

## Announcing the Human: Rethinking the Relationship Between Wisdom of Solomon 13–15 and Romans 1.18–2.11

JONATHAN A. LINEBAUGH

*Durham University, Department of Theology and Religion, Abbey House, Durham DH1 3RS, England.*

*email: j.a.linebaugh@durham.ac.uk*

Although the relationship between Rom 1.18–2.5 and Wisdom of Solomon 13–15 is variously interpreted, those who detect a level of textual engagement tend to agree that while Rom 2.1–5 critiques Wis 15.1–4, Rom 1.18–32 stands as a compressed yet theologically consistent restatement of Wis 13.1–14.31, 15.7–19. This paper challenges this virtual consensus by rereading Rom 1.18–32 in light of the rhetorical turn at Rom 2.1. The kerygmatic location of Paul's polemic, together with a series of alterations to the Hellenistic Jewish polemical tradition, suggest an interpretation of Rom 1.18–32 that runs directly counter to Wisdom of Solomon's rhetorical and theological purposes in chs. 13–15. Whereas Wisdom of Solomon's polemic functions to reinforce the anthropological distinction between Jew and Gentile on the basis of true and false worship, Paul reworks the aniconic tradition to establish the essential unity of humanity.

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### Us and Them, or Us

The story of sin starts in Eden (Wis 2.23–24; Rom 5.12). If the beginning of a story was the whole story, then Romans and the Wisdom of Solomon would have a similar tale to tell; and many have assumed that they do. Since Grafe alerted the world of Pauline scholarship to the unusually close connection between Rom 1.18–32 and Wisdom of Solomon 13–14,<sup>1</sup> readers of Romans have typically read Rom 1.18–32 as a condensed but consistent restatement of Wisdom of

1 E. Grafe, 'Das Verhältniss der paulinischen Schriften zur Sapientia Salomonis', *Theologische Abhandlungen: Carl von Weizsäcker zu seinem siebenzigsten Geburtstage 11. December 1892 gewidmet* (Freiburg: Mohr Siebeck, 1892) 251–86. W. Sanday and A. C. Headlam, *The Epistle to the Romans* (ICC; New York: Scribner's, 1896) 51–2, 267–9 introduced these parallels to English-speaking scholarship. For a detailed survey of scholarship, see J. R. Dodson, *The 'Powers' of Personification: Rhetorical Purpose in the Book of Wisdom and the Letter to the Romans* (BZNW 161; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2008) 4–13.

Solomon's aniconic polemic. Nygren's Romans commentary problematised this textual relationship by extending the comparison into Romans 2 and Wisdom of Solomon 15, but even here the theological affinity between Rom 1.18–32 and Wisdom of Solomon 13–14 was affirmed (and exploited).<sup>2</sup> According to his programmatic reading—a reading that dominates modern commentaries<sup>3</sup>—Rom 1.18–32 reactivates Wisdom of Solomon's polemical attack on *Gentile* idolatry and immorality and *then* (Rom 2.1–11), in what Richard Hays calls a rhetorical 'sting operation',<sup>4</sup> establishes the hamartiological equality of Jew and Gentile. Interpreted this way, Rom 1.18–32 is still about Gentile sin; 2.1–11 simply undermines Wisdom of Solomon's immunisation of Israel (Wis 15.1–4) by pointing to the impartiality of divine judgment (2.6–11) and the presence of sin within the elect nation (2.1–5, 21–24). Campbell, following the unpopular proposals of Schmeller<sup>5</sup> and Porter,<sup>6</sup> has recently radicalised this interpretative trend, arguing that the affinities between Rom 1.18–32 and Wisdom of Solomon 13–14 are so close that Rom 1.18–32 is properly read as an un-Pauline summary of Wisdom of Solomon's polemic.<sup>7</sup> The crucial point for our purposes is that these construals, despite their diversity, assume that while Paul critiques Wis 15.1–4 in Rom 2.1–11, Rom 1.18–32 stands as a compressed but theologically faithful re-presentation of Wisdom of Solomon 13–14.

In this respect, Kathy Gaca is something of an outlier. As she reads Rom 1.18–32, Paul, while speaking within the 'tradition of Hellenistic Jewish polemic', has introduced a 'problematic innovation': whereas the polemical tradition charges the Gentiles with theological ignorance, Paul ascribes received theological knowledge to Gentiles, thereby accusing them not just of ignorance but of apostasy.<sup>8</sup> For

2 A. Nygren, *Commentary on Romans* (trans. C. C. Rasmussen; London: SCM, 1952), compare p. 112 with 114–17.

3 J. D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8* (WBC 38a; Waco: Word, 1988) 82–3; J. A. Fitzmyer, *Romans* (AB 33; London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1992) 298; D. J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996) 133; E. Lohse, *Der Brief an die Römer* (KEK 4; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003) 86, 99.

4 R. B. Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1996) 389.

5 T. Schmeller, *Paulus und die 'Diatriben': Eine vergleichende Stilinterpretation* (Münster: Aschendorf, 1987) 225–86.

6 C. L. Porter, 'Romans 1.18–32: Its Role in the Developing Argument', *NTS* 40 (1994) 210–28.

7 D. A. Campbell, *The Deliverance of God: An Apocalyptic Rereading of Justification in Paul* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009) 542–93. In Campbell's reconstruction, it is not Wisdom of Solomon that speaks, but an adversarial teacher for whom Wisdom of Solomon was a theologically formative text.

8 K. L. Gaca, 'Paul's Uncommon Declaration in Romans 1.18–32 and Its Problematic Legacy for Pagan and Christian Relations', *HTR* 92.2 (1999) 165–98. Others (e.g. R. Bell, *No One Seeks for God: An Exegetical and Theological Study of Romans 1.18–3.20* [WUNT 106; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998] 76) have noticed that Rom 1.18–32 differs from Wisdom of Solomon in a number of ways, but this has generally been used as evidence against Pauline interaction with Wisdom of Solomon. However, as F. Watson (*Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith*

Gaca, however, while Paul alters the accusation (apostasy not ignorance), the identity of the accused (Gentiles) remains unchanged.

The terms in which Paul's rhetorical trap is sprung, however, invite a reconsideration of Paul's polemical target in Rom 1.18–32. The one who judges the other (κρίνεις τὸν ἕτερον, 2.1)—the other being the presumed target of the invectives of 1.18–32—is liable to condemnation because he is guilty of the other's sins (τὰ ἀντὶὰ πράσσεις, 2.1; ποιῶν ἀντὶά, 2.3). The effect of this rhetorical move is to eliminate the self-imposed distance between the judge and the other, thereby subjecting the judge to his own condemnation (σεαυτὸν κατακρίνεις, 2.1). Functionally, then, the indictment of Rom 1.18–32 becomes, at least retroactively, an indictment of the Jew as much as the Gentile.<sup>9</sup> It is this implication that necessitates a reexamination of Rom 1.18–32, one which attends more closely to the *dramatis personae* Paul actually presents, and exhibits a corresponding sensitivity to the inclusion of Israel within the scope of Israel's own polemical tradition.<sup>10</sup>

Because this reading is retrospective—occasioned as it is by the terms of the rhetorical turn at 2.1–11—it is necessary to allow our argument to develop in parallel with Paul's own rhetorical strategy. For this reason, our (brief) first pass through Rom 1.18–32 will emphasise the similarities between this unit and Wisdom of Solomon 13–14 in an effort to highlight the crucial break which occurs at 2.1. What makes this investigation unique, however, is that it intends to take up the invitation to reread Rom 1.18–32 in light of the polemical twist of Romans 2. This rereading will attempt to situate Paul's accusatory announcement of 1.19–32 within the kerygmatic progression of Rom 1.16–18 and consider the rhetorical function and theological significance of Paul's alterations to the Hellenistic Jewish polemical tradition. It will be argued that the contextualisation of the Pauline polemic within the apostle's apocalyptic kerygma (Rom 1.16–18), together with his 'supra-natural theology' (1.19–20), allusive inclusion of Israel within the history of sin (1.23), insertion of divine agency into the causal link between idolatry and immorality (1.24, 26 and 28), and collapsing of Wisdom of Solomon's differentiation between types of idolatry (1.24–25) require an

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[London: T&T Clark, 2004] 405 n. 77) notes, this assumption 'implies that "influence" and "differences" are mutually limiting... In fact...the depth of Paul's engagement with this text is evident precisely at the points he also differs from it'.

9 That the interlocutor of Rom 2.1–16 is the same figure explicitly identified as a self-proclaimed Jew in 2.17 will be argued below.

