

TITLE: “Applying Old Testament Yahweh Passages to Jesus: Recontextualization of Joel 2:32 in Romans 10:13”

INTRODUCTION

The use of the Old Testament (OT) in the New Testament (NT) has been a large subject of investigation and has provided a rich diversity of texts to study. What has made it complex are the various ways that NT writers use the OT. Sometimes they are quoting a direct fulfillment of prophecy and it is clear to see why that OT passage applies in the NT context. But at other times, it is not so straightforward, and understanding the meaning that the NT writer intends the passage to convey is not as easily perceived.

Romans 10:13 is one such passage where the Apostle Paul quotes Joel 2:32 (3:5 in the LXX). What is intriguing is that Joel 2:32 is a passage about Yahweh, but Paul applies it directly to Jesus. Is he being indiscriminate, intentional, or does he have some other motivation for it? On the surface, it might seem as though Paul views Yahweh and Jesus as identical referents, and thus interchangeable. This perspective is what undergirds a popular interpretation of the text, which is aptly represented by the remarks of David Capes, who writes,

“Since Paul did not hesitate to apply Old Testament Yahweh texts to Jesus as well as to God, he apparently understood that an underlying unity existed between them which transcended function to encompass aspects of nature, being, name, and essence.”¹

Capes’ explanation presumes that Paul has in mind a specific relationship between Yahweh and Jesus that he then reads into Paul’s use of Joel 2:32 in Rom 10:13. But does Paul have this theological premise in mind when he is drawing on the OT to support his current context about Christ and the good news?

In this paper, I will argue that Paul’s intention in quoting Joel 2:32 in Rom 10:13 is not on account of an ontological unity that exists between Yahweh and Jesus, but rather Paul understands that in Jesus, Yahweh is fulfilling all of his covenant promises and salvation purposes for both Jew and Gentile. Therefore, anyone who calls upon the name of the “Lord” (Jesus) will receive Yahweh’s promised eschatological salvation that is proclaimed in the good news (i.e., the message of trust) about Christ.

NEW TESTAMENT USE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

In the NT, the OT is quoted and referred to frequently. Depending upon how a quotation is counted, figures can vary, but in total, there are 283 direct quotations of the OT in the NT.

¹ David B. Capes, *Old Testament Yahweh Texts in Paul's Christology* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992), 114.

Now, if you also count textual allusions, the number jumps to over 1,000. This shows how significant the NT writers viewed the OT and how often they incorporated references to it in their writings.

In the process of interpreting the NT, it is important to ask how NT authors are using the OT. When the OT is quoted, does the NT author take into the account the original context of the citation? Secondly, why did the NT authors use that particular passage at that point in their writing? Lastly, when NT writers quote an OT passage in an apparently new context, does that mean that they also had in mind the surrounding verses in the original context, implying they should also be interpreted according to the NT context?

Some OT passages that are prophetic are quoted in the NT as direct fulfillments and correspond in a one-to-one way with what the OT writer intended. But many OT passages are interpreted in the NT as having eschatological or christological meaning which they don't appear to carry in the original context. These particular quotations in the NT are the ones that have preoccupied the interest of biblical scholars in attempting to understand how the NT writers viewed the OT and their intention in quoting it the way they did in their writings.

Perhaps the NT writer saw generic promises, typology,² or corporate solidarity³ in the OT passage that entailed a messianic component which the NT writer then relies on to develop their point.⁴ Or maybe when NT writers interpret an OT passage, they are giving the *sensus plenior* ("fuller sense") that the OT passage inherently contained but which was only revealed later to the NT writer, and which the OT writer may or may not have been consciously aware of.⁵ Or it could be that there is a complex interaction happening between the contexts of the OT passage and where it is quoted in the NT so that the NT writer adopts the meaning of the original context but shifts the referent and application to a new context; and so the meaning of the OT passage in the NT is not entirely divorced from its original meaning but is allowed to still be at work in the new context.⁶ However, it also

² Typology is a method of interpreting certain people, objects, or events in a symbolic way where they correspond to or foreshadow subsequent people, objects, or events.

³ Corporate solidarity is a method of viewing a relationship between a group and an individual so that characteristics, aspects, or actions of the group or representative leader can then be said to apply to the members of the group and vice versa. Richard N. Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period*, Revised ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 93-4.

