

READING ROMANS AFTER THE BOOK OF ACTS

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Abstract: *The Acts-Romans sequence, such as found in the Latin manuscript tradition and familiar to readers of the English Bible, is hermeneutically significant and fruitful. Early readers had good reason to place the books together, for the visit of Paul to Rome (Acts 28) is the one anticipated in the next chapter (Romans 1). The Letter to the Romans appears to pick up and develop key themes in the preceding book, and prefixing Romans with Acts promotes a certain reading strategy for the head-letter of the Pauline corpus. The adjoining of Acts and Romans suggests that the accusations made against Paul in the final chapters of Acts (and summed up in Acts 21:28) set the agenda for Romans, in which Paul shows that he does not speak against the people, the law, and the temple. Paul's gospel proclaims that God will be faithful to the promises made to Abraham, so that Jewish privileges are preserved, the law is exonerated, and a community consisting of believing Jews and believing Gentiles is brought into being.*

Key Words: *Paul, Romans, Acts, Jew, Gentile, temple, canon logic*

No doubt scholars will continue to debate the purpose of Romans, why Paul wrote the letter and how its contents reflect its purpose, but for a complex and sophisticated work like the Letter to the Romans it would be a mistake to think that only one purpose was in the mind of its author.¹ The historical setting of its composition is not the only possible context that matters for the interpretation of a literary work, and in the case of Paul's Letter to the Romans, it has another *Sitz im Leben* due to its place within the canonical setting provided by the other books among which it stands. This phenomenon is an aspect of the biblical "paratext" (a term coined by Gérard Genette),² which includes features such as book titles, book order, and internal divisions within books (e.g. paragraphs). These paratextual elements provide a frame of reference for the text and set up certain expectations for subsequent readers.³ In other words, an effect is produced on readers when biblical books are placed in a particular sequence,⁴ for this suggests that neighboring books

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¹ For a brief survey of proposals as to the purpose of the epistle, see L. Ann Jervis, *The Purpose of Romans: A Comparative Letter Structure Investigation* (JSNTSup 55; Sheffield: JSOT, 1991), 14–27.

² Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* (trans. Jane E. Lewin; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

³ For the fluidity of the biblical paratext in the digital age, see Jeffrey S. Siker, *Liquid Scripture: The Bible in a Digital World* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2017), 161: "The potential exists in a digital Bible to read a passage with dozens of paratexts that serve to modify or provide some form of commentary on the particular biblical text in question."

⁴ Robert W. Wall speaks of "the interpretive importance of certain canonical markers," one such marker being a book's placement within the NT canon; see "Israel and the Gentile Mission in Acts and

are to be viewed as canonical “conversation partners” whose related contents throw light on each other. This canonical frame may provide evidence of how early readers understood the message and purpose of Paul’s Letter to the Romans.

This discussion focuses on book order and in particular the Acts–Romans sequence found in some forms of the NT canon and familiar to readers of the English Bible. Physical contiguity is regularly understood by readers to indicate that there must be a significant connection between books, and the most obvious link in this case is that Acts ends with Paul’s arrival in Rome (28:11–31), which is the visit anticipated by Paul in Romans 1 (vv. 8–15; cf. Rom 15:22–33).⁵ The interpretive significance of the propinquity of Acts and Romans is that it supports the supposition that “Luke’s *Paulusbild* provides the reader of the New Testament with an authorized biography by which to understand the canon’s Pauline corpus.”⁶ In particular, the portrait of Paul in Acts may suggest a particular way of reading Romans and of understanding its purpose.

I. ROMANS AT THE HEAD OF THE PAULINE CORPUS

The early manuscript evidence for the Pauline corpus shows that there was not total fixity in the ordering of the letters,⁷ but despite some variation, Romans is almost always in first position and the letters are ordered according to decreasing size.⁸ In the present sequence, Paul’s letters are roughly ranked according their (decreasing) length and audience (classified as either churches or individuals), and letters to the same church or individual are placed together.⁹ This scheme is exemplified by the oldest manuscript of Paul’s letters (ca. AD 200), the Chester Beatty codex \mathfrak{P}^{46} , except that Romans is followed by Hebrews, Ephesians precedes Galatians, and the manuscript breaks off at 1 Thess 5:28 (folio 97 verso, with seven leaves missing).¹⁰ Though the position of Romans at the head of the Pauline corpus

Paul: A Canonical Approach,” in *Witness to the Gospel: The Theology of Acts* (ed. I. Howard Marshall and David Peterson; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 439.

⁵ For other possible thematic links, see Robert W. Wall, “Romans 1:1–15: An Introduction to the Pauline Corpus of the New Testament,” in Robert W. Wall and Eugene E. Lemcio, *The New Testament as Canon: A Reader in Canonical Criticism* (JSNTSup 76; Sheffield: JSOT, 1992), 152.

⁶ Wall, “Romans 1:1–15,” 152–153.

⁷ Jack Finegan, “The Original Form of the Pauline Collection,” *HTR* 49 (1956): 85–103; David Trobisch, *Die Entstehung der Paulusbriefsammlung: Studien zu den Anfängen christlicher Publizistik* (NTOA 10; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag, 1989), 14–61; H. J. Frede, “Die Ordnung der Paulusbriefe und der Platz des Kolosserbriefs im Corpus Paulinum,” in *Epistula ad Colossenses* (ed. H. J. Frede; Vetus Latina: Die Reste der altlateinischen Bibel 24/2 fasc. 4; Freiburg: Herder, 1969), 290–303.

⁸ See David Trobisch, *Paul’s Letter Collection: Tracing the Origins* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 11–22.

⁹ See, e.g., the chart provided by Trobisch, *Paul’s Letter Collection*, 17. For the publication of the corpus in this form in Paul’s lifetime and possibly by the apostle himself, see Stanley E. Porter, “Paul and the Process of Canonization,” in *Exploring the Origins of the Bible: Canon Formation in Historical, Literary, and Theological Perspective* (ed. Craig A. Evans and Emanuel Tov; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 173–202; idem, *The Apostle Paul: His Life, Thought, and Letters* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016), 175–78.

¹⁰ See Frederic G. Kenyon, *The Chester Beatty Biblical Papyri: Descriptions and Texts of Twelve Manuscripts on Papyrus of the Greek Bible: Fasciculus III Supplement, Pauline Epistles* (London: Emery Walker, 1936). For the placement of Hebrews after Romans, see H. J. D. Sparks, “The Order of the Epistles in \mathfrak{P}^{46} ,” *JTS* 42 (1941): 180–81. The order Ephesians–Galatians in \mathfrak{P}^{46} is perhaps due to the differing systems of sti-

is due to the mechanical principle of length, being the longest letter to a church, it is also the most treatise-like of the apostle's letters,¹¹ and so appropriately functions as the *de facto* theological introduction to the Pauline corpus. On that basis, if Acts is allowed to influence the reading of Romans, it potentially has a hand in shaping the reading of the Pauline corpus as a whole.