10 R. Jewett, *Romans* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007) 152–4, like R. Dabelstein, *Die Beurteilung der 'Heiden' bei Paulus* (BBET 14; Bern: Lang, 1981) 73–9 before him, argues for the inclusion of Israel within the polemical scope of Rom 1.18–32, but this argument is made at the expense of Paul's engagement with Wisdom of Solomon rather than, as this paper intends, on the basis of a close comparison between Rom 1.18–32 and Wis 13–15.

interpretation of Rom 1.19–32 according to which its polemical target includes, as 1.18 indicates, ‘all...humankind’.

Thus, my thesis: Paul’s polemic in Rom 1.18–32, rather than standing as a compressed but consistent restatement of Wisdom of Solomon 13–14, serves the opposite rhetorical and theological function of Wisdom of Solomon 13–15. This is not to say that these texts exhibit no continuity. On the contrary, the often noted lexical, thematic and argumentative parallels between Rom 1.18–2.5 and Wisdom of Solomon 13–15 indicate an engagement which is situated within an antithetical argument. *Textual dependence* serves the rhetorical function of establishing *theological difference*. Whereas Wisdom of Solomon’s polemic serves to reinforce the anthropological distinction between Jew and Gentile (*qua* non-idolaters and idolaters), Paul reworks the aniconic tradition to establish the essential unity of humanity.<sup>11</sup>

### **Romans 1.19–2.5 and Wisdom of Solomon 13–15: An Initial Reading**

Wisdom of Solomon 13–15 and Rom 1.18–2.5 are connected by a series of lexical and thematic links<sup>12</sup> and, perhaps more significantly, by a unique argumentative structure. As Watson observes, ‘The argument of Rom 1.18–32 develops in parallel to Wis 13.1–14.31’<sup>13</sup> and, as Campbell remarks, ‘the two argumentative progressions are unique to the Wisdom of Solomon and Romans 1’.<sup>14</sup> Both texts argue from a squandered creation-related knowledge of God to a corresponding turn to idolatry that in turn occasions a litany of social and moral perversities, thereby inviting an appropriate exercise of divine judgment. This broad structural continuity conceals numerous and significant theological differences that will be explored after the rhetorical turn of Rom 2.1 has been considered. Situating this discontinuity, however, requires that the following analysis emphasise the points of contact between Romans and Wisdom of Solomon, in order to underline

11 C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* [2 vols.; ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1975] 1.104 n. 1) seems to have intuited a similar reading, but he never developed it outside a footnote.

12 For a detailed list of the lexical parallels, see T. Laato, *Paul and Judaism: An Anthropological Approach* (trans. T. McElwain; Atlanta: University of South Florida, 1995) 94–5.

13 Watson, *Hermeneutics*, 405.

14 Campbell, *Deliverance of God*, 360. While this argumentative sequence is particular to Romans and Wisdom of Solomon, Philo’s *De decalogo* offers something of a parallel to Wisdom of Solomon in that its denunciation of false-worship moves from the less deplorable act of worshipping heavenly elements or bodies (52–56; Wis 13.1–9) to the absurd practice of worshipping created images (66–77; Wis 13.1–9; 14.15–21; 15.7–13) which finds its most risible expression in Egyptian animal worship (77–81; Wis 15.18–19); cf. J. M. G. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora: From Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE–117 CE)* (Berkeley: University of California, 1996) 186.

the dramatic twist of Romans 2, which will then point us back to Paul's unique reworking of the polemical tradition in Romans 1.

(i) *A (possible) creation-related knowledge of God has been squandered: Wisdom of Solomon 13.1–9; Romans 1.19–20.* Wisdom of Solomon's claim that the animal plagues function as the appropriate divine recompense for Egyptian animal worship (11.15–16; 12.23–27; 15.18–16.1) invites an extended reflection on the origin of idolatry and the corresponding divine judgment that confronts it (13.1–15.13).<sup>15</sup> Theological knowledge is universally available because, as Wis 13.5 states, 'the greatness and beauty of the created' (κτίσμα) provides an 'analogous perception (ἀναλόγως θεωρεῖται) of the creator' (ὁ γενεσιουργός). Similarly, Paul insists that the 'knowledge of God' (τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ) has been evident 'since the creation of the world (ἀπὸ κτίσεως κόσμου) because his eternal power and divinity (θειότης, cf. Wis 18.9) are perceivable in the things that have been created/done' (τοῖς ποιήμασιν, Rom 1.19–20). In both texts, however, this (possible) knowledge of the creator is forfeited by worthless (μάταιος, Wis 13.1; ματαιώω, Rom 1.21) fools who either fail to reason from creation to creator (Wis 13.1–9) or neglect to honour the God they know (Rom 1.21–22). Stupidity, however, is 'no excuse'; both the ignorant idolaters of Wisdom of Solomon and the rebels against revelation of Romans are ἀναπολόγητος (Wis 13.8; Rom 1.20).

(ii) *This wasted opportunity to know the true God manifests itself in false religion: Wisdom of Solomon 13.10–14.11, 15–21 (and 15.7–13); Rom 1.21–23.* Paul and Wisdom of Solomon appear to agree that humans are fundamentally worshippers, and thus turning from true worship can only be a turning to its opposite—idolatry. Wisdom of Solomon offers a detailed review of the origin of idolatry: left-over lumber becomes a household god (13.10–19), a sailor's fear of the sea provokes prayer to the powerless (14.1), an image designed to console a bereaved father gains religious momentum until it achieves legal apotheosis (14.15–16a), the absence of a monarch occasions the fashioning of his image which slips from respect to worship in the popular imagination (14.16b–21), profiteers trade in idols, actively capitalising on the senseless piety of their customers (15.7–13) and, most deplorably, Egyptians worship animals even God failed to bless (15.18–19).<sup>16</sup> Paul, choosing succinctness over subtlety, condenses this complex genesis of idolatry into a single sentence: καὶ ἠλλαξαν τὴν δόξαν τοῦ ἀφθάρτου θεοῦ ἐν ὁμοιώματι εἰκόνας φθαρτοῦ ἀνθρώπου καὶ πετεινῶν καὶ τετραπόδων

15 For a detailed analysis of this section, see M. Gilbert, *La critique des dieux dans le Livre de la Sagesse (Sg 13–15)* (Rome: Biblical Institute, 1973); cf. M. McGlynn, *Divine Judgement and Divine Benevolence in the Book of Wisdom* (WUNT 2/139; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001) 132–69; D. Wintson, *The Wisdom of Solomon* (AB 43; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1979) 247–91.

16 For a detailed tracing of Wisdom of Solomon's polemic see Gilbert, *La critique*, 245–57; cf. C. Larcher, *Le Livre de la Sagesse, ou, La Sagesse de Salomon* (3 vols.; Paris: Gabalda, 1983) 1.122.

καὶ ἔρπετῶν (Rom 1.23). Paul's compactness has the advantage of emphasising the oppositeness of idolatry and true worship implicit in much of Wisdom of Solomon's rhetorical devaluation of the natural origin and impotence of idols. Artifacts which are created by human artisans are obviously, if only implicitly, not themselves creators (cf. Isa 44.9-20) and thus, as creatures of creatures, are powerless in response to prayer (Wis 13.16-14.1; cf. Ps 115.5-7). Paul captures this contrast between the creator and the creature in the antithetical presentation of the incorruptible God (ἄφθαρτος θεός) and the corruptible human (φθαρτὸς ἄνθρωπος). Furthermore, Paul's focus on creaturely idolatry (i.e. animals rather than artifacts) appears to follow the distinctive emphasis of Wisdom of Solomon's aniconic polemic which ultimately has Egyptian animal worship as its target.<sup>17</sup>

(iii) *The turn to idols occasions a corresponding decline into immorality: Wisdom of Solomon 14.12-14, 22-29; Romans 1.24-31.* The point is explicit in Wisdom of Solomon: 'For the idea of idols was the beginning of sexual perversion (ἀρχὴ πορνείας) and the discovery of them was the destruction of life' (14.12); and again, 'for the worship of nameless idols is the beginning and cause and end (ἀρχὴ καὶ αἰτία καὶ πέρας) of every evil' (14.27). Without compromising this basic aetiology (idolatry leads to immorality), Paul emphasises the divine agent within the causal process. God delivers idolators over to sin because (διό, 1.24; cf. 1.26, 28) they exchanged his glory and truth and failed to acknowledge his divinity (1.23, 25, 28). The effect, in Romans, is an ethical decline, rooted in the meta-sin of idolatry, which spirals downwards into sexual sin (1.24, 26-27) and then overflows into a smorgasbord of non-sexual immorality (1.29-31).<sup>18</sup> While Wisdom of Solomon mixes sexual and non-sexual sins (14.23-26), the Pauline emphasis on gender/sexual denaturalisation is reflected in Wisdom of Solomon's vice list as it repeatedly refers to the defilement of marriage (1.24), sex inversion (γενέσεως ἐναλλαγῆ), marital disorder (γάμων ἀταξία) and adultery (μοιχεία, 1.26).