⁴ Walter C. Kaiser Jr, "Single Meaning, Unified Referents: Accurate and Authoritative Citations of the Old Testament by the New Testament," in *Three Views on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. Kenneth Berding and Jonathan Lunde (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 45-89.

⁵ "The *sensus plenior* is that that additional, deeper meaning, intended by God but not clearly intended by the human author, which is seen to exist in the words of a biblical text (or group of texts, or even a whole book) when they are studied in the light of further revelation or development in the understanding of revelation." Raymond E. Brown, *The Sensus Plenior of Sacred Scripture* (Baltimore: St. Mary's University, 1955), 92.

⁶ Darrell L. Bock, "Single Meaning, Multiple Contexts and Referents: The New Testament's Legitimate, Accurate, and Multifaceted Use of the Old," in *Three Views on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. Kenneth Berding and Jonathan Lunde (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 105-51.

could be that the NT writers viewed the OT in an “atomistic” fashion and reinterpreted OT passages in new contexts in ways that don’t seem to have any direct connection, or in the least very little, with the original context and meaning.⁷

Nevertheless, despite these various approaches (and others) that have been offered to explain the use of the OT in the NT, there has been general agreement that to some degree the methods of the NT writers resemble ancient Jewish methods of exegesis.⁸ Therefore, an understanding of ancient Jewish methods of interpretation is necessary in order to understand how a NT writer might be using an OT passage in a new context. And while there are a couple of different ancient lists of Jewish hermeneutical principles,⁹ there are two specific methods that are of particular concern when discussing the way that the OT is used in Romans 10:5-13: *midrash* and *peshet*.

ANCIENT JEWISH METHODS: MIDRASH AND PESHER

Historical background studies on ancient Jewish practices of interpretation can help shed light on the exegetical methods of NT writers. Caution must be used, however, not to jump to the conclusion that the NT writers simply adopted Jewish methods of exegesis *in toto*. In addition, to the extent that NT writers drew upon Jewish methods of interpretation in no way implies any endorsement of Jewish views or interpretations of Scripture.

Midrash refers to a method of interpretive exposition of Scripture where the interpreter “seeks to explicate the hidden meanings contained therein by means of agreed on hermeneutical rules in order to contemporize the revelation of God for the people of God.”¹⁰ This doesn’t mean that an interpreter can assign any meaning they desire to a text. Interpretation is done according to specific ways of uncovering the “hidden, deeper” meanings of the text.¹¹

The second important method is *peshet*, which has been extensively noted in the Qumran literature.¹² *Peshet* interpretation mainly follows along the lines of a “this is that” fashion of

⁷ Peter E. Enns, “Fuller Meaning, Single Goal: A Christotelic Approach to the New Testament Use of the Old in Its First-Century Interpretive Environment,” in *Three Views on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. Kenneth Berding and Jonathan Lunde (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 167-217.

⁸ Martin Pickup, “New Testament Interpretation of the Old Testament: The Theological Rationale of Midrashic Exegesis,” *JETS* 51, no. 2 (2008): 355.

⁹ The prime list of Jewish interpretive methods is the seven rules of Hillel (c. 1st-cent. AD). These were then further developed into thirteen rules (c. AD 110-30), and then again later into thirty-two rules (c. AD 130-60). These lists are described in the fourth-century AD Babylonian Talmud. Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis*, 19-21.

¹⁰ Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis*, 22.

¹¹ For the seven rules of Hillel, see Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis*, 20.

¹² The Qumran literature is a reference to the Dead Sea Scrolls.

interpretation where an eschatological (incl. ecclesiological, christological, soteriological, etc) meaning is deemed to be applicable to the contemporary audience.¹³

Space confines the amount of detail that can be included, but suffice it to say that many OT quotations can be demonstrated to have the characteristics of these ancient Jewish methods of interpretation.¹⁴ This correlation supports the validity of affirming that these techniques of interpretation were available to the NT writers when they quoted the OT and were, in fact, used numerous times. Therefore, they can be of great help in determining how the NT writer is likely using an OT passage.

Romans 10:5-13 contains several OT quotations, and one in particular where an OT passage referring to Yahweh is applied to Jesus (Rom 10:13). The common interpretation is that Yahweh is Jesus, and that the Apostle Paul recognizes this and is properly identifying an implicit ontological unity that exists between them.

