a restoration for Israel (although it is not quoted there). Thus the ‘latent sense’ does not contradict the original meaning even though it eclipses it in Romans 9.

Wagner builds on this, noting that in Romans, Paul consistently seizes on negative appellations in Scripture in order to find references to Gentiles. Thus Paul identifies Gentiles as the reference to the ‘nation without understanding’ in Deut 32:21 (Rom 10:19), those ‘not seeking God’ in Isa 65:1 (Rom 10:20) and ‘those who have not heard’ in Isa 52:15 (Rom 15:21). Paul thus offers a ‘radical rereading of texts foundational to Israel’s understanding of election’ and in particular, ‘Hosea’s moving depiction of God’s passionate commitment to his people Israel is refracted and refocused into a prophecy of the “riches of God’s glory” now showered upon *Gentile* “vessels of mercy.”’<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> M.J. Goodwin, *Paul, Apostle of the Living God. Kerygma and Conversion in 2 Corinthians* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press, 2001), p.153.

<sup>26</sup> Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*, pp. 66-7.

<sup>27</sup> Wagner, *Heralds*, p. 83.

I find myself in substantial agreement with Hays and Wagner and greatly admire their ability to use such poetic turns of phrase to express it. To my mind, it confirms that Paul is not a frivolous reader of Scripture with little interest in the context of his quotations. Paul is a sophisticated reader of Scripture and this allows him to *improvise* in ways that can appear shocking (Wagner) or audacious (Hays) to the modern reader. But does the statement that ‘Paul respects the context of his quotations’ sufficiently convey this aspect of Paul’s use of Scripture to a modern reader? I do not think so. The modern reader is unlikely to associate ‘respect for context’ with interpretations that are ‘shocking’ and ‘audacious’ and where ‘the opaque original sense has vanished altogether’. Thus neither ‘respect’ or ‘lack of respect’ sufficiently conveys the complex and daring interpretations of the book of Hosea that Paul offers in Romans and 1 Corinthians.

### *Conclusion*

What then should we conclude from this short study of Paul’s use of the book of Hosea? It might appear that I wish to ‘sit on the fence’ but I would like to put it more positively than that. I am actively stating that those who say to a modern audience that ‘Paul respects the contexts of his quotations’ are misleading them. A modern audience will almost certainly hear in the word ‘respect’ a series of implications (accuracy of quotation, sensitivity to the historical context, used in much the same sense) that are not true (or not always true). On the other hand, to boldly state that ‘Paul does not respect the context of his quotations’ will almost certainly be heard as an accusation that he is a charlatan, twisting and distorting the scriptures of Judaism in favour of Christianity. Of course this debate is not ideologically neutral. Jewish scholars have routinely accused Paul of this, just as (conservative) Christian scholars have routinely defended him. Perhaps Gignilliat is correct that in the end, it depends on whether one accepts that ‘the true subject matter of Scripture is God’s Trinitarian action as expressly demonstrated in Jesus Christ’. It certainly influences whether one sees the glass as half full or half empty. But it seems to me that it is important to do justice to the half that is glossed over in such summaries (‘respect’ or ‘lack of respect’). Paul can hardly be called a charlatan for his exegetical methods without implicating Philo, Qumran and the rabbis. As Watson has so ably demonstrated, Paul has much in common with the Qumran pesherist, even though many of their interpretations are at odds with one another.<sup>28</sup> On the other hand, we must acknowledge that Paul was a man of his time and some of his exegetical moves are ‘audacious’ by modern literary standards and it is appropriate that we say so. We might of course wish to add that our so-called ‘modern standards’ are not equipped to analyse ‘sacred’ texts but then we should make this clear to readers. To my mind, the statements that ‘Paul respects the context of his quotations’ and ‘Paul does not respect the context of his quotations’ are equally misleading and thus best avoided.

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<sup>28</sup> F. Watson, *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith* (London & New York: T&T Clarl, 2004).