(iv) *A fitting divine judgment awaits those guilty of idolatry and the corresponding immorality: Wisdom of Solomon 14.30-31; Romans 1.32.* Divine judgment upon sin is evident within the historical depreciation of human religion and ethics, but in neither Romans nor Wisdom of Solomon is God's confrontation with the sinner reducible to anthropological history. In Wisdom of Solomon, those whose history is characterised by the movement from idolatry to immorality

17 Watson, *Hermeneutics*, 407.

18 E. Klostermann, 'Die adäquate Vergeltung in Röm 1,22-31', *ZNW* 32 (1993) 1-6; cf. S. Gathercole, 'Sin in God's Economy: Agencies in Romans 1 and 7', *Divine and Human Agency in Paul and His Cultural Environment* (ed. J. M. G. Barclay and S. J. Gathercole; London: T&T Clark, 2006) 162-3.

will be overtaken by 'just penalties' (τὰ δίκαια),<sup>19</sup> not because their idols are powerful, but because 'the just penalty' (ἡ δίκη) for their sins will 'always overtake the transgression of the unrighteous' (14.30–31). It is difficult to fix the juridical context for this coming judgment, but 14.11 appears to indicate that Wisdom of Solomon, consistent with its earlier eschatology (Wis 2–5), expects a future divine visitation upon idols/idolaters. According to Paul, idolaters, though theologically ignorant (1.22), are nevertheless aware of the divine decree 'that the ones who practise such things [i.e. the idolatry and immorality catalogued in 1.23–31] are worthy of death (ἄξιτοι θανάτου, Rom 1.32; cf. Wis 1.16). That the execution of this decree awaits an eschatological act of divine judgment is explicitly stated in Rom 2.5–10.

### The Rhetorical Turn

In Rom 2.1 Paul addresses a generic individual (ἄνθρωπος) who is characterised by an ironic combination of judging the people depicted in 1.19–32 and practising the vices of 1.19–32. The effect of this combination—a combination which is paradoxically expressed in the contrast between ἕτερος and αὐτός—is to remove the self-imposed distance between the judge and the other. The judge's condemnation of the other, because the judge does the same things (τὰ αὐτὰ πράσσεις), is necessarily self-condemnation (σεαυτὸν κατακρίνεις). To expose this identification of the judge and the other, however, Paul does not introduce a new set of criteria by which the judge's religion and morality is assessed. On the contrary, the judge's judgment is shown to be self-referential on the basis of the theological principles which shaped the polemic of 1.19–32.<sup>20</sup> The repeated use of πράσσω (2.1, 2) and ποιέω (2.3) in conjunction with αὐτός (2.1) and τοιοῦτος (2.2, 3) includes the judge within the pattern of idolatry and immorality outlined in 1.18–32 and, in particular, with the phrasing of 1.32 (οἱ τὰ τοιαῦτα πράσσοντες). Effectively, then, by the judge's own standards, he is an object of the revelation of divine wrath (1.18) and thus under the divine death sentence of Rom 1.32.

The judge, however, appears to disagree. This raises the dual question of the judge's identity and the rationale behind his assumed immunity from both the logic of his own judgment and, more fundamentally, the judgment of God (τὸ κρίμα τοῦ θεοῦ, 2.3). As to identity, despite some continued scholarly

19 Codex Alexandrinus (A) has ἄδικα instead of δίκαια; see McGlynn, *Divine Judgement*, 158 n. 73.

20 Campbell (*Deliverance of God*, 548) helpfully refers to this rhetorical tactic as 'universalization'—'an argumentative concession that can be forced onto the proponents of any position by insisting that the principles within that position...be applied consistently to its proponents'.

protest,<sup>21</sup> the generic judge of 2.1–5 should be associated with the Jew of 2.17. While the evidence for this assertion includes matters of genre, scriptural quotation and thematic links between 2.1–6 and 2.17–24,<sup>22</sup> the most compelling (and relevant) evidence is that Paul's argument assumes that the judge of 2.1–5 endorses his critique of false-religion in 1.18–32 and thus the entirety of 2.1–24 operates within the parameters of what Wischmeyer calls 'der innerjüdische Israel-Diskurs'.<sup>23</sup> More specifically, Rom 2.1–5, as will be demonstrated below, engages with Wisdom of Solomon by arguing from theological principles articulated in Wisdom of Solomon. Thus, to say that the judge is a Jew is only a partial answer. Paul's continued engagement with Wisdom of Solomon in Rom 2.1–5 establishes both the Jewishness of his interlocutor's theology and, more specifically, forces us to say with Käsemann that 2.1–11 'ist einzig Polemik gegen jene jüdische Tradition begrifflich, welche sich am deutlichsten und teilweise mit gleicher Begrifflichkeit in Sap. Sal 15,1ff. äußert'.<sup>24</sup> In other words, Paul's Jewish interlocutor is neither a generic human nor a generic Jew; he is a Jew in the theological tradition of the Wisdom of Solomon.

This association of the judge and the theology of Wisdom of Solomon is evident in his implicit affirmation of the polemical content of 1.18–32, his presumed immunity from divine judgment and the language in which Paul launches his critique. Paul's indication that his interlocutor assumes he will 'escape the judgment of God' (Rom 2.3) alludes to and attacks one of Wisdom of Solomon's central theological convictions: Israel is different because Israel is not idolatrous. Paul's polemical turn towards Israel in Rom 2.1 occurs at the same argumentative moment (and in much the same language) as Wisdom of Solomon's polemical pause in relation to Israel at 15.1–4:

But you our God are kind (χρηστός) and true, patient (μακρόθυμος) and managing all things in mercy.

For if we sin we are yours, knowing your power; but we will not sin, knowing that we are reckoned as yours.

For to understand you is complete righteousness, and to know your power is the root of immortality.

For neither has the evil intent of human art deceived us, nor the useless labour of painters...

21 See e.g. S. K. Stowers, *A Rereading of Romans: Justice, Jews, and Gentiles* (New Haven: Yale University, 1994) 101–4.

22 So Watson, *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles*, 198; S. J. Gathercole, *Where is Boasting? Early Jewish Soteriology and Paul's Response in Romans 1–5* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002) 198–9.

23 O. Wischmeyer, 'Römer 2.1–24 als Teil der Gerichtsrede des Paulus gegen die Menschheit', *NTS* 52 (2006) 356–76 (359).

24 E. Käsemann, *An die Römer* (HNT 8a; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1973) 49.



Here, as in Exod 34.6-9, which this paragraph echoes,<sup>25</sup> divine patience and mercy anchor an assurance that sin does not disqualify Israel from being God's people (cf. σοὶ ἔσμεν, σοὶ λελογίσμεθα, Wis 15.2 with ἐσόμεθα σοί, Exod 34.9, LXX). As Barclay notes, 'the reference to sin ("even if we sin") picks up Moses' confidence that "you will forgive our sins and our iniquities" (Exod 34.9, LXX)'.<sup>26</sup> However, whereas Moses utters these words in the wake of the Golden Calf episode, Wisdom of Solomon contextualises this confidence within an assurance that Israel does not and will not worship idols because they know God' ('we will not sin', 15.2b; 'the evil intent of human art has not deceived us', 15.4). Thus, while Wisdom of Solomon echoes Exod 34.6-9, it decontextualises divine mercy: 'Wisdom does not make, and could not make, reference to the Golden Calf'.<sup>27</sup> Unlike the ungodly who are ignorant of God (13.1) and thus caught in the inevitable movement from idolatry to immorality (14.12-14, 22-31), Israel knows God and therefore 'will not sin' (15.2b). The function of 15.1-4 within Wisdom of Solomon's critique of false-religion is therefore to establish the irreducible difference between Jew and Gentile on the basis of the non-idolatry of the former and the false-worship of the latter. More concisely, Wisdom of Solomon's anthropological dualism is built on Israel's immunity from idolatry. It is this foundational presumption that Paul challenges in Rom 1.18-2.5.<sup>28</sup>

Paul's reference to the kindness (χρηστότης) and patience (μακροθυμία) of God (Rom 2.4) echoes Wisdom of Solomon's echo of Exodus 34. Paul, however, is quick to remind his interlocutor of an essential element of Wisdom of Solomon's theology: God mercifully 'overlooks human sin for the sake of repentance' (εἰς μετάνοιαν, Wis 11.23; cf. Rom 2.4).<sup>29</sup> Whereas Wis 15.1-4 suggests that an awareness of the divine attributes renders potential sin an actual impossibility, Paul, like Exodus 34, locates the operations of divine kindness and patience within the matrix of human idolatry and immorality. Paul thus disputes the assumed immunity of the judge who, in Rom 2.1-4, appears to base his self-differentiation vis-à-vis the other on the same religious and ethical criteria Wisdom of Solomon employs to construct the Jew/Gentile dualism.<sup>30</sup> Assuming that the history of Rom

25 Larcher, *Livre*, 3.847-49; cf. H. Hübner, *Die Weisheit Salomons* (ATD Apokryphen 4; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999) 183-4.