The question we must answer is, “Why does the Apostle Paul quote a verse about Yahweh from the OT and then apply it to Jesus?” Is it because Jesus shares a unity of essence/being with Yahweh, and therefore, Paul can rightly speak about Jesus in terms of Yahweh since they share the same ontological identity? Or is Paul quoting an OT passage about Yahweh and applying it to Jesus because there is a relationship between Yahweh and Jesus that is better explained through the lens of Jewish exegetical methods of interpretation that were in common use when the NT was written?

A CASE EXAMPLE: ROMANS 10:5-13

Romans 10:13 appears in a major section of the letter (chs. 9-11) that deals with the implications regarding the people of Israel in God’s redemptive plan on account of the inclusion of the Gentiles in salvation that is announced through the good news that Paul preached. The good news speaks of a righteousness that is based on trust, not on works of the law (cf. Rom 9:30-31). Therefore, Paul is seeking to establish the validity of trust-based righteousness for salvation as commensurate with the Scriptures (i.e., Old Testament),¹⁵ in contrast to the mistaken law-based righteousness as a means of salvation that Jewish leaders were advocating.

The immediate section containing 10:13 begins in verse 5, and thus, it is necessary to establish the surrounding context so we can better situate verse 13. In this section, Paul begins by contrasting the presence of these two forms of righteousness by drawing on the

¹³ Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis*, 24-25.

¹⁴ For a detailed analysis, see E. Earle Ellis, *Paul’s Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957), 54-75, 114-49.

¹⁵ For the Jewish people, “Scripture” referred to the Old Testament. For Jews living in Palestine, Scripture predominantly meant the Hebrew Scriptures, while those living elsewhere (i.e., in the diaspora), it would be the Septuagint (LXX), which is the Greek translation of the Hebrew.

OT. In verse 5, Paul grounds the principle of law-based righteousness by quoting Leviticus 18:5 (“the person who does these *commandments* will live by them”), and then he subsequently counters this in verses 6-8 by grounding trust-based righteousness in the text of Deuteronomy 30:12-14 (“Who will ascend into heaven...Who will descend into the abyss...The message is near to you, in your mouth and in your heart”).

In the original context, Deut 30:12-14 is speaking about the commandment of God and the keeping of the law. The purpose of the text is to encourage Israelites that obeying the commandment of God is not something unattainable or too hard for them to do. God has revealed his commandment, and if it is in their heart, then they are able to do it. The interesting hermeneutical move that Paul makes is he shifts the reference from God’s “commandment” in Deuteronomy as being what is “near” to the Israelites to the “message of trust” about Christ that he is proclaiming in the good news.

Paul’s purpose in recontextualizing Deut 30:12-14 is to convey that the trust-based righteousness that he is preaching is not something impossible for humans or too distant to reach. It is the “word/message” (ῥῆμα) that is “near” a person and in their “heart.” Paul’s comparison now becomes clearer: Deut 30 stipulates that the law was a “message” that was to be obeyed from the heart (i.e., based on trust). In the same way, the good news about Christ is a “message” that calls for a response from the heart. This is why Paul identifies the “message” of Deut 30 as being “the message of trust” in Romans 10. His point is not to equivocate the “message” of Deut 30 with the good news he was preaching, but to assign to the good news the same expectation God had for the commandment he gave to Israel: obedience was to be based on trust.

In verses 9-10, Paul then unpacks how the message of the good news is also “in the mouth” and “in the heart” like the commandment of God in Deut 30. Just as the “commandment” called for a response of obedience, so too God calls for a response to the good news: confession that “Jesus is Lord” and belief in his resurrection from the dead. Paul combines these two in a powerful declaration to establish that the “heart” operates on the level of trust, while the “mouth” operates on the level of action (i.e., confession). This was what Deut 30 had always called for and expected with regard to God’s commandment in the law, but now Paul recontextualizes the passage and applies it to Christ and the good news as being in continuity with Israel’s salvation history. In other words, Paul’s point is to demonstrate that redemption and salvation through trust in the message of the good news is fulfilling the same purpose that God intended with his commandment to Israel: to bring about a response of trust in God.