In his final book, Brevard Childs explored the significance of the premier position of Romans.¹² He argued that the rest of the corpus was to be read through the lens of the mature and comprehensive survey of Pauline teaching found in Romans.¹³ Childs's view in part builds on Günther Bornkamm's famous discussion of Romans as "Paul's last will and testament."¹⁴ Both Bornkamm and Childs acknowledge that they go beyond Paul's stated intention for his letter, but argue the way they do because they claim that Romans, in contrast to the other letters that follow, is less influenced by the contingent, local problems of the church to which it was sent.¹⁵ According to Childs, "the placing of Romans as an introduction was not a tour de force, but was encouraged by the very nature of the letter itself."¹⁶ The other part of Childs's thesis is that Romans and the Pastorals act as bookends, with the Pastorals showing how the letters by the apostle are to be read as Scripture and labelling his teaching "sound doctrine."¹⁷ As well, the collation of the letters in an epistolary corpus, with a theological framework provided by Romans, makes them *all* circular letters.

chometry in use in antiquity, for the two letters are closely similar in length; see Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul the Letter-Writer: His World, His Options, His Skills* (Good News Studies 41; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1995), 123–24.

¹¹ For Romans as a Pauline adaptation of the "letter-essay," see M. Luther Stirewalt Jr., *Paul, The Letter Writer* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 107–12.

¹² *The Church's Guide for Reading Paul: The Canonical Shaping of the Pauline Corpus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008).

¹³ *Ibid.*, 7, 66–67, 104, and 117.

¹⁴ Günther Bornkamm, "The Letter to the Romans as Paul's Last Will and Testament," in *Romans Debate*, 16–28; cf. John D. Godsey who says that Romans deserves its place at the head of the Pauline Corpus for the apostle wrote Romans to introduce himself and his central theological and ethical convictions, see "The Interpretation of Romans in the History of the Christian Faith," *Int* 34 (1980): 3.

¹⁵ This is an important aspect of Childs's argument, see *Church's Guide for Reading Paul*, 139, 145, 147, 179.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 175.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 75–78, 164–167. For an evaluation of Childs's approach, see Leander E. Keck, "Faith Seeking Canonical Understanding: Childs's Guide to the Pauline Letters," in *The Bible as Christian Scripture: The Work of Brevard S. Childs* (ed. Christopher R. Seitz and Kent Harold Richards; BSNA 25; Atlanta: SBL, 2013), 103–17 and John C. Poirier, "Order and Essence of Canon in Brevard Childs's Book on Paul," *BBR* 20 (2010): 503–16. Poirier finds fault with Childs for failing to mention that the Pauline corpus was ordered according to the decreasing length of the letters and Poirier sees this rationale for the ordering as ruling out any hermeneutical significance for Romans as the head of the corpus ("Order and Essence," 505–9). Poirier does not, however, deal with Childs's positive argument, namely the broad theological scope of Romans itself.

II. THE APPOSITION OF ACTS AND ROMANS

In the English Bible, the Pauline Corpus is prefaced by the book of the Acts, and this canonical position suggests that those responsible viewed Acts as functioning as a bridge between the Gospels and the Letters.¹⁸ In the Muratorian Fragment (ca. AD 200),¹⁹ “the acts of all the apostles” is discussed after Luke and John and before the Pauline Epistles.²⁰ So, too, in Eusebius, the order of discussion of the *homologoumena* (acknowledged or recognized writings) is: the Gospels, Acts, Pauline Epistles, 1 John, 1 Peter, and Revelation; namely, he lists the letters of Paul after Acts.²¹ In contrast to all Greek witnesses, in which Acts is always combined with the Catholic Epistles,²² Acts in the Latin Vulgate is placed between the Gospels and the Pauline Epistles,²³ and this placement determined book order within the Western Bible, both Protestant and Catholic. This way of ordering the books reflects the concentration upon Paul in the second half of the narrative of Acts (chap. 13 onwards).²⁴ With Acts strategically placed before the *corpus Paulinum*, the churches planted or visited by Paul in Acts receive letters from the apostle in the adjoining epistolary section of the canon, with Acts helping to frame the interpretation of these letters.²⁵ It is intriguing that Acts fails to mention that Paul wrote letters. However, several scholars have recently argued that Pauline letters were used by the author of Acts as one of the unacknowledged sources upon which he drew for his own composition. This view is now widely accepted,²⁶ and, according to Rich-

¹⁸ Brevard S. Childs, *The New Testament as Canon: An Introduction* (London: SCM, 1984), 219–25; cf. Robert W. Wall, “The Acts of the Apostles in Canonical Context,” *BTB* 18 (1988): 17–18. Wall builds on the work of Childs. I acknowledge my dependence on Wall for this paragraph. See also Jens Schröter, “The Acts of the Apostles and the Emergence of the New Testament Canon: Observations on the Canonization of Acts and Its Meaning as a Canonical Writing,” in idem, *From Jesus to the New Testament: Early Christian Theology and the Origin of the New Testament Canon* (trans. Wayne Coppins; Baylor-Mohr Siebeck Studies in Early Christianity; Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2013), 273–304.

¹⁹ For this dating, see Graham N. Stanton, *Jesus and the Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 68–71; Eckhard J. Schnabel, “The Muratorian Fragment: The State of Research,” *JETS* 57 (2014): 231–64.

²⁰ The deviant order of Pauline letters in the Muratorian Fragment that has Romans in last position may be intended to be chronological or else indicates its climactic importance, see Harry Gamble, “The Redaction of the Pauline Letters and the Formation of the Pauline Corpus,” *JBL* 94 (1975): 407–8.

²¹ *Hist. eccl.* 3.25.1–2.

²² Trobisch, *Paul’s Letter Collection*, 10. For the possible interpretive significance of the Acts-Catholic Epistles collation (*Praxapostolos*), see Gregory Goswell, “The Place of the Book of Acts in Reading the NT,” *JETS* 59 (2016): 67–82. In this canonical arrangement, Acts appears to promote non-Pauline forms of Christianity, for it features several disciples (esp. Peter and John), not just Paul, who dominates chapters 13–28.

²³ See Samuel Berger, *Histoire de la Vulgate: pendant les premiers siècles du moyen âge* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1976), 339 (order no. 1). For listings of alternative orders within the Latin tradition, see Berger, *Histoire de la Vulgate*, 339–41.

²⁴ Peter effectively bows out of the story in Acts 12:17 (“Then he departed and went to another place”), though he makes a further (highly significant) cameo appearance in Acts 15.

²⁵ The only exception is Colossians, for this church was not founded by Paul (Col 2:1), nor is there any record that he visited Colossae.

²⁶ See Morton S. Enslin, “Once Again, Luke and Paul,” *ZNW* 61 (1970): 253–71; Steve Walton, *Leadership and Lifestyle: The Portrait of Paul in the Miletus Speech and 1 Thessalonians* (SNTSMS 108; Cambridge:

ard Pervo, “The cumulative evidence that Luke made use of Pauline letters is rather persuasive.”²⁷

If the author of Acts did make use of Romans as a source, his reading of Romans may have materially shaped the portrait of Paul in Acts, which in turn would throw light on how Luke himself understood Romans. This means that a careful comparison of Acts and Romans (a procedure prompted by their canonical juxtaposition) may encourage the reading of Romans from a certain “angle of vision.”²⁸ Acts highlights Paul’s efforts to promote unity among believers, especially between Jewish and Gentile believers, and consistent with the Lukan portrait, “for its part, Romans offered a picture of a Paul in pursuit of peace and eager to place himself in a good light with believers who were more observant of Torah.”²⁹ The promotion of gospel unity among believers would seem to be one of the main purposes for which Acts was written,³⁰ and a passage such as Romans 9–11 supports the thesis that it is a credible exegetical procedure to read the juxtaposed Pauline Corpus (and especially Romans) from this vantage point.³¹ Paul in Acts routinely starts his missionary efforts by preaching in the synagogue (if there is one in the location) until ejected (9:20–22; 13:5, 46; 14:1; 16:13; 17:1–4, 10–12, 17; 18:4, 6, 19; 19:8–10; 28:17, 28). According to Luke, Paul does this as a matter of theological principle (N.B. Acts 13:46: “It was necessary [ἦν ἀναγκαῖον] that the word of God should be spoken first to you [= the Jews], ... we turn to the Gentiles”). In line with this, the priority of the Jews in the divine plan of salvation and their temporary