26 J. M. G. Barclay, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy": The Golden Calf and Divine Mercy in Romans 9-11 and Second Temple Judaism', *Early Christianity* 1 (2010) 82-106 (91).

27 Barclay, "I will have mercy", 91.

28 Gathercole, *Where is Boasting*, 211 notes that Rom 2.21-24 and 3.9-18 also provide what he terms 'phenomenological evidence' and 'scriptural evidence' for Israel's sinfulness.

29 On Paul's use of Wisdom of Solomon's theology and language against his interlocutor, see Watson, *Hermeneutics*, 410.

30 Pace K. Yinger (*Paul, Judaism and Judgement according to Deeds* [SNTSMS 105; Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1999] 152-3) who argues that Paul is not disputing a Jew 'claiming "we have not sinned"...but Jews or Jewish Christians claiming that they will not be treated the same way as the "sinners" in the judgement'. This reflects a representative tendency

1.18-32 is not his history, the judge affirms Paul's *theologoumenon*: οἱ τὰ τοιαῦτα πρόσσοντες ἄξιοι θανάτου (Rom 1.32). As Paul's repeated claim that the judge 'does the same things' (2.1, 3) implies, however, Paul's reading of anthropological history includes his interlocutor within the narrative of Rom 1.18-32. In other words, for Paul, in opposition to Wisdom of Solomon, 'the difference between Jew and Gentile'—a difference which Paul maintains (e.g. Rom 1.16; 3.1; 9.1-5)—'is not', as Watson observes, 'the difference between the righteous and the unrighteous'.<sup>31</sup> In Wis 15.1-4 Israel is different because the nation is *not* guilty of the idolatry and immorality catalogued in Wis 13.1-14.31. In Romans the gap between the Jewish judge and the other is erased because Paul's interlocutor *is* guilty of the idolatry and immorality catalogued in Rom 1.19-32. This inclusion of Paul's *Jewish* dialogue partner within the scope of what initially sounds like a *Jewish* polemic against non-Jews invites a reconsideration of the subtle but substantive differences between Wisdom of Solomon 13-15 and Rom 1.18-32. To state our thesis in advance, the rhetorical contextualisation of Rom 1.19-31 within the kerygmatic proclamation of 1.16-18, together with the Pauline alterations to Wisdom of Solomon's critique of non-Jewish religion, broadens the target of Paul's polemic to include Israel and thus, as Paul announces in 1.18, πᾶσα ἀσέβεια καὶ ἀδικία ἀνθρώπων.

### Rereading Romans 1.18-32

This rereading will attempt to situate Paul's accusatory announcement of 1.19-32 within the kerygmatic progression of Rom 1.16-18 and consider the rhetorical function and theological significance of Paul's alterations to the Hellenistic Jewish polemical tradition. It will be argued that this rhetorical location, together with Paul's divergence from Wisdom of Solomon's aniconic critique, contribute to a universalising of Paul's polemical target. The anthropological effect is the essential identification of Jew and Gentile as they confront the divine verdict, not as non-idolatrous Jew or idolatrous Gentile, but as ἄνθρωποι.<sup>32</sup>

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among Pauline scholars (e.g. B. W. Longenecker, *Eschatology and the Covenant: A Comparison of 4 Ezra and Romans 1-11* [JSNTSup 57; Sheffield: JSOT, 1999] 182; U. Wilckens, *Der Brief an die Römer* [3 vols.; EKKNT; Neukirchen: Benziger, 1978-82] 1.121-24) to abstract Wis 15.2a ('even if we sin') from the more basic insistence that 'we will not sin' (15.2b) and 'human art has not misled us' (15.4).

<sup>31</sup> Watson, *Hermeneutics*, 410.

<sup>32</sup> While it would be over-determined to argue from Paul's use of ἄνθρωπος to the broadening of his polemical target, it is nevertheless suggestive that ἄνθρωπος is explicitly and intentionally inclusive in Rom 3.28 (cf. Gal 2.16) and 5.12-19. Even in Rom 2.1 where ἄνθρωπος is limited to the Jewish judge, Paul argues from within 'der innerjüdische Israel-Diskurs' to 'eine

### The Kerygmatic Context of Romans 1.19–32

Wisdom of Solomon's aniconic polemic is situated within an extended reflection on Egyptian animal worship and functions primarily as an argument for Israel's avoidance of idolatry over against non-Jewish religion (12.23–15.18). Paul's polemic finds its rhetorical context within the proclamation of a gospel that addresses both Jew and Gentile with the news of God's saving righteousness (Rom 1.16–17). This contextual contrast generates a difference in genre which Bornkamm identifies as a distinction between 'Hellenistic apologetic' (Wisdom of Solomon) and 'prophetic accusation' (Romans).<sup>33</sup> Understood within the double-apocalypse of divine righteousness (1.17) and wrath (1.18), the Pauline proclamation announces an event. Such a claim, however, states a conclusion ahead of its evidence. To situate the polemic of Rom 1.19–32 within its apocalyptic and kerygmatic context it is necessary to take a step back and consider the grammatical and theological progression of Rom 1.16–18.

The apocalypse of wrath in Rom 1.18 is connected to the gospel of 1.16 through an argumentative chain linked by successive uses of the explanatory γάρ. Paul is not ashamed of the gospel *because* (γάρ) it is the divine power for salvation *because* (γάρ) the righteousness of God is revealed in it; *for* (γάρ) the wrath of God is revealed. Grammatically, the γάρ of 1.18 relates ἀποκαλύπτεται ὀργή Θεοῦ directly to the syntactically similar and ultimately salvific (1.16) revelation of divine righteousness in 1.17. The crucial question for our purposes is what this grammatical connection indicates about the theological link between the revelations of wrath and righteousness in relation to the gospel.

Answers to this question, while diverse, generally take one of two approaches: juxtaposition or progression. According to the former, wrath and righteousness relate as opposites.<sup>34</sup> This reading has always been puzzled by the presence of γάρ in 1.18,<sup>35</sup> but Campbell's radicalised version of this interpretation explains the γάρ as contributing to the structural parallel between the revelations of wrath and righteousness which, according to his reading, represent two antithetical gospels.<sup>36</sup> As Cranfield observes, however, 'there would seem to be no

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universale Verurteilung', and therefore his use of ἄνθρωπος has 'universal-anthropologische Dimensionen' (Wischmeyer, 'Römer 2.1–24', 376).

33 Bornkamm, 'The Revelation of God's Wrath', 54.

34 P. Stuhlmacher, *Gerechtigkeit Gottes bei Paulus* (FRLANT 87; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1966) 80–1.

35 M.-J. Lagrange (*Saint Paul: Épitre aux Romains* [Étbib 13; Paris: J. Gabalda, 1922] 21) translates the γάρ with 'car', but argues that in this context it has 'une légère opposition' (cf. C. H. Dodd, *The Epistle to the Romans* [MNTC; London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1932] 45 who refers to the 'adversative conjunction *but* in 1.18').

36 The Pauline gospel (1.17), defined by a saving righteousness, is set in juxtaposition to the 'Teacher's' gospel (1.18), which is centred on an eschatological exercise of retributive wrath

justification (apart from a theological presupposition that it is appropriate to contrast δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ and ὀργή θεοῦ) to read Rom 1.17 and 1.18 antithetically.<sup>37</sup> In Campbell's case at least, his exegesis is clearly driven by a disinclination to permit a theological association between the syntactically linked revelations of righteousness and wrath. In his words, Rom 1.17 and 1.18 express 'fundamentally different conceptions of God'.<sup>38</sup> This theological interpretation, however, appears to put asunder that which the apostle has joined together. In 1 Thess 1.10 and Rom 5.9, to cite but two examples, salvation is defined as deliverance from divine wrath. Similarly, the natural force of the repeated γόρ of Rom 1.16–18 coordinates the saving righteousness of God with that from which it saves. Thus, in the interpretative tradition of Sanday and Headlam,<sup>39</sup> we can say that the γόρ of 1.18 explains the revelation of righteousness by citing the reason it is required; but we can also say more.