But Paul is not finished demonstrating Israel’s misunderstanding about their own Scriptures. He follows up with another quotation in verse 11, this time using the explicit introductory formula, “For the Scripture says” (λέγει γὰρ ἡ γραφή). Pulling from Isaiah 28:16, Paul adapts this text slightly to meet his own hermeneutical needs to further substantiate the connection between trust and salvation that he is setting forth in the good news. First, Paul includes the Greek word πᾶς (“whoever,” lit. “all”) at the beginning of the

quotation to denote the universality of salvation based on trust, meaning it is not exclusive or bound by any ethnic or national constraints: righteousness and salvation are for “whoever believes in him.”¹⁶

While in the original context of Isa 28:16, ἐπ’ αὐτῷ (“in him”) refers to the stone that the “Lord Yahweh” will set in Zion. Paul identifies that stone as being Christ. He did this implicitly in 9:33 (quoted from Isa 28:16) where the stone that the Jews stumbled at was Christ. The subsequent flow of context and the mention of calling on the one in whom they have not believed” (v. 14) renders it nearly certain that Paul is applying this passage to Jesus. Furthermore, with slight adaptation of Isa 28:16 in Rom 10:11 by adding πᾶς, Paul brings it into alignment with his emphasis on universalizing the good news.

In order to spell out what he means by adding πᾶς (“whoever”), Paul makes an explicit declaration that “there is no distinction between Jew and Greek” (v. 12; cf. Rom 3:22). Paul had shown previously in the letter that there was no difference between Jew and Greek when it came to sin and God’s wrath and judgment (3:9-18), but now he additionally shows that there is also no difference when it comes to righteousness and salvation. Since Paul claimed that God was the same God of both the Jews and Gentiles (3:29), he now confirms a similar reality with respect to there being the same “Lord” for both the “Jew and Greek.” Undoubtedly, it would seem that Paul has in mind the reference to “Lord” as being the Lord Jesus as per his recent claim that confessing “Jesus is Lord” is what results in the blessing of salvation (vv. 9-10), that whoever believes “in him” will not be put to shame (v. 11), and that he is “Lord of all” and the one who richly blesses “all who call on him” (πάντας τοὺς ἐπικαλουμένους αὐτόν).

Picking up on the catchword “call on” (ἐπικαλουμένους) from verse 12, Paul continues to defend his argument for the equality of Jew and Greek for receiving salvation through trust by adding one more scripture to bolster his point. To achieve this, he quotes Joel 2:32 (LXX 3:5), “for everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved” (πᾶς γὰρ ὃς ἂν ἐπικαλέσῃται τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου σωθήσεται). Citing verbatim from the LXX (which also corresponds well with the MT), Paul draws to a close his argument in this section with this text in order to, yet again, establish that the good news being offered to the Jew and Greek alike is firmly grounded in Scripture.

While Paul quotes Joel 2:32 from the LXX (3:5), which uses the Greek word κύριος (“Lord”), the MT has the Hebrew Tetragrammaton יהוה (YHWH = “Yahweh”). In the LXX, the word κύριος is commonly used in place of the Tetragrammaton as a reference to Yahweh as the “Lord.”¹⁷

Translation

NA²⁸

LXX (Rahlfs)

¹⁶ This is an intentional addition by Paul as neither the LXX or MT has in it the universal application that Paul attributes to it in v. 11.

¹⁷ In some early LXX texts, the Hebrew Tetragrammaton was transliterated using the Hebrew consonants יהוה (YHWH).

for everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved	πᾶς γὰρ ὃς ἂν ἐπικαλέσῃται τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου σωθήσεται	καὶ ἔσται πᾶς, ὃς ἂν ἐπικαλέσῃται τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου, σωθήσεται
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In the original context of Joel, Yahweh promises a new age of physical safety, spiritual blessings, and material abundance for Israel and the judgment of the Gentile nations. Joel 2:32 appears at the end of a section about covenant renewal and the pouring out of Yahweh’s spirit and the “great and terrible day of Yahweh” that is coming. But the wrath and judgment of Yahweh will not be upon those who “call on the name of κύριος.” For Israel, the name of κύριος is “Yahweh” (YHWH). The “whoever” that Joel has in mind are the Israelites (i.e., Jews),¹⁸ and therefore any Israelite who calls on the name of Yahweh will “escape” the impending judgment and destruction that is coming and will be among the “remnant” that is saved.