Cambridge University Press, 2000), 199–214; Wolfgang Schenk, “Luke as Reader of Paul: Observations on his Reception,” in *Intertextuality in Biblical Writings: Essays in Honour of Bas van Iersel* (ed. Sipke Draisma; Kampen: H. J. Kok, 1989), 127–39; William O. Walker Jr., “Acts and the Pauline Corpus Revisited: Peter’s Speech at the Jerusalem Conference,” in *Literary Studies in Luke-Acts: Essays in Honor of Joseph B. Tyson* (ed. Richard P. Thompson and Thomas E. Phillips; Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1998), 77–86; Lars Aejmalaeus, “The Pauline Letters as Source Material in Luke-Acts,” in *The Early Reception of Paul* (ed. Kenneth Liljeström; Publications of the Finnish Exegetical Society 99; Helsinki: Finnish Exegetical Society, 2011), 54–75.

²⁷ Richard I. Pervo, *Dating Acts: Between the Evangelists and the Apologists* (Santa Rosa, CA: Polebridge, 2006), 145. Pervo uses this discovery to support his view that Acts is a second-century composition, but Lukan use of the Pauline corpus does not need to lead to this conclusion, especially if Paul himself (or one of his immediate company shortly after his death) was responsible for the publication of the corpus (à la the theory of Stanley Porter).

²⁸ Cf. Robert W. Wall, “The Acts of the Apostles,” *NIB* 10:31.

²⁹ Pervo, *Dating Acts*, 55 (addition mine). However, I do not agree with Pervo when he claims: “Luke’s Paul is ... a ‘revisionist’ Paul, a figure shaped to meet the needs of a later era” (*Dating Acts*, 55 [suspension points mine]). In fact, I would see thematic match-ups between Romans and Acts as throwing doubt on the theory of Pervo, for it suggests that the contents of Paul’s letters acted as a constraint and helped mold the Lukan portrait of the apostle.

³⁰ Cf. Andrew C. Clark, *Parallel Lives: The Relation of Paul to the Apostles in the Lukan Perspective* (Paternoster Biblical and Theological Monographs; Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 2001), 29: “it is the issues of the identity and unity of the people of God which are Luke’s main concern”; cf. Alan J. Thompson, *One Lord, One People: The Unity of the Church in Acts in Its Literary Setting* (LNTS 359; London: T&T Clark, 2008).

³¹ Jacob Jervell, *The Unknown Paul: Essays on Luke-Acts and Early Christian History* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984), 68–76 (75: “We are ... in Romans 9–11 confronted with that part of Paul which above all is the basis and foundation of the Lukan Paul” [suspension points mine]). For this paragraph, I acknowledge my substantial dependence on Jervell.

rejection of the gospel as grounds for a mission to the Gentiles are also repeatedly stated in Romans and must be viewed as key themes in the epistle (1:16: “to the Jew first and also to the Greek”; 2:9–10; 11:11–15, 19–20; 15:8–9).³² This is an example of how the reading of Acts alerts the reader to what is a significant theme in the book that follows.

Another, not unrelated, example is found in Acts 10:34, where Peter proclaims to Cornelius the theological axiom that “God shows no partiality” and on that basis proceeds to preach the gospel to Gentiles and witnesses their conversion. The same theme of divine impartiality dominates Romans 2 (esp. 2:11), with both texts using the same rare Greek term (*προσωπολημία*; cf. its use in Col 3:25 and Eph 6:9 in application to the fair treatment of slaves).³³ The identical theme of God’s equal treatment of Jews and Gentiles is voiced by Peter using different wording in Acts 15:9. The system of chapters (capitulation) in Codex Vaticanus (B 03) of the early fourth century is the oldest such system known for the NT.³⁴ The beginning of the second chapter of Romans in Vaticanus (V2) is placed at 1:18, which the editors of NA²⁷ (who place a blank line after 1:17) view as the start of the body of the book. The next chapter in Vaticanus commences at 2:12 (V3). This division has the effect of making the final statement of the preceding chapter a punchline (2:11: “For God shows no partiality”). This way of dividing the text of Romans suggests that 2:11 summarizes the opening argument of the letter.³⁵ It also makes the first sentence of the next chapter in Vaticanus (2:12) a statement of theme for the new chapter. As noted by Bassler, the statement about divine impartiality rounds off the argument, and 2:11 is a restatement and refinement of the thought in 2:6 (“For [God] will render to every man according to his works”).³⁶ The viability of the demarcated section in Vaticanus is supported by the *inclusio* of the motif of divine wrath (1:18; 2:8–9),³⁷ with the section demonstrating that both

³² Pervo, *Dating Acts*, 104–5. According to Pervo, Luke “historicized” the theological principle enunciated in Rom 1:16 (*Dating Acts*, 105); cf. Eckhard Plümacher, “Rom in der Apostelgeschichte,” in *Geschichte und Geschichten: Aufsätze zur Apostelgeschichte und zu den Johannesakten* (ed. Jens Schröter and Ralph Brucker; WUNT 170; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 154; Simon Buttica, “‘Has God Rejected His People?’ (Romans 11:1): The Salvation of Israel in Acts: Narrative Claim of a Pauline Legacy,” in *Paul and the Heritage of Israel: Paul’s Claim upon Israel’s Legacy in Luke and Acts in the Light of the Pauline Letters* (ed. David P. Moessner et al.; LNTS 452; London: T&T Clark, 2012), 159–60.

³³ The connection is noticed by Jouette M. Bassler, *Divine Impartiality: Paul and a Theological Axiom* (SBLDS 59; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1982), 176, and Anthony J. Guerra, *Romans and the Apologetic Tradition: The Purpose, Genre and Audience of Paul’s Letters* (SNTSMS 81; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 58 n. 63.

³⁴ For details, see Gregory Goswell, “An Early Commentary on the Pauline Corpus: The Capitulation of Codex Vaticanus,” *JGRChJ* 8 (2011–12): 51–82.

³⁵ Bassler makes reference to the chapter division in Vaticanus (*Divine Impartiality*, 122), noting that the codex regards 1:18–2:11 “as a single thought unit” and that the *kephalaia* of Codex Alexandrinus (A1, A2) also begin at 1:18 and 2:12; cf. H. F. von Soden, *Die Schriften des Neuen Testaments: in ihrer ältesten erreichbaren Textgestalt hergestellt auf grund ihrer textgeschichte; I. Teil: Untersuchungen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1911), I.1.461.

³⁶ Bassler, *Divine Impartiality*, 126.

³⁷ On indications of textual sections in Pauline letters, see J. A. Fischer, “Pauline Literary Forms and Thought Patterns,” *CBQ* 39 (1977): 209–23.