This initial answer may appear to imply a movement from wrath to saving righteousness which in turn would seem to support a progressive reading in which the era of wrath precedes the era of righteousness.<sup>40</sup> There are, however, two related reasons why this cannot be sustained. First, as Bornkamm observes, world history prior to the gospel event is not characterised as an era of wrath; rather, for Paul, the time before the revelation of divine righteousness is the period of patience (Rom 3.25–26; cf. 2.4).<sup>41</sup> It is this time of divine forbearance that is brought to an end in the present (ἐν τῷ νῦν καιρῷ, 3.26) demonstration of divine righteousness that is the cross of Christ Jesus (3.24–26). The correlation between εἰς ἔνδειξιν τῆς δικαιοσύνης αὐτοῦ (3.25, 26) and δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ ἀποκαλύπτεται (1.17), together with the identical time references indicated by ἐν τῷ νῦν καιρῷ (3.26) and the present tense of ἀποκαλύπτω (1.17), indicate that it is, as the connection between 1.16 and 1.17 suggests, in the gospel event that the divine righteousness is revealed. What then of the revelation of wrath in 1.18? The structural parallelism between the revelations of wrath and righteousness, especially the identical present passive form of ἀποκαλύπτω, suggests

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(Campbell, *Deliverance of God*, 542–3). This construal requires reading Rom 1.18–32 as a summary of the rhetorical opening of Paul's opponent whose theology is decisively shaped by Wisdom of Solomon. Such a thesis is seriously called into question by the numerous and significant differences between Rom 1.18–32 and Wis 13–14.

37 Cranfield, *Romans*, 1.106–7.

38 Campbell, *Deliverance of God*, 543.

39 Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, 40.

40 H. Lietzmann, *An die Römer* (HNT 8; Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 3d ed. 1928) 31. A variant of this reading does not relate the two eras chronologically but views wrath and righteousness as two spheres of existence corresponding to being outside (wrath) or inside (righteousness) the gospel (e.g. T. Zahn, *Der Brief des Paulus an die Römer* [KNT 6; Leipzig: Deichert, 1910] 86–7).

41 Bornkamm, 'The Revelation of God's Wrath', 49.

that the dual revelations are tied to a single reality.<sup>42</sup> Read this way, the apocalypse of divine wrath is not only the reason for the revelation of saving righteousness; it is the dark side of the one event which reveals both.<sup>43</sup> The antithesis between wrath and righteousness, therefore, does not indicate the presence of two gospels (*contra* Campbell); rather it represents the two words of the singular Gospel: wrath and righteousness, condemnation and salvation, death and life, no and yes. In Pauline terms, the cross is the divine enactment of judgment on ungodliness and *therefore* the justification of the ungodly. Accordingly, the revelation of wrath is, in relation to the gospel, a *novum*—something heretofore concealed but now unveiled.<sup>44</sup>

This brings us back to the difference between Wisdom of Solomon 13–14 and Rom 1.18–32. In Wisdom of Solomon the anthropological situation is fundamentally knowable. Non-Jewish humanity has foolishly failed to exercise their rational potential, but this failure renders them ignorant, not epistemologically incapable. In Wisdom of Solomon's words, the non-Jewish world should have known that 'a corresponding perception of the creator' is derivable 'from the greatness and beauty of created things' (Wis 13.5), but, being 'foolish by nature', they failed to think from 'the good things' to 'the one who exists' (13.1). Reading Rom 1.18–32 as if it were Wisdom of Solomon 13–14, Campbell detects what he considers an un-Pauline parallel in the anthropology of Rom 1.18–32. According to Campbell, the polemic of Romans 1 presupposes an epistemological openness to the existence and demands of God which is itself the presupposition for the rational transition from wrath to grace.<sup>45</sup> Thus interpreted, the content of Rom

42 Campbell, *Deliverance of God*, 542–3, attempts to soften the syntactical connection between 1.17 and 1.18 by interpreting the present tense verb of 1.18 as 'a rare future present' (cf. Bell, *No One Seeks for God*, 14; H.-J. Eckstein, 'Denn Gottes Zorn wird vom Himmel her offenbar werden'. Exegetische Erwägungen zu Röm 1,18', *ZNW* 78 [1987] 74–89), but the present time reference of the identical occurrence of ἀποκαλύπτεται in 1.17 makes this unlikely.

43 Cf. K. Barth, *A Shorter Commentary on Romans* (trans. D. H. van Daalen; London: SCM, 1959) 24–6 (see also *Church Dogmatics* I/2, [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1956] 304–5). While Barth's explicit association of the revealed wrath of Rom 1.18 and the cross is theologically appropriate, it is exegetically premature. Though divine wrath finds its eschatological manifestation on Golgotha, Rom 1.18–3.20 is that part of the apostolic kerygma which announces God's wrath which properly stands over humankind and which, as Paul only *later* reveals, is enacted and exhausted on the cross.

44 R. Jewett, *Romans* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007) 150–2. This is not to suggest that God's wrath is not operative prior to the gospel events (cf. Rom 1.24, 26, 28).

45 Campbell, *Deliverance of God*, 16–17. Campbell's theological concern is to combat a 'prospective soteriology' (i.e. plight to solution) which he insists rests on a faulty epistemology that requires an essentially rational rather than revelatory apprehension of the human condition. (This is contrasted with a 'retrospective soteriology' [i.e. solution to plight] which allows the liberating gospel to inform its object about its prior captivity.) This epistemological criticism, however, is neutralised if the anthropological content of Rom 1.19–3.20 is situated within the revelatory disclosure of 1.16–18.

1.19-32 is essentially and antecedently known, or at least knowable. This, however, is precisely the reading which the apocalyptic and kerygmatic context of 1.18 will not allow.

In contrast to Wisdom of Solomon's invitation to reason 'from below', Paul's apocalyptic accusation pronounces the gospel's verdict on the world. The revelation of wrath is thus a constituent part of the Pauline proclamation (cf. Rom 2.16; 1 Thess 1.9-10). Read this way, solution and plight do not exist in a linear relationship that can be plotted in terms of an epistemological process. There can be no sense of a natural, rational awareness of the anthropological situation which somehow functions as a soteriological preface to the proclamation of the gospel. Paul is not *arguing* from plight to solution or solution to plight; he is, as Seifrid observes, *announcing* both the solution (1.16-17) and the corresponding plight which it presupposes.<sup>46</sup> There is, then, between solution and plight what we might call an antithetical affinity—the problem and the answer fit. However, an apprehension of this fit—this correspondence between the severity of the crisis and the drama of the divine saving act—is the epistemological product of the *theologia crucis*. It is the event and proclamation of the cross that *reveals* both sin and salvation, both wrath and saving righteousness. Within this kerygmatic context, the revelation of divine wrath is not, in contrast to Wisdom of Solomon, reducible to a process of rational deduction. The revelation of divine wrath is, to risk stating the obvious, a *revelation*.

### **Paradise Lost: Created-Theology in Romans 1.19-21**

Romans 1.19-32 narrates the history of ἀσέβεια and ἄδικία against which God's wrath of 1.18 is revealed. Within the movement of this basic plotline Rom 1.19-21 establishes humanity as recipients of divine truth, thereby legitimating the accusation that people 'suppress the truth' (1.18). Paul's reference to 'the knowledge of God' (τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ, 1.19) that has been evident 'since the creation of the cosmos' (ἀπὸ κτίσεως κόσμου, 1.20), suggests that, for Paul, the act of creation is the establishment of the divine-human relationship.<sup>47</sup> Within this context, 'natural theology' is more properly 'created-relationality'; it is the theological knowledge presupposed in the original relationship between human creature and divine creator. For Paul, however, what is primal is past (and prologue).

According to Wis 13.1-9, knowledge of God is an unactualised potential. Creation offers a corresponding knowledge of the creator (13.5), but the non-

46 M. Seifrid, 'Unrighteous by Faith: Apostolic Proclamation in Romans 1.18-3.20', *Justification and Variegated Nomism*. Vol. 2, *The Paradoxes of Paul* (ed. D. A. Carson et al.; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004) 105.

47 Cf. F. Watson, *Text and Truth: Redefining Biblical Theology* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1997) 242-67.