The Greek word translated “call on” (ἐπικαλέσῃται) in Joel 2:32 was commonly used in ancient secular Greek religious expressions of prayer and appeals to gods for assistance or divine blessings. The petitioner would invoke the name of the god or ruler and plea for them to respond favorably to their request.¹⁹ Moreover, the term is also commonly used in the LXX and other ancient Jewish writings in a similar way with respect to Yahweh.²⁰ The phrase also has liturgical and cultic connotations that imply the religious dimension of “worship” as inherent in the meaning of “calling on” Yahweh.²¹

Thus, the meaning of to “call on the name of the Lord” in Joel 2:32 is to entreat Yahweh through prayer to be gracious and offer divine protection from the previously mentioned terrors and judgment that will attend the coming day of Yahweh (vv. 30-31).²²

But what is the meaning that Paul intends his readers to understand when he quotes Joel 2:32 in Romans 10:13?

RECONTEXTUALIZING JOEL 2:32 IN ROMANS 10:13

Paul’s process of recontextualizing can be seen throughout Romans 10:5-13 with several OT citations that are placed within a new context and thereby given new meaning. But the

¹⁸ That πᾶς refers to “all” Israel is evident from the surrounding context describing the judgment of the Gentiles and the salvation of Israel, but also on account of the linguistic connection with Joel 2:27 where Yahweh says he is in the midst of Israel and that “all” (πᾶς) his people will never again be disappointed.

¹⁹ BDAD, s.v. “ἐπικαλέω,” 373. LSJ, s.v. “ἐπικαλέω,” 635. Brill Dictionary of Ancient Greek, s.v. “ἐπικαλέω,” 768. NIDNTTE, s.v. “καλέω,” 2:601-7. K. L. Schmidt, “ἐπικαλέω,” TDNT 3:496-500.

²⁰ E.g., Gen 4:26; 12:8; 1 Sam 12:17-18; 1 Kgs 18:24; 2 Kgs 5:11; Psa 79:6; 105:1; 116:4, 13; Isa 55:5-6; 64:7; Zech 13:9; 2 Macc 3:22; 8:2; 13:10; 3 Macc 6:1; 4 Macc 12:17; Sir 2:10; 46:16; 47:5; 48:20; Sol 15:1; Bar 3:7; Judith 16:2.

²¹ Joel D. Estes, “Calling on the Name of the Lord: The Meaning and Significance of ἐπικαλέω in Romans 10:13,” *Them* 41, no. 1 (2016): 26-29.

²² James L. Crenshaw, *JOEL*, The Anchor Yale Bible, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), 169.

most striking of all the citations is his final one in v. 13. What makes Paul's recontextualizing of it so striking is that it is clear Paul intends his audience to identify the "Lord" as referring to the Lord Jesus. The clarity of this conclusion arises from several aspects of Paul's argument in the section. First, the confession that "Jesus is Lord" (v. 9) is the basis of the good news that a person is to trust in with their heart (v. 8) that results in salvation (v. 10). Second, all who trust in this "Lord" will never be put to shame (v. 11) because, third, he is the same Lord for both Jew and Greek—he is "Lord of all" (v. 12). Therefore, anyone, whether Jew or Greek, who "calls on the name" of this "Lord" (Jesus) will receive salvation (v. 13).²³ Lastly, it is evident that in v. 14, Paul identifies the one whom his readers will call on as "one in whom they have not believed," which is revealed to only be possible by them hearing the message about Christ (v. 17).

As a result, because of this christocentric focus of Romans 10:5-13 and Paul's inclusion of Joel 2:32 as applied to the Lord Jesus, many scholars have posited that Paul is not only identifying Jesus as Yahweh from the OT, but that he is also integrating Jesus into the worship of the one God Yahweh.²⁴ C. Kavin Rowe in an influential article on the subject expresses the logic behind this conclusion as follows:

"It is quite astonishing, then, that Paul explicitly uses *to onoma kyriou* ('the name of the Lord') of Joel 3:5 to refer to Jesus. In this way he makes an unreserved identification of Jesus with YHWH, the unique and only God of Israel. However, since Paul is not foremost a propositional theologian, he does not simply say, 'Jesus is YHWH'. His theological medium is instead that of overlap and resonance, such that he creates the overlapping conceptual space wherein this resonating identification occurs. The identification within this unquestionable resonance and 'conceptual overlap' is one of dialectical *identity*. The name which *is* the God of Israel alone, is now the name which *is* Jesus. The saving name in its original context was YHWH, now the saving name is Christ's. In Joel the Israelites would have called out 'YHWH' to be saved, and now in Romans, all would call out 'Jesus.' 'The name of the Lord' = YHWH has become, through Paul's OT citation, 'the name of the Lord' = Jesus."²⁵