Jew and Greek are subject to God's judgment and reward. According to Bassler, "the statement that God is impartial functions as a terse summary of the entire preceding unit,"³⁸ which does not explicitly mention Jews or Gentiles (as noted by Bassler) and so applies equally to both groups. Bassler argues for the unity of 2:12–29 (= V3) on the basis of the word chain: *ἀνόμος* – *νόμος* – *περιτομή* – *ἀκροβυστία*,³⁹ and because 2:28–29 is a restatement (albeit in different terms) of the opening statement of the unit in verses 12–13,⁴⁰ namely that God ignores all external distinctions and is only interested in deeds. As well, this thesis can be understood as a development of the thematic statement at 2:11.⁴¹ In this way, the opening of Romans can be viewed as a theological recapitulation of leading themes and missionary events in the preceding book of Acts. Prefixing Romans with Acts promotes a particular reading strategy for the head-letter of the Pauline corpus, namely Romans, like Paul's own ministry as depicted in Acts, promotes the unity of all believers (Gentile and Jewish) in a gospel that offers salvation to all who believe.

III. ROME AS A DESTINATION IN ACTS

As already noted, Acts ends with Paul in Rome (28:11–31), and it is fitting that Romans should immediately follow in modern printed Bibles (reflecting the Vulgate tradition), with Paul in Rom 1:8–15 and 15:22–29 discussing a possible visit to Rome. It is plain that the Roman terminus of Paul's movements dominates the last phase of the narrative of Acts, starting from 19:21 ("After I have been there [= Jerusalem], I must also see Rome"). This is a major turning point in Acts and comes immediately after the summary statement of the gospel's progress in 19:20 ("So the word of the Lord grew and prevailed mightily"). The transition to a new phase in the story is also marked by the opening of verse 21 ("Once these things had been fulfilled"). Luke signals what will be the itinerary for the rest of the book of Acts, namely a journey to Rome via Jerusalem.⁴² The significance of the goal of the journey is underlined by the language of divine necessity (Paul "must" [δέῃ] see Rome), implying that this is God's will.⁴³ This interpretation is supported by the way in which Paul's stated resolution is prefaced: "Paul resolved in the Spirit," indicating the leading of God's Spirit. Later, the Spirit provides inspired premonitions

³⁸ Bassler, *Divine Impartiality*, 135.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 137.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 139.

⁴¹ Julette M. Bassler, "Divine Impartiality in Paul's Letter to the Romans," *NovT* 26 (1984): 53.

⁴² Craig S. Keener, *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary*, vol. 3: 15:1–23:35 (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2014), 2860–61.

⁴³ This finds a parallel in Jesus's journey to Jerusalem, and in each case the commencement of the journey is a major turning point in the narrative (cf. Luke 9:51) and the protagonist heads toward arrest, suffering and death; see Susan Marie Praeder, "Jesus-Paul, Peter-Paul, and Jesus-Peter Parallels in Luke-Acts: A History of Reader Response," in *SBL 1982 Seminar Papers* (ed. Kent Harold Richards; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1984), 23–39; Charles H. Talbert, *Literary Patterns, Theological Themes, and the Genre of Luke-Acts* (SBLMS 20; Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1974), 1–50; Armand Puig i Tàrrach, "Les Voyages à Jerusalem (Lc 9,51; Ac 19,21)," in *The Unity of Luke-Acts* (ed. J. Verheyden; BETL 142; Leuven: Peeters, 1999), 493–505.

of what he will face in Jerusalem (20:22–23; 21:11), but these are not understood by Paul as reasons for not proceeding with his plan.⁴⁴ There are also visions granted to Paul that assure him that he will reach Rome (23:11; 27:23–24). Paul's appeal to Caesar is a further step toward the goal of visiting Rome (25:11–12, 21). The sea voyage to Rome is described in some detail (Acts 27), and finally, it is stated that he arrived in Rome (28:14, 16).

It could be argued that the Roman destination is signalled as early as the phrase “the end of the earth” in the programmatic statement of Acts 1:8, with this being the mandated end goal of the gospel mission. Wall notes the use of the singular (“the *end* [ἔσχατου] of the earth”), which he says is not to be generalized to mean the *ends* of the earth, indicating that Luke is indeed thinking of Rome.⁴⁵ The beginning and end of Acts are connected and frame the intervening narrative as shown, for instance, by the *inclusio* of references to God's “kingdom” (1:3, 6; 28:23, 31) and to the activity of teaching by Jesus and Paul (1:1; 28:31 using the term *διδάσκω*).⁴⁶ Paul's two-year residence in Rome (28:30), the center of the Gentile world, is an indicator of the worldwide spread of the gospel,⁴⁷ but it has this function whether or not Rome is equated with “the end of the earth.” Despite the possible association forged between the two in Pss. Sol. 8:15, the reuse of the Greek phrase in Acts 13:47 (quoting Isa 49:6) in parallel with “to be a light for the Gentiles” suggests that it signifies the Gentile world as a whole.⁴⁸ As well, Rome holds a climactic geographical position near the end of the list of foreign visitors to Jerusalem at Pentecost in Acts 2 (v. 11: “and visitors from Rome”), as is fitting for a narrative that starts in Jerusalem and ends in Rome.⁴⁹ Here, then, are two (albeit subtle) indicators that the Roman destination may have been in the author's mind from the beginning of Acts.⁵⁰

⁴⁴ As noted by John B. F. Miller, both Paul and those trying to dissuade him from going to Jerusalem see their actions as in accordance with the Spirit, see *Convinced that God had Called Us: Dreams, Visions and the Perception of God's Will in Luke-Acts* (Biblical Interpretation Series 85; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 225–29.

⁴⁵ Wall, “Romans 1:1–15,” 149 n. 26.

⁴⁶ For these and other links, see Mikeal Parsons, *The Departure of Jesus in Luke-Acts* (JSOTSup 21; Sheffield: JSOT, 1987), 156–59.

⁴⁷ According to Wall, “Rome symbolizes the universal significance of Paul's previous ministry” (“Romans 1:1–15,” 150).

⁴⁸ Brian S. Rosner, “The Progress of the Word,” in *Witness to the Gospel*, 217–21; cf. W. C. van Unnik, “Der Ausdruck ἔως ἐσχατου τῆς γῆς (Apostelgeschichte 1:8) und sein alttestamentlicher Hintergrund,” in idem, *Sparsa Collecta: The Collected Essays of W. C. van Unnik: Part One; Evangelia, Paulina, Acta* (NovTSup 29; Leiden: Brill, 1973), 399, who argues that the Psalms of Solomon reference is to Pompey coming from Spain in the far west, not from Rome. For a recent survey of the issue, see Sebastian Schneider, “...bis an die Grenzen des Landes: Überlegungen zur Bedeutung und Funktion von Apg 1,8 im Rahmen Apostelgeschichte,” in *Lukas – Paulus – Pastoralbriefe: Festschrift für Alfons Weiser zum 80. Geburtstag* (ed. Rudolf Hoppe and Michael Reichardt; SBS 230; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2014), 53–69. Schneider's own view is that the phrase in 1:8 means “to the end of the land of Israel” (the mission focus of Acts 1–12) and 13:47 marks the change of focus to the Gentile mission in Acts 13–28.

⁴⁹ As noted by Craig S. Keener, *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary*, vol. 1: *Introduction and 1:1–2:47* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012), 850.

