PART 3

Paul
Our study of Israel's scriptural heritage and of the interpretative traditions in Second Temple Judaism questions the assumption that Paul bypasses Deuteronomy 30:1–10 and even invites a reconsideration of how that text, along with Jeremiah 31 and Ezekiel 36–37, might have influenced his conceptions about divine and human agency. In chapter 8, I will seek to substantiate Paul's reading of Deuteronomy 30:1–10 through an investigation of Romans 2:17–29. While that small section houses some of the apostle's most radical statements, it is my contention that these are nothing less than his own reading of and wrestling with Israel's Scriptures. Examining Paul's hermeneutic will not only throw fresh light on his argument; it will also begin to answer questions about the way he structures divine and human agency. It should be noted that the approach taken here makes no claims regarding Paul's readers' abilities to pick up on his allusions. It is assumed that a range of familiarity with Israel's Scriptures existed in the congregations to whom Paul wrote. Our primary interest concerns how Paul's reading of his scriptural heritage informed his theology and vice-versa.

Chapter 9 investigates how the conclusions reached in Romans 2:17–29 interact with larger themes in Pauline theology as he develops his argument in Romans. I first trace Paul's reading of these scriptural narratives in Romans 5–8, with 7:5–6 serving as a basecamp. I then explore what light our investigation thus far might throw on Paul's radical rewriting of Deuteronomy 30:12–14 in Romans 10:6–8. In each case, my aim is to show the ways in which the conclusions from Romans 2 regarding grace and agency are confirmed and enriched when set in this wider context.

Chapter 10 briefly explores Paul's reading of these narratives in texts outside of Romans by looking at 2 Corinthians 3:5–6, Philippians 3:3, and the disputed Colossians 2:11–12. Even if the Pauline authorship of this final text is doubted, it still serves as confirmatory evidence for how Deuteronomy 30 was interpreted within the Pauline community.