The assertion that Rowe is making can be summarized in simpler terms in the remarks of Douglas Moo, which are representative of the perspective of the majority scholarship,

"Paul is again here quoting the Old Testament: Joel 2:32 (3:5 in the LXX). The 'Lord' in Joel is, of course, Yahweh. But Paul applies the text to believers who call on the name of Jesus (in 10:9 and the context of 10:10-12). The way the early Christians applied language from the Old Testament about Jehovah God to Jesus conveys an

²³ Paul identifies as his audience the Corinthian believers along with "all those in every place who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor 1:2). Cf. Acts 9:14, 21; 22:16; 2 Tim 2:22.

²⁴ Richard J. Bauckham, "Paul's Christology of Divine Identity," in *Jesus and the God of Israel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 196.

²⁵ C. Kavin Rowe, "Romans 10:13: What Is the Name of the Lord?," *HBT* 22, no. 1 (2000): 160. Emphasis original.

important clue about the divine status they implicitly accorded to Jesus...On the whole then, the application of *kyrios* language from the Old Testament to Jesus does suggest his deity.”²⁶

What both Rowe and Moo are concluding is that Paul is, in fact, not recontextualizing Joel 2:32 into the present section of Romans 10 and adapting it to the message about Christ. Rather, they are asserting that Paul is simply quoting Joel 2:32 and claiming that the “Lord” Yahweh mentioned in Joel is to now be equated with or identified as the “Lord” Jesus. This interpretation is likely motivated from a view that Paul means for the quotation to be understood primarily in christological terms, that is, to say something about who Christ is. This interpretation draws upon the assumption that Paul intends the reader to equate the OT referent of Yahweh as being the same referent in the NT context—Jesus. But we must ask why should that be the preferred method for understanding Paul’s meaning?

Paul has already demonstrated the recontextualization of two other OT passages in Romans 10:5-13 (Deut 30:12-14; Isa 28:16) that he interprets in the present context of the good news and the message of trust about Christ. It may be that the conclusion of Rowe, Moo, and others is driven by other theological presuppositions and a confirmation bias rather than exegesis and sensitivity to Paul’s hermeneutical conventions.

Paul has demonstrated his reinterpretation of several OT passages in light of Christ and the good news throughout the section of Rom 10:5-13. Taking into consideration Paul’s hermeneutical objective to focus on the significance of Christ and the universal application concerning salvation based on trust, it can be argued that Paul’s quotation of Joel 2:32 is better understood as having a *soteriological* focus, rather than a *christological* one. Paul’s purpose in the quotation is not one aimed at establishing a christological identity (i.e., that Jesus is to be understood as Yahweh), but to reveal a soteriological purpose (i.e., that Jesus is the one through whom Yahweh is fulfilling and bringing about the culmination of salvation history).²⁷

In a similar way to how the Israelites were instructed to call upon Yahweh as their “Lord” in the old covenant, Paul is expressing the recontextualizing of that reality in the new covenant that Jews and Gentiles alike are now to call upon the name of Jesus as “Lord” because he is the one who God has chosen to be the means of salvation and righteousness.

²⁶ Douglas J. Moo, “Romans,” in *Romans to Philemon*, ed. Clinton E. Arnold, Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 65. See also Douglas J. Moo, *The Letter to the Romans*, New International Commentary on the New Testament, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018), 678-79. Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1998), 561. Colin G. Kruse, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, Pillar New Testament Commentary, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 411-12. John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), 57. R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans 8–16*, Lenski’s Commentary on the New Testament, (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961), 659.

²⁷ James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, vol. 38B, Word Biblical Commentary, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988), 617.

This interpretation is supported by several lines of reasoning. First, the Greek word κύριος, as applied to Jesus in verse 9, reveals Paul's view that confession of the lordship of Jesus is primarily a response of obedience, humility, and devotion to Christ because God raised him from the dead and highly exalted him as Lord over all. It is important to mention that κύριος does not carry with it an implicit designation that Christ is the Lord Yahweh in the OT.²⁸ When God raised Jesus from the dead, highly exalted him above the heavens, and set him at his own right hand over all of creation (Rom 8:34; Eph 1:20; Heb 1:3, 13; 1 Pet 3:22), this marked Jesus as God's vice regent, the one through whom God is going to exercise his rule and authority (i.e., kingdom), for through the blood of Jesus, God is bringing together all things according to the plan of his will (Eph 1:10; Col 1:20).