⁵⁰ Indeed, the Roman terminus may be in the author's mind as early as the reference to the decree of Caesar Augustus in Luke 2:1 (Plümacher, “Rom in der Apostelgeschichte,” 168).

IV. APOLOGETICS IN ACTS AND ROMANS

My thesis is that Romans can be understood as an answer to the false charges levelled at Paul in Jerusalem, for in Acts 21:28 the Jews accuse Paul in these words: “This is the man who is teaching men everywhere against the people and the law and this place,” with their words that follow showing that the *place* referred to is the temple (“he has defiled this holy place”). The charge that Paul has an anti-law message is also alluded to by James in 21:21 (“they have been told about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children or observe the customs”). Likewise, two of the charges are again mentioned by Paul in Rome in 28:17 (“I have done nothing against the people or the customs of our fathers”), so that Paul feels the need to defend himself against the same kind of slanderous charges in Rome.

Within a wider reading of Acts, the charges are anticipated by the similar accusations made against Stephen by “false witnesses” in 6:13 (“This man never ceases to speak words against this holy place and the law”).⁵¹ This is one aspect of the typological link between Stephen and Paul.⁵² If the summary reports of the progress of the word in Acts are accepted as structurally significant (6:7; 9:31; 12:24; 16:5; 19:20; 28:30–31),⁵³ the second major section of the book (6:8–9:31) is the account of the death of Stephen and the raising up of a second “Stephen” in the person of Saul who was present at Stephen’s death (7:58b; 8:1a). Stephen and Saul (Paul) have the same opponents (6:9; cf. 9:29),⁵⁴ both preach boldly, both face life-threatening plots, and both see visions of Jesus, and so it is to be expected that Paul will later have to answer the same kind of charges as Stephen did.

Further comment is required on the attitude to the temple in Acts, for Stephen’s speech (Acts 7) is often viewed as anti-temple;⁵⁵ however, Stephen does not reject the temple so much as relativize its importance, for he makes the point that the manifestation of God’s presence was not (and cannot be) limited to the temple (7:2, 30, 44, 48). Luke’s interest in the temple is plain in the Gospel, which begins and ends in the temple (Luke 1:8–23; 24:52–53) and features Jesus teaching daily in the temple during his final week of ministry (19:47–48; 21:37–38; 22:53). In Acts,

⁵¹ Cf. Acts 6:11 (“We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God”), and 6:14 (“for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place, and will change the customs which Moses delivered to us”).

⁵² The resemblance between Stephen and Paul is noted by Robert C. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts: A Literary Interpretation* (2 vols.; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986, 1990), 2.99–100, 273; Clark, *Parallel Lives*, 273–78; Sean A. Adams, *The Genre of Acts and Collected Biography* (SNTSMS 156; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 189–90.

⁵³ See e.g. Alan J. Thompson, *The Acts of the Risen Lord Jesus: Luke’s Account of God’s Unfolding Plan* (NSBT 27; Nottingham, UK: Apollon, 2011), 67–70.

⁵⁴ Note the Asian (= Ephesian?) connection of the accusers in both 6:9 and 21:27–29; see Oskar Skarsaune, *In the Shadow of the Temple: Jewish Influences on Early Christianity* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002), 153–54.

⁵⁵ But see Steve Walton, “A Tale of Two Perspectives? The Place of the Temple in Acts,” in *Heaven on Earth: The Temple in Biblical Theology* (ed. T. D. Alexander and Simon Gathercole; Carlisle, UK: Pater-noster, 2004), 135–49.

the first believing community regularly meets in the temple and the apostles teach in the temple (2:46; 3:1; 4:2; 5:12, 20, 25, 42),⁵⁶ so that it is probably best to see the community of believers as the fulfilment of and replacement for the temple. The temple and priestly leadership has been superseded by the new community and its apostolic leadership. The preaching of the gospel begins in the Jerusalem temple and fans out from there. Consistent with this Lukan focus, the rebuilt “dwelling of David” (15:16 RSV quoting Amos 9:11–12) is understood by James as the end-time reconstituted temple that consists of believing Jews and Gentiles that is forming through the preaching of the gospel.⁵⁷ Luke’s account of the council in Acts 15 is a major turning point in Luke’s story (and the prophecy of Amos 9 plays a crucial part). At the council meeting the threat to the gospel mission to Gentiles is dealt with by recourse to OT prophecy. Immediately after this is the beginning of the extension of the gospel into Europe (Acts 16).

The charges against Paul come in the context of his trip to Jerusalem to hand over the collection, as Paul mentions in Acts 24:17: “Now after some years I came to bring to my nation alms and offerings.” As noted by Christopher Mount, “Paul’s collection is for the author [of Acts] as an example of his general piety toward his people and the temple, the issue about which he is being falsely charged.”⁵⁸ The narrative of Acts shows that the charges against Paul cannot be sustained. In Acts, almsgiving is a mark of piety (cf. Tabitha [9:36] and Cornelius [10:2]) and is connected to the temple (N.B. the beggar at the gate of the temple [3:2]).⁵⁹ Far from attempting to profane the temple, as he was accused of doing in 21:28 and 24:6, Paul’s obedience to the law is on display in his entering the temple as advised to do by James (21:22–26). As well, his defence includes the claim that at an earlier date he was praying in the temple where he received a vision (22:17).

It does appear that Acts is, at least in part, an *apologia* for Paul, his message and his mission,⁶⁰ and was written by Luke to provide a certain image of Paul,

⁵⁶ Ron C. Fay, “The Narrative Function of the Temple in Luke-Acts,” *TrinJ* 27 (2006): 255–70.

⁵⁷ Cf. Richard Bauckham, “James and the Jerusalem Church,” in *The Book of Acts in its Palestinian Setting* (ed. Richard Bauckham; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 452–55; idem, “James and the Gentiles (Acts 15:13–21),” in *History, Literature and Society in the Book of Acts* (ed. Ben Witherington III; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 154–84; Craig R. Koester, *The Dwelling of God: The Tabernacle in the Old Testament, Intertestamental Jewish Literature, and the New Testament* (CBQMS 22; Washington, DC: The Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1989), 85–87. Commenting on Amos 9:11–12 (LXX), W. Edward Glenny acknowledges: “If the ‘tent of David’ is rebuilt for the purpose that the remnant of men and all the nations may seek the Lord, ‘the tent’ could refer to Jerusalem, including the temple, but it must refer to more than simply Jerusalem” (*Finding Meaning in the Text: Translation Technique and Theology in the Septuagint of Amos* [VTSup 126; Leiden; Brill, 2009], 222). In Amos 9:11 (MT), the “booth of David” is best understood as referring to Jerusalem as a cultic centre, with the temple as its focal point, see Sabine Nägele, *Laubhütte Davids und Wolkensohn: Eine auslegungsgeschichtliche Studie zu Amos 9,11 in der jüdischen und christlichen Exegese* (AGJU 24; Leiden: Brill, 1995), 211–14; Greg Goswell, “David in the Prophecy of Amos,” *VT* 61 (2011): 243–57.

⁵⁸ Christopher Mount, *Pauline Christianity: Luke-Acts and the Legacy of Paul* (NovTSup 104; Leiden: Brill, 2002), 156.

⁵⁹ Mount, *Pauline Christianity*, 156 n. 255.