Jewish world failed to reason from ‘the good’ to ‘the one who exists’ (13.1). In Romans 1 by contrast, τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ φανερόν ἐστιν ἐν αὐτοῖς; and this because ὁ θεὸς αὐτοῖς ἐφανερώσεν. Here knowledge of God is a reality on account of divine revelation (cf. 1.21). As Markus Barth replies to his own question—‘What is suppressed?’—it is ‘the factual knowledge of God’.<sup>48</sup> In both Wisdom of Solomon and Romans this possible (Wisdom of Solomon) or actual (Romans) theological knowledge is tied to creation, but it is notable that whereas Wisdom of Solomon argues for a possible theological knowledge derived ‘from’ (ἐκ, 13.1, 5) creation, Paul indicates only that God’s revelatory activity has been occurring ‘since’ (ἀπό, Rom 1.20) the creation of the cosmos and that this self-disclosure is somehow related to ‘the things that have been made’. There is, then, a sharp contrast between Wisdom of Solomon’s insistence that though people could and should have known God they are nevertheless ignorant of God (13.1) and Paul’s declaration that people, γνόντες τὸν θεόν, have failed to honour him. In the one case the knowable God is unknown (Wisdom of Solomon); in the other the unknowable God (τὰ ἄόρατα, 1.20) is known (Romans).<sup>49</sup>

‘For although they knew God...’ (1.21). This, for Paul, is the problem—not that humanity is ignorant of God, but that humanity knew God. Wisdom of Solomon asserts that Israel’s knowledge of God will prevent sin (15.2) and the ungodly are defined as such on the basis of their theological ignorance (e.g. 2.1). From a Pauline perspective, knowledge of God does not prevent sin; it is the precondition for creaturely rebellion.<sup>50</sup> As Watson observes, ‘we learn in Rom. 1.19–20 that to be human is to be the recipient of God’s self-disclosure’;<sup>51</sup> but in Rom 1.18–23 we also learn that to be human *in history* is to be a rebel against this creational revelation. ‘Suppressing the truth’ (Rom 1.18) presupposes ‘knowledge of God’ (1.19). The δὲ ὅτι which connects the two clauses indicates that Paul’s emphasis on the actuality of theological knowledge serves to establish the reality of human rebellion and the legitimacy of divine judgment. By relating divine revelation to creation, Paul effectively includes all humanity within its scope and therefore makes each person a potential rebel. Thus, in contrast to Wisdom of Solomon’s charge that people are ‘without excuse’ because they failed to exercise their epistemic potential and therefore know God, Paul insists that humanity is ‘without excuse’ because the self-revealing God is known.

48 M. Barth, ‘Speaking of Sin’, *SJT* 8 (1955) 288–96.

49 Cf. H. Bietenhard, ‘Natürliche Gotteserkenntnis der Heiden? Eine Erwägung zu Röm 1’, *ThZ* 12 (1956) 275–88.

50 Bornkamm, ‘The Revelation of God’s Wrath’, 59.

51 Watson, *Text and Truth*, 258.

To adapt Gaca's provocative proposal, Wisdom of Solomon's polemic targets idiots; Paul aims at apostates.<sup>52</sup>

This construal captures the implicit plot of Paul's polemical proclamation. There is a definite movement from knowledge of God to ignorance, idolatry and immorality. Thus, in contrast to Wisdom of Solomon's summons to reason 'from below' (from creation to creator), Paul announces a revelation 'from above'. Moreover, whereas Wisdom of Solomon envisages a process of epistemological ascent, Paul tells a story of anthropological decline. As Bell remarks, Rom 1.19–31 narrates a 'fall'.<sup>53</sup> In Watson's words, 'the effect of the primal revelation was, simply and solely, its own distortion into idolatry'.<sup>54</sup> For Paul, then, idolatry is not a step in the right religious direction; it is the rejection of revelation. The movement of false religion is not from theological ignorance to the almost excusable worship of creation (as in Wisdom of Solomon); it is the distortion of divine self-disclosure—a suppression of theological truth (1.18) and the exchange of that truth for a lie (1.25).<sup>55</sup> Consequently, within the Pauline polemic an original, creation-related knowledge of God does not represent an alternative route to theological knowledge. This original revelation is fundamentally rejected revelation (it is past). Its function is therefore not to contribute to theology proper but to establish the reality of human 'excuselessness'<sup>56</sup> and therefore to ground the necessity of the re-creative revelation of Rom 3.21–22 (it is prologue).

### **Adam, Israel and Everyone: Allusive Inclusion in Romans 1**

Allusions are elusive: they are difficult to identify and, once identified, their meaning and rhetorical function is not always clear. The following analysis of the allusive presence of Adam and Israel in Romans 1 concedes the initial ambiguity of the allusions. It is possible that Paul's account of human sin draws freely and somewhat indiscriminately from biblical resources. In this broad sense, Westerholm is correct to describe Rom 1.18–32 as 'a dramatized depiction of the human condition, recalling many a biblical account...but not retelling any one story'.<sup>57</sup> However, it is precisely as Paul is drawing together these various

52 Gaca, 'Paul's Uncommon Declaration in Romans', 165–98. Barth (*CD I/2*, 304) anticipates Gaca in his suggestion that the gospel's universality implies a corresponding crisis in which 'the complaint of apostasy is now expressly and seriously leveled against them all'.

53 Bell, *No One Seeks for God*, 94.

54 Watson, *Text and Truth*, 261.

55 Cf. Watson, *Text and Truth*, 274 n. 41, who rightly notes that the Pauline affirmation of primal revelation occurs within a theological interpretation of the phenomena of idolatry.

56 Cranfield, *Romans*, 1.116.

57 S. Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New: The 'Lutheran' Paul and His Critics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004) 386.



stories that he effectively constructs a single story—the human story. As argued above, the terms of the rhetorical turn at 2.1–5 force a rereading of Rom 1.18–32 which is alert to the inclusion of unexpected characters within the narrative. The following argument should thus be read as an exegetical attempt to re-read Rom 1.18–32 in light of the implications of 2.1–11.

In Wisdom of Solomon 13–15, the ignorant idolators do not include Israel (15.2b–4). Paul’s polemic permits no such limitations. Subsuming his polemical addressees under the single term ἄνθρωπος (cf. 2.1), Rom 1.18–32 tells the tragic tale of human history ‘since the creation of the cosmos’ (ἀπὸ κτίσεως κόσμου, 1.20). This creational context is the first indication that the humanity in question is, both broadly and specifically, Adamic humanity. God’s self-revelation began in the beginning (1.20). This brings Adam into the story,<sup>58</sup> but the ingressive ἀπό keeps the narrative moving. Put another way, the story of a primordial knowledge of God which is exchanged for a lie is Adam’s story; but for Paul, Adam’s story is never Adam’s story alone.

In Rom 5.12 Paul traces human sin and the death that accompanies it back to Adam: ‘Therefore, just as sin came into the world through the one man (δι’ ἑνὸς ἀνθρώπου), and death through sin, so death spread to all because all sinned’. In Pauline theology, the Adamic trespass means death (5.15), condemnation (5.16, 18) and the status of ‘sinner’ (5.19) for the many who, through Adam’s sin, are subjected to the reign of death (5.17, 21).<sup>59</sup> But this universalism also has a particularity. While ‘all sinned’ (5.12), not all sinned ‘in the likeness of Adam’s trespass’ (ἐπὶ τῷ ὁμοιώματι τῆς παραβάσεως Ἀδάμ, 5.14). That dubious honour had to await the coming of the Mosaic Law (5.13–14) and therefore is a distinction

58 Those who find Adam in Rom 1 include J. Jervell, *Imago Dei: Gen 1,26f. im Spätjudentum, in der Gnosis und in den paulinischen Briefen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1960) 317–18; M. D. Hooker, ‘Adam in Romans I’, *NTS* 6 (1959–60) 297–306; Bell, *No One Seeks for God*, 26; Dunn, *Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 91–3; J. R. Levison, ‘Adam and Eve in Romans 1.18–25 and the Greek *Life of Adam and Eve*’, *NTS* 50 (2004) 519–34. However, see the cautionary article by A. J. M. Wedderburn, ‘Adam in Paul’s Letter to the Romans’, *Studia Biblica 1978 III* (ed. E. A. Livingstone; JSNTSup 3; Sheffield: JSOT, 1980) 413–30. The strongest evidence for the presence of Adam in Rom 1 is (1) 1.23 probably echoes Gen 1.26a (LXX) in which ἄνθρωπος, εἰκὼν and ὁμοίωσις (a possible synonym with Paul’s ὁμοίωμα) are all coordinated, (2) the references to ‘exchange’ (Rom 1.23, 25), ‘desire’ (1.24) and service to the creaturely subsequence (1.25) may be allusions to Gen 1–3 which have been, as Levison (‘Adam and Eve’, 523) argues, ‘refracted through the lens of a tradition such as we find in the Greek *Life of Adam and Eve*’, (3) the possible reflection of Jewish traditions about the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the contrast between presumed wisdom and actual folly in 1.22, (4) the points of contact between Paul’s references to sexual immorality and traditions (e.g. *4 Macc.* 18.7–8; *2 En.* 31.6) about Eve’s temptation relating to unchastity.