Second, the universal lordship of Jesus that Paul is proclaiming derives from his view that Jesus is the "eschatological expression" of God's redemptive plan and purpose.²⁹ It is through Jesus as the Lord and Christ that Yahweh's covenant promises are being fulfilled and Yahweh's spiritual blessings are being bestowed upon all who will call on the name of Jesus (2 Cor 1:19-20; Rom 10:12). In the same way to how Israel called upon the name of Yahweh in the OT times for deliverance (i.e., salvation) and blessings, Paul is claiming that Yahweh has now set forth Jesus as the Lord who both Jew and Greek are to call upon for salvation and spiritual blessings. Because Yahweh has acted decisively in Christ to bring about his plan of redemption, he obligates all people (Jew and Greek) to surrender themselves to the one upon whom he has bestowed the highest name and authority—Jesus (Phil 2:9).

Third, Jesus fulfills and brings the old covenant to its intended goal (Rom 10:4). For Jews to reject the message of trust Paul is proclaiming in the good news is, in fact, to reject their own covenant with Yahweh. The healing and restoration that Yahweh promised to Israel is being completed in Jesus and the new covenant that he instituted through his death and resurrection. The salvation from the destruction and terror of the day of Yahweh for the remnant of Israel is only obtained by embracing the good news that Jesus is Lord and that through him Yahweh is delivering the promised blessings of wholeness, rest, and peace mentioned in the old covenant.

This interpretation of Paul's use of Joel 2:32 in Rom 10:13 is well articulated by H. A. W. Meyer in his commentary on Romans and worth quoting at length.

"This passage [Rom 10:13] treats of the coming in of the *Messianic* era; hence Paul might refer κυρίου, which in the original points to *God*, justly to *Christ*, who has

²⁸ Contra C. E. B. Cranfield and others, who interpret Jesus being called κύριος ("Lord") as containing a "necessary implication" that Paul believes Christ's lordship entails his preexistence and incarnation. C. E. B. Cranfield, "Some Comments on Professor J. D. G. Dunn' Christology in the Making: A New Testament Inquiry into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation, with Special Reference to the Evidence of the Epistle to the Romans," in *The Glory of Christ in the New Testament: Studies in Christology in Memory of George Bradford Caird*, ed. L. D. Hurst and N. T. Wright (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 274.

²⁹ Dunn, *WBC-NT-25*, 38B, 610.

appeared in the name of God, and continually rules as His Representative and Revealer, and Mediator, whose name was now the very specific object of the *Christian* calling on the Lord. That Paul writes not αὐτοῦ, but κυρίου, is from no particular motive; he simply reproduces the words of Scripture, which he presumes to be well known and makes his own.”³⁰

CONCLUSION

In examining Paul’s use of the OT in Rom 10:5-13, the conclusion that he recontextualized OT passages in order to explain the continuity of the message of trust about Christ in the new covenant with God’s “word” to the Israelites in the old covenant is well supported. Informed by the historical background of ancient Jewish methods of interpretation, Paul’s recontextualizing reflects known *midrash* and *peshet* methods for reinterpreting Scripture in light of an eschatological perspective to convey the relevance of the text for his audience. Viewed in this way, the intention behind Paul’s quotation of Joel 2:32 aligns more coherently with a soteriological purpose rather than a christological one. While Paul has a christological focus throughout the section as he recontextualizes several OT texts and applies them to a new context in connection with the good news and the message of Christ, his motivation to apply Joel 2:32 to Jesus does not seem to derive from a desire to establish an identity of identification with Yahweh. Rather, Paul recontextualizes the passage to comport with the way that Yahweh is bringing to completion his act of redemption and salvation in Jesus as the one in whom all his covenant promises find their fulfillment and through whom he is exercising his power and kingdom.

³⁰ H. A. W. Meyer, *Critical and Exegetical Hand-Book to the Epistle to the Romans*, Meyer's Commentary on the New Testament, (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1884), 412. Emphasis original.

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