⁶⁰ This is most obvious in chaps. 21–26; see, e.g., Paul W. Walaskay, “*And So We Came to Rome*”: *The Political Perspective of St Luke* (SNTSMS 49; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 50–52;

which climaxes with the speeches of Paul in Jerusalem, in which he defends himself against charges brought by the Jews (e.g. the vehement denial of Paul in 25:8). Paul is allocated four speeches in the final chapters of Acts, which are identified by Greek noun or verb as *apologia* (22:1; 24:10; 25:16; 26:1–2, 24).⁶¹ According to Alexander, the last and longest speech of Paul before King Agrippa as a prestigious representative of Diaspora Judaism (ch. 26) suggests that this is the chief target audience for the apologetic in Acts,⁶² namely the book is “a plea for a fair hearing at the bar of the wider Jewish community in the Diaspora, perhaps especially in Rome.”⁶³ In the narrative flow of Acts, the recorded speeches of Paul in Jerusalem anticipate and give the substance of what he will say when he gets to Rome and is invited to defend himself and his message to the Jewish community leaders of that city (28:21–22). Their invitation is the occasion of Paul’s last apology in the book of Acts (28:23). This final scene is probably the clearest indicator of the situation of the ideal reader of Acts, so that Luke’s story of Israel’s recurrent rejection of the Gospel and of Paul’s repeated attempts to win his own people to faith in Christ invites the kind of theological reflection that is seen in Paul’s Letter to the Romans, especially Romans 9–11.⁶⁴

This suggests that there is a measure of truth in the thesis of Jacob Jervell that Romans is a letter to *Jerusalem*, though his theory fails to convince as a total explanation of the purpose of Romans.⁶⁵ Jervell argued that attempts to explain the occasion of Romans primarily on the basis of the situation and needs to the Roman church lead nowhere,⁶⁶ and that the solution is to pay attention to Paul’s immediate situation and travel plans (his intention to come to Rome *via Jerusalem*). According to Jervell, in Romans “Paul sets forth and explains what he, as bearer of the collection given by the Gentiles for the mother congregation in Jerusalem, intends to say so that he as well as the gift will not be rejected.”⁶⁷ In summary, “In Romans Paul is absorbed by what he is going to say in Jerusalem.”⁶⁸ On this theory, the apostle writes with the aim of enlisting the understanding, support, and prayers of the Roman church as he faces an uncertain reception from both unbelieving Jews and the

Loveday C. A. Alexander, “The Acts of the Apostles as an Apologetic Text,” in idem, *Acts in its Ancient Literary Context: A Classicist Looks at the Acts of the Apostles* (LNTS 298; London: T&T Clark, 2005), 183–206.

⁶¹ Alexander, “Apologetic Text,” 199.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 201–205.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 205.

⁶⁴ As noted by Alexander, “Reading Luke-Acts from Back to Front,” in idem, *Acts in its Ancient Literary Context*, 226.

⁶⁵ “The Letter to Jerusalem,” in *The Romans Debate* (ed. Karl P. Donfried; rev. and exp. ed.; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991), 53–64. For example, Jervell too quickly discounts the Spain link, for “although the structure and key themes of Romans 1–11 are probably shaped largely by Paul’s anticipation of his Jerusalem trip,” part of Paul’s purpose in writing is to lay a platform for Roman support of his Spanish mission (15:22–28) and so it comes in the form of a “theological resume” (Sam K. Williams, “The ‘Righteousness of God’ in Romans,” *JBL* 99 [1980]: 250, 254).

⁶⁶ Jervell, “Letter to Jerusalem,” 53–55.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 56.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 60.

Christian congregation in Jerusalem (15:30–33; cf. Acts 21). Paul asks for prayer (15:31), and the content of his letter shows why he and his “service” are worthy of acceptance. Paul’s last journey to Jerusalem is the canonical setting of the theology of his letter to the Romans. On that basis, Jervell sees the issues discussed in Romans 9–11 as the heart of the message of Romans, with Paul dealing with objections he expects to face in Jerusalem.

V. READING ROMANS AFTER ACTS

The canonical juxtapositioning of Acts and Romans suggests the possibility that the accusations made against Paul in Acts, wherein he is accused of speaking against the people, law, and place, set up the agenda of Romans. This is not to deny that there are important differences between Acts and Romans; for instance, the former book focuses on the accusations made by *unbelieving* Jews about Paul’s message and mission (though see Acts 21:21), whereas the latter has in mind possible misunderstandings of *believers* (though note Rom 15:31). As well, in Acts the speeches of Paul in Jerusalem are a rehearsal for what he will say to the Jewish community *in Rome*, whereas (according to Jervell) Paul’s Letter to the Romans is a rehearsal of what he will say *in Jerusalem*. The difference in foci is enough to show that neither text is to be allowed to exercise total control over the interpretation of the other. The propinquity of the two books in some forms of the NT canon is a *post-authorial* phenomenon, with book order reflecting the perceptions of ancient readers, who were right, however, to detect the presence of significant connections between these two canonical portions, and the “canon logic” of the appended letter to the Romans is that it is an authentic summary of Paul’s teaching that demonstrates that he has been maligned. In what follows, I will summarize the letter in a way that brings out this connection.

In the first place, Paul does not speak *against the people*, and all of Rom 1:18–4:25 can be placed under this heading.⁶⁹ The gospel first of all means an authoritative proclamation of coming judgment (1:18; 2:16), for the wrath of God hangs over humanity (1:18–3:20), both Jews and Gentiles (2:9–10: “the Jew first and also the Greek” [x2]). The impending universal judgment includes “those who are under the law” (3:19). Gentile believers are a living rebuke to the Jews, for those “who do not have the law by nature do what the law requires” (2:14 RSV modified) and “those who are physically uncircumcised ... keep the law” (2:27).⁷⁰ Paul acknowledges the privileges of the Jews (2:17–20; 3:1–2), which are “much in every way” (3:2),⁷¹ but the fact of sin means that the Jews are “not entirely” better off (3:9 [a

⁶⁹ In what follows I acknowledge my substantial dependence on the classic article by Williams, “The ‘Righteousness of God’ in Romans.”

⁷⁰ For 2:14 in reference to Gentile Christians, see C. E. B. Cranfield, *The Epistle to the Romans* (ICC; 2 vols.; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1975), 1:156–57.

⁷¹ Here the only privilege mentioned is their possession of “the oracles of God” (3:2), but this theme will be elaborated and the list of privileges extended in 9:4–5.

better translation of οὐ πάντως than the RSV “not at all”]),⁷² for they, like the Gentiles, merit the judgment of God due to their sin. Paul is here defending two things: he is defending the conversion of the Gentiles as a crucial part of the eschatological plan of God and at the same time he is defending the specialness of the Jews. The Abrahamic promise, given in response to the universal problem of sin (Gen 12:1–3), is what binds these two concerns together. Paul seeks to demonstrate that the gospel he preaches is in full accord with the divine plan, which is nothing other than the outworking of the Abrahamic promise. In line with this, the thesis statement in 1:16–17 refers “to the Jew first and also to the Greek,” and “the righteousness of God” (δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ read as a possessive or subjective genitive⁷³) is best understood as God’s faithfulness in keeping his promise to Abraham.⁷⁴

Romans 3:1–7 is a key passage (to be taken up and developed in chaps. 9–11),⁷⁵ and the Jewish privilege highlighted is that “they were entrusted with the oracles of God” (3:2), with Paul first and foremost having in mind the divine promises given to Abraham (chap. 4), which were the gospel announced beforehand (1:2; cf. Gal 3:8). But “some” (τίνες) of the Jews have failed in their responsibility as stewards of the promises.⁷⁶ They persist in their blindness to the truth revealed to Abraham and the prophets (3:21), the truth that on the basis of faith God seeks all peoples, Jews and Gentiles, as his children. Over against the “unfaithfulness” (ἀπιστία) of some Jews, Paul sets “the faithfulness (πίστιν) of God” (3:3). God’s fidelity to the divine plan announced to Abraham will not be annulled by the unbelief of some of his chosen people. In 3:3–7, God’s faithfulness, righteousness, and truthfulness (ἀλήθεια) are virtual synonyms.