59 While Wisdom of Solomon explains the entrance of death in relation to the devil’s agency in Eden (2.23–24), Adam’s particular theological significance is not as the archetypal sinner, but rather as the first figure in a long history of Wisdom saving those who are ‘worthy of her’ (10.1–2; cf. 6.16).

unique to Israel. As Gathercole remarks, 'Here we see that the primeval "fall" of Adam and Eve has...been brought into association with sin under the Law in the life of the people of Israel'.<sup>60</sup>

Romans 7.7-12 makes precisely this point. As in Romans 1, multiple stories appear to be intermixed. The prohibition against desire (ἐπιθυμία, 7.7),<sup>61</sup> the emphasis on deception (ἐξαπατάω, 7.11; cf. Gen 3.13) and, most notably, the reference to a prior period of aliveness apart from the law (ἐγὼ ἔζων χωρὶς νόμου ποτέ, 7.9) indicate the allusive presence of Adam.<sup>62</sup> However, as Moo and Watson argue, the primary focus of Rom 7.7-12 is Israel's encounter with the Mosaic Law.<sup>63</sup> In Watson's words, 'The topic here is not the fall but the coming of the law, and the commandment, "You shall not desire" (v. 7) is drawn not from Genesis but from the Decalogue (Exod 20.17)'.<sup>64</sup> The absence of an object in relation to the prohibition indicates, as in Philo (*Decal.* 142-153) and 4 *Macc.* 2.6, that the tenth commandment is cited here as, in Moo's phrase, 'a representative summation' of the law.<sup>65</sup> The coming of this command (7.9) is the event of the law's coming, the conclusion of the period referred to in Rom 5.14 (ἀπὸ Ἀδὰμ μέχρι Μωϋσέως). This association of Adam and Israel enables Paul to recast Israel's confrontation with the law in Edenic terms. In this respect, the selection of the prohibition against desire, rather than forcing a choice between a focus on Israel or Adam, has the effect of bringing Sinai and Eden together.<sup>66</sup> As Chester remarks, Paul 'creates a fusion between the giving of the command not to eat in the Garden of Eden [and] the giving of the law at Sinai'.<sup>67</sup>

60 Gathercole, 'Sin in God's Economy', 161 n. 3; cf. N. T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Paul and the Law in Pauline Theology* (London: T&T Clark, 1991) 39. 4 *Ezra* 3.7, 20-27 offers a similar account of the replication of Adamic sin in Israel's history.

61 Jewish sources (e.g. *Apoc. Mos.* 19.3; *Apoc. Abr.* 24.9) commonly cite 'desire' as the root of all sins and therefore link the prohibition against desire to the Eden narrative (Dunn, *Theology of Paul the Apostle* 87-8, 98-9).

62 G. Bornkamm, 'Sin, Law and Death: An Exegetical Study of Romans 7', *Early Christian Experience* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969) 87-104; H. Hübner, *Das Gesetz bei Paulus. Ein Beitrag zum Werden der paulinischen Theologie* (FRLANT 119; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978) 66-9; Käsemann, *An die Römer*, 186.

63 D. J. Moo, 'Israel and Paul in Romans 7.7-12', *NTS* 32 (1986) 122-35; Watson, *Hermeneutics*, 335-80. This is established primarily on the basis of Paul's use of νόμος, the similarity between the narrative sequence of this text and, in Moo's words (123), 'a Pauline theological pattern having to do with the redemptive-historical experience of Israel, the citation of the tenth commandment, the link between the law and life (cf. Lev 18.5; *Sir.* 45.5) and the connection between "desire" and Israel's experience in the desert (cf. 1 Cor 10.1-10)'.<sup>64</sup>

64 Watson, *Hermeneutics*, 359.

65 Moo, 'Israel and Paul in Romans 7.7-12', 123 n. 8.

66 G. Theissen, *Psychological Aspects of Pauline Theology* (trans. J. Galvin; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1987) 204-6; S. J. Chester, *Conversion at Corinth: Perspectives on Conversion in Paul's Theology and the Corinthian Church* (SNTW; London: T&T Clark, 2003) 186 n. 29.

67 Chester, *Conversion at Corinth*, 187 n. 129.

By linking desire and death, however, Paul does more than connect the Eden episode and Israel's sin; he connects quite specifically the Adamic trespass and Israel's experience under the law *in the wilderness*. As Watson has thoroughly demonstrated, the 'correlation of desire and death derives...from Numbers'.<sup>68</sup> 1 Corinthians 10.1–10, reading Numbers 11 in a similar fashion to Ps 105.14–15, associates Israel's desire in the desert (1 Cor 10.6) with the destruction of nearly the entire wilderness generation (10.5). Here, the first manifestation of this sin-causing illicit desire is the idolatrous incident of the Golden Calf: 'Do not be idolators as some of them were; as it is written, "The people sat to eat and drink and rose to play"' (1 Cor 10.7, quoting Exod 32.6). This indicates that the story of desire leading to death that is allusively narrated in Rom 7.7–12 is in large part the story of Israel's sin and death at Sinai and in the wilderness. This, crucially, is the story Wisdom of Solomon cannot tell.

This brings us back to Romans 1. Paul, by including Israel within the history of Adamic sin, confronts the realities of Israel's past that Wisdom of Solomon is forced to erase or displace. As argued above, Wisdom of Solomon alludes to Moses' confident words in the aftermath of the Golden Calf, but in the same sentence Wisdom of Solomon exonerates Israel from idolatry (Wis 15.2–4). That Paul faces precisely this history is strikingly evident in the double allusion of Rom 1.23. We have already noted the probable echo of Gen 1.26a here; but, in keeping with the Pauline association of Adamic and Israelite sin, the primary reference of this verse is to the allusion to the Golden Calf in Ps 105.20 (LXX):

And they exchanged the glory (καὶ ἠλλάξαντο τὴν δόξαν) that was theirs for the likeness (ὁμοίωμα) of a grass-eating ox (Ps 105.2).

And they exchanged the glory (καὶ ἠλλάξαν τὴν δόξαν) of the immortal God for the likeness (ὁμοίωμα) of the image of a mortal man and of birds and four-footed animals and creeping creatures (Rom 1.23).

Here, to adapt a well-known phrase, we have an echo of Israel in the polemic of Paul.<sup>69</sup> This allusive inclusion of Israel stands in the sharpest possible contrast to Wisdom of Solomon's claim that Israel is innocent of idolatry (15.4). There is no room for the Golden Calf in Wisdom of Solomon's anthropological dualism. The wilderness is the site of blessing and testing for the holy, idolatry-free nation in symmetrical contrast to the plagues which fittingly befell the unrighteous Egyptians (Wis 11–19). As Barclay remarks, 'the God-aware people of Israel are

68 Watson, *Hermeneutics*, 363.

69 Barth, 'Speaking of Sin', 291: 'All that Paul says about the foolishness of those that think themselves to be wise, and of the fabrication of quadrupedal idols, he says by allusions to OT sayings'.

in principle averse to idolatry, and hardly liable to worship a Golden Calf.<sup>70</sup> But Paul, as Watson comments, ‘faces the fact that the author of Wisdom of Solomon strives to suppress: that the holy nation is itself deeply complicit in the idolatry and ungodliness that it prefers to ascribe to the Gentiles’.<sup>71</sup> As we have seen, for Wisdom of Solomon, Jew and Gentile are irreducibly different *qua* non-idolaters and idolaters. Consequently, Paul’s inclusion of Israel within the human history of idolatry effectively eliminates the basis on which Wisdom of Solomon’s anthropological dualism is constructed.

Romans 1.18–32 is a polyvalent narrative. The story of the sin of Adamic humanity is told in the Gentile-directed style of Wisdom of Solomon 13–15, but, in contrast to that tradition, the polemical target is broadened to include Israel. Dunn captures this dynamic when he refers to a ‘blending of traditions’ that produces a ‘twofold indictment’, a reference first to ‘the characteristic Jewish condemnation of Gentile religion and sexual practice’ and, secondly, to a ‘reminder that Israel itself falls under the same indictment’.<sup>72</sup> The effect of Rom 1.18–32 is therefore the opposite of Wisdom of Solomon 13–15. Whereas Wisdom of Solomon explicitly disassociates Israel and idolaters, Rom 1.18–32 highlights Israel’s idolatry, thereby collapsing the soteriological difference between Jew and Gentile. The contrast is thus between two theological anthropologies. Wisdom of Solomon’s anthropological dualism, which has Israel (righteous) and non-Israel (sinners) as its lowest, irreducible denominators, is confronted by Paul’s anthropological universalism that further reduces the Jew/Gentile distinction to a single denominator: ἄνθρωπος.

### Introducing Divine Agency

Stanley Stowers observes that ‘interpreters have not placed enough emphasis on God’s action in [Romans] 1.18–32’.<sup>73</sup> We have already considered the contextualisation of Rom 1.19–32 within the apostolic announcement of an ultimately salvific divine act and the explicit references to divine self-revelation that ground the claims about a primal theological knowledge. In Romans 1, however, God’s agency is not only evident in acts of salvation and revelation; it is also active in judgment. Wisdom of Solomon’s explanation of the origin and effects of sin, at least in chs. 13–15, is strictly anthropological.<sup>74</sup> According to

<sup>70</sup> Barclay, ‘I Will Have Mercy’, 93.

<sup>71</sup> Watson, *Hermeneutics*, 411.

<sup>72</sup> Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 93. Dunn appears to overlook the oddity of having these two indictments side by side and that the presence of such a phenomenon represents a significant Pauline alteration to the polemical tradition from which he draws.

<sup>73</sup> Stowers, *A Rereading of Romans*, 93.

<sup>74</sup> Wis 2.24 does introduce a supra-human cause within the account of death’s origin, but here the non-human is demonic (διάβολος) not divine.

Rom 1.24, 26 and 28, by contrast, ‘the human situation depicted in Rom 1 derives’, as Beverly Gaventa argues, ‘both from human rebellion against God *and* from God’s own active role in a cosmic conflict’.<sup>75</sup> The ‘and’ makes all the difference.

Paul’s introduction of divine agency into the causal link between idolatry and immorality is unique in the Hellenistic Jewish polemical tradition. The significance of this innovation is underlined by the triple use of the phrase ὁ θεὸς παρέδωκεν (1.24, 26, 28).<sup>76</sup> Gaventa’s consideration of both biblical and non-biblical uses of παραδίδομι convincingly, if unsurprisingly, demonstrates that ‘handing over virtually always involves a handing over to another agent’.<sup>77</sup> This raises two related questions: whom did God hand over and to whom did he deliver them?

Taking the latter question first, Rom 1.24, 26 and 28 all identify that to which people were delivered with an εἰς + accusative clause: εἰς ἀκαθαρσίαν (v. 24), εἰς πάθη ἀτιμίας (v. 26) and εἰς ἀδόκιμον νοῦν (v. 28). According to this reading, the phrase ἐν ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις τῶν καρδιῶν αὐτῶν that separates the παραδίδομι and εἰς clauses in 1.24 is interpreted causally. This is consistent with both the Pauline (1 Cor 10.6) and early Jewish opinion that ‘desire is the origin of every sin’ (*Apoc. Mos.* 19.3) and means that God hands people over to ‘uncleanness’, ‘dishonourable passions’ and a ‘worthless mind’ because of the desires of their hearts. While these sound more like descriptions of human misbehaviour or depravity than agents, the reappearance of these motifs in Romans—Gaventa cites 6.19–20, 7.5 and 8.6–7—seems to subsume these unnatural disorders under the power of sin. This is not quite the same as saying, as Gaventa does, that ‘uncleanness, dishonourable passions, and a deformed mind are instances of synecdoche; they refer to the anti-God powers, especially the power of Sin’;<sup>78</sup> but it does imply that these human conditions are, in part, the effects of sin and therefore point to its sinister agency.

There is, then, a linking of desire and the implicit agency of sin in Rom 1.24. Following a now recurring pattern, this subtly connects the *Verdammnisgeschichten* of Rom 1.18–32 and Rom 7.7–12.<sup>79</sup> Personified Sin is the main character of Rom 7.8–11. With the coming of the prohibition against *desiring* (ἐπιθυμέω, 7.7), Sin sprang to life and produced ‘*all desire*’ (πᾶσα ἐπιθυμία, 7.8) in the ‘I’, thus deceiving and murdering him (7.11). The parallel movement from desire (ἐπιθυμία) to the effects of sin’s agency and ultimately death (1.32) in Rom 1.24–28 suggests that Israel, the main focus of Romans 7, is not excluded from the account of God handing humanity over to the destructive

75 B. R. Gaventa, *Our Mother Saint Paul* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007) 113 (italics added).

76 Cf. Gathercole, ‘Sin in God’s Economy’, 162–6.

77 Gaventa, *Our Mother Saint Paul*, 114.

78 Gaventa, *Our Mother Saint Paul*, 119.

79 Cf. Gathercole, ‘Sin in God’s Economy’, 159–69.

power of sin in Rom 1.24–28. Otherwise expressed, tying the effects of sin to the causal effects of desire, with all its associations with Adam and Israel, contributes to the bringing together of Jew and Gentile under the single term ἄνθρωπος. Thus, in answer to our second question, God handed over *humans*—Jew and Gentile—to the effects of sin’s agency. In Rom 1.18 ἄνθρωπος means ἄνθρωπος; it is an inclusive reference and as such the tragic history of human sin is precisely the *human* story.

### Unsubtle Subversion

‘God’s wrath strikes man’s religion’.<sup>80</sup> This is true in both Wisdom of Solomon 13–15 and Romans 1; but again, there are crucial differences. There is a subtle differentiation between two types of false worship in Wis 13.1–9 and 13.10–19. The initial focus (vv. 1–9) is on those things created by the divine artisan. Fire, water, air, wind, stars—these ‘created things’ (κτίσμα, 13.5) were taken to be gods (13.2) with the result that Gentile religion became fixed on the penultimacy of the created rather than its divine cause (13.1, 3–5, 9). In 13.10–19 the focus is no longer on the works of the divine creator, but rather on the artefacts created by humans (cf. 14.15–21; 15.7–13). Under this general topic, Wisdom of Solomon demonstrates an awareness of various forms of idolatry: personal piety (13.11–19), legal cult (14.15–16) and emperor worship (14.17–21). This differentiated reflection on non-Jewish cult displays a level of acculturated sophistication and subtlety.<sup>81</sup>

Whatever Paul is in Romans 1, he is certainly not subtle. In contrast to Wisdom of Solomon’s careful distinguishing of types of idolatry, Paul’s account reduces idolatry to images of living creatures (Rom 1.24). A similar lack of subtlety is evident as Paul, unlike Wisdom of Solomon’s sensitive evocation of Israel’s aniconic tradition, offers an apparently novel interpretation of idolatry as service to the creature (1.25). Wisdom of Solomon’s emphasis on the human origin of certain idolatrous artefacts (13.10–19; 15.7–13) evokes what Watson calls the ‘craftsman motif’ from Isa 44.9–20, and the satirical polemic against the lifeless impotency of idols derives from Ps 115.5–7.<sup>82</sup> Paul’s interpretation, by contrast, seems to come from nowhere. It may be, however, that Paul’s language of ‘exchange’ and its connection to, as Levison writes, ‘the inversion of the human dominion that is established in Gen. 1.26’ reflects an interpretative tradition that includes ‘the exchange of human dominion for subservience to animals’ as an effect of the Edenic fall.<sup>83</sup> In the Greek *Life of Adam and Eve* the wild animals address

80 Barth, ‘Speaking of Sin’, 290.

81 Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, 392.

82 Watson, *Hermeneutics*, 407.

83 Levison, ‘Adam and Eve’, 530, 533.

the woman after her rebellion: ἡμῶν αἱ φύσεις μετηλλάγησαν (11.2). That this exchange includes the forfeiting of Adamic dominion is confirmed both by an extra-biblical linking of the Edenic sin with animal rebellion (24.3) and an eschatological promise that Adam's rule will be reestablished (39), thus indicating that the loss of that rule is presupposed. This connection between Rom 1.23, 25 and an interpretative tradition associated with the Eden narratives further confirms the significance of Adam within Paul's polemic. Importantly, however, Adam himself is not the polemical target. Paul accuses ἄνθρωποι not Ἀδὰμ. Accordingly, the effect of