Through the death of Jesus, God keeps his promise to Abraham by making people from all nations his sons (3:21–4:25), so the righteousness of God is his faithfulness to his promises to Abraham, promises which focus on the eschatological gathering of all the nations into the people of God. This occurs “apart from law” (χωρὶς νόμου; 3:21) and “through the faith of Jesus Christ” (interpreting πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ as a subjective genitive), that is, the faith of Christ that made him willing to die on the cross (3:22; cf. 3:25).⁷⁷ By justifying Gentiles by faith

⁷² For a survey of the exegetical difficulties in Rom 3:9, see Robert Jewett, *Romans* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 256–59. See the helpful comments of Douglas J. Moo, who, however, finally comes to a different interpretation than the one offered here (*The Epistle to the Romans* [NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996], 200 n. 16).

⁷³ Just as “the wrath of God” (1:18 ὀργή θεοῦ) is a possessive or subjective genitive (God’s character expressed in action), referring to God’s wrath against sinful humanity.

⁷⁴ Williams, “Righteousness of God’ in Romans,” 265. I will not enter into the huge scholarly debate over this issue.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 265 n. 74, 280.

⁷⁶ Some, not all, were unfaithful, for there is a Jewish remnant (cf. 11:5).

⁷⁷ See e.g. George Howard, “On the ‘Faith of Christ,’” *HTR* 60 (1967): 459–65; D. W. D. Robinson, “‘Faith of Jesus Christ’: A New Testament Debate,” *RTR* 29 (1970): 71–81; Morna D. Hooker, “ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ,” *NTS* 35 (1989): 337; Richard B. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substratum of Galatians 3:1–4:11* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 156–61; for recent debate over the meaning of the phrase, see *The Faith of Jesus Christ: Exegetical, Biblical, and Theological Studies* (ed. Michael F. Bird and Preston M. Sprinkle; Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster, 2009).

and not by works of the law (“for all who believe”), God removes any barriers to the Gentiles’ realization of the divine blessing and he keeps his promise to Abraham (cf. 15:8–9). In teaching this, Paul is not overthrowing the law (3:21b, 31), for, as depicted in the book of Genesis, Abraham is the model for both the uncircumcised believer and the circumcised believer (4:11–12).

Far from speaking against the people, Paul’s heartfelt concern for his “brethren,” his “kinsmen by race,” is that they be saved (9:3; 10:1). Romans naturally follows after Acts 28, for Romans explains the Jewish hardening predicted in the extensive quotation from Isaiah 6 of Acts 28:26–27,⁷⁸ with this theme taken up *in extenso* in Romans 9–11 (esp. 11:25). Some three times in the narrative of Acts, Jewish unbelief causes Paul to turn to the Gentiles (13:46; 18:6; 28:28), but Paul never repudiates the Jewish people nor gives up efforts to win them (28:30: “[he] welcomed *all* who came to him”).⁷⁹ Since the ending of Acts mentions both Jews (28:17) and Gentiles (28:28), the “all” in 28:30 must refer to both.⁸⁰ Romans 9–11 is Paul’s final vindication of God’s faithfulness, noting especially 9:6 (“But it is not as though the word of God had failed”), thinking particularly of the Abrahamic promise.⁸¹ The pathos of Paul over his fellow-Jews is palpable, for despite all their privileges (9:4–5), they are not enjoying the blessings described in chapter 8, whereas they should have been the first to receive them.⁸² God has not rejected his people (11:1). Their stumbling does not mean that they (Israel) have fallen (11:11). There has been no change of intention on God’s part, for God does not change his mind about his gifts and calling (11:29). All Israel will be redeemed and saved according to promise (11:26–27). Of this outcome, the present Jewish believing remnant (including Paul himself) is the guarantee (9:27; 11:1–5, 16). Indeed, the salvation of the Gentiles and of Israel are mysteriously intertwined. Israel has heard the word of the gospel (10:14–21), for the OT proclaims it in the prophetic writings, especially the Servant passages of Isaiah (10:15–16 quoting Isa 52:7 and 53:1). This

⁷⁸ The same Isaianic citation was earlier used in Luke 4, see Gerhard A. Krodel, *Acts* (ACNT; Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1986), 487–88.

⁷⁹ Robert L. Brawley, “Paul in Acts: Lucan Apology and Conciliation,” in *Luke-Acts: New Perspectives from the Society of Biblical Literature Seminar* (ed. Charles H. Talbert; New York: Crossroad, 1984), 129–47, esp. 131–34; idem, *Luke-Acts and the Jews: Conflict, Apology, and Conciliation* (SBLMS 33; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987), 69–78.

⁸⁰ Argues Troy M. Troftgruben, *A Conclusion Unbinder: A Study of the Ending of Acts within its Literary Environment* (WUNT 2/280; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 139.

⁸¹ Stephen Westerholm, “Paul and the Law in Romans 9–11,” in *Paul and the Mosaic Law* (ed. James D. G. Dunn; WUNT 89; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996), 220–26 (226: “Paul presumes throughout these chapters that God is committed to the blessing of [ethnic] Israel”).

⁸² The lack of a chapter division in Vaticanus at Rom 9:1 shows a recognition of the logical connection of 9:1–5 with what is said in chap. 8. By this means, God’s good purposes as stated in 8:28–39 are brought into relation to the issue of Jewish resistance to the Gospel. As noted by James Dunn, Paul’s contemplation of being “cut off from Christ” (9:3) is in sharp contrast to the position of believers as portrayed in 8:38–39, since it is “in Christ” that God’s love is experienced (8:39) (J. D. G. Dunn, *Romans 9–16* [WBC 38B; Dallas: Word, 1988], 525). Thomas H. Tobin views 8:31–9:5 as a transitional passage that contrasts Paul’s expression of confidence in nothing separating us from God’s love in 8:38–39 and the apostle’s sorrow over his fellow-Jews in 9:1–5 (*Paul’s Rhetoric in its Contexts: The Argument of Romans* [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2004], 322–26).

prepares for the special role of Paul himself, the Servant, who seeks to make Israel “jealous” by magnifying his ministry to the Gentiles (10:19; 11:11, 14).⁸³ Paul’s Gentile mission in no way denies or undermines Jewish privileges but will be the very means of winning over disobedient Israel (11:30–32). The argument refutes any idea that Paul speaks against the people.

Second, Paul does not speak *against the law*. The theme of the law dominates 5:12–7:25, having been touched on in 3:31 (“we uphold the law”).⁸⁴ Romans 5:12–21 continues the “much more” argument begun in 5:9–10, yet it also begins a new section. Death is due to sin, not due to the law, for sin is much older in human experience. So too, the reign of death was established long before Moses (5:14). The law caused an “abounding” of sin among the Jews (5:20), for it made the situation worse by making sin more culpable,⁸⁵ but this is more than compensated by the “super-abounding” of God’s grace in the work of Christ. The Jew under the law is actually worse off than the Gentile, because of an “abundance of sin.” On the other hand, they find in Christ an “abundance” of grace to offset their former disability. Paul’s apology for the law continues in chapter 7, in which he offers a vigorous defence of the law as “holy, just, and good” (7:12),⁸⁶ though severely restricting its functions (7:6). Paul speaks from his past experience as a Jew under the law, so that the first-person pronoun “I” in Romans 7 is generalizing (as in 3:7), yet he also speaks about it from the theological stance gained from the gospel. References to coveting (7:7) and being deceived (7:11) also recall the Adamic fall into sin in Genesis 3. The upshot is that all the blame goes to sin, and the law’s dignity is upheld.

Last of all, Paul does not speak *against the temple*, though, as in Acts, due to the work of Christ the temple is radically redefined as the believing community indwelt by God.⁸⁷ This aspect of Paul’s argument is more difficult to detect, because the temple is not mentioned as such in Romans, but three sections of the letter (5:1–11; 8:1–39; 12:1–15:6) display motifs connected to the temple (e.g. glory, Spirit, sacrifice, building).⁸⁸ Romans 5:1–5 sounds themes that will soon be explored at greater

⁸³ According to Williams, “This is an argument, he hopes, which will convince his detractors in Jerusalem that his missionary endeavor is by no means anti-Jewish in its import” (“Righteousness of God” in Romans,” 248).

⁸⁴ In both 3:31 and 10:4, the law is viewed as a witness to the righteousness that comes by faith and so points to Christ; see C. Thomas Rhyne, *Faith Establishes the Law* (SBLDS 55; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981). Likewise, Robert Badenas, *Christ the End of the Law: Romans 10:4 in Pauline Perspective* (JSNTSup 10; Sheffield: JSOT, 1985), 118: “Paul clearly states in Rom 10:4 what he had only hinted in the previous verses, namely that Christ embodies that righteousness which the law promised, that righteousness which some Gentiles obtained through faith and which Israel rejected.”

⁸⁵ Frank Thielman, *From Plight to Solution: A Jewish Framework for Understanding Paul’s View of the Law in Galatians and Romans* (NovTSup 61; Leiden: Brill, 1989), 99–101.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 110.

⁸⁷ For the parallel development at Qumran, see Bertil Gärtner, *The Temple and the Community in Qumran and the New Testament: A Comparative Study in the Temple Symbolism of the Qumran Texts and the New Testament* (SNTSMS 1; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965); Lawrence H. Schiffman, *Qumran and Jerusalem: Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the History of Judaism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 81–97.

⁸⁸ For the temple in Paul’s thinking more generally (e.g. 1 Cor 3:16: “Do you not know that you are God’s temple...?”), see D. R. de Lacey, “οἶκόντες ἐστε ὑμεῖς: The Function of the Temple as a Metaphor

length in Romans 8, namely 5:1–2 (justification-glorification) will be expanded on in 8:1–17, and 5:3–5 (suffering-assurance) will receive fuller exposition in 8:18–39. On this understanding, 5:1–11 and chapter 8 form an *inclusio* around the long section about the law (5:12–7:25) which is the heart of Paul’s letter.⁸⁹ Romans 5:1–11 follows logically from the end of the previous chapter (5:1: “Therefore, ...”), with these verses summarizing the outcome of justification. Mention of the indwelling of God’s Spirit (5:5) and the hope of sharing “the glory of God” (5:2) shows that the temple theme is present. Likewise, chapter 8 describes the liberty of Paul the Jew who is indwelt by the Spirit and has the sure hope of glory.

The temple theology of chapters 12–15 builds on this presentation, beginning as they do with the language of sacrifice (12:1: “to present your bodies as a living sacrifice”),⁹⁰ and closing with the thought that proper behavior aims at “upbuilding” others (15:2 *πρὸς οἰκοδομήν*; cf. 14:19; 15:20; 1 Cor 14:12),⁹¹ and a quotation in 15:3 from Ps 69:9, which speaks of zeal for God’s house. Godly behavior that benefits fellow believers can be viewed as temple-building. The answer to the chaos of sin depicted in Romans 1, which chapter draws on the narratives of Genesis 3–11, is God’s goal of restoring an Edenic sanctuary. In line with such a typological analysis, the harmonious relationships of Romans 12–15 are in stark contrast to the terrible effects of sin in Romans 1.⁹² This is the final *telos* of the gospel, namely the prospect of ridding the creation of the effects of sin (cf. 8:18–25).

VI. CONCLUSIONS

While not suggesting that the Acts-Romans sequence is the only context for interpreting Paul’s famous letter, I have argued that the juxtapositioning of the two works, such as occurs mainly in the Latin manuscript tradition and reflected in the English Bible, is hermeneutically significant and fruitful. Early readers had good reasons for placing these books side by side in the way they did, for the books can be understood to throw light on each other. Romans can be viewed as a theological recapitulation of leading themes and events in the preceding book, and prefixing Romans with Acts promotes a particular reading strategy for the head-letter of the

in St Paul,” in *Templum Amicitiae: Essays on the Second Temple Presented to Ernst Bammel* (ed. William Horbury; JSNTSup 58; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), 391–409; R. J. McKelvey, *The New Temple: The Church in the New Testament* (Oxford Theological Monographs; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), 92–124; Dan Lioy, *Axis of Glory: A Biblical and Theological Analysis of the Temple Motif in Scripture* (StBibLit 138; New York: Peter Lang, 2010), 87–100. In this regard, discussion is often confined to the Corinthian correspondence and Ephesians 2.

⁸⁹ The central location of this section in the epistle is appropriate, given that Paul’s gospel ministry aimed to bring about “the obedience of faith” among all the nations (1:5; 16:26), an ambiguous phrase that signifies both the obedience that springs from faith and the obedience (= proper response to God) that consists of faith, see Don Garlington, *Faith, Obedience, and Perseverance: Aspects of Paul’s Letter to the Romans* (WUNT 2/79; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1994), 13–31.

⁹⁰ McKelvey, *New Temple*, 107, 129–30, 184–85; Luke Timothy Johnson, *Reading Romans: A Literary and Theological Commentary* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2001), 189–90.

⁹¹ Bauckham, “James and the Gentiles,” 166 n. 33; McKelvey, *New Temple*, 182.

⁹² Victor Paul Furnish notes the striking resemblances between Romans 1 and 12:1–2 (*Theology and Ethics in Paul* [Nashville: Abingdon, 1968], 103–4).

Pauline corpus. Romans can be read as a canonical answer to the false charges levelled at Paul in Jerusalem, where in Acts 21:28 the Jews accuse him in these terms: "This is the man who is teaching men everywhere against the people and the law and this place." The act of adjoining Acts and Romans can be taken as implying that these accusations set up the agenda of the Letter to the Romans, in which Paul shows that he does not speak against the people, the law, and the temple. Paul's gospel proclaims that God will be faithful to the promises he made to Abraham, promises that embrace both believing Jews and believing Gentiles in God's saving purposes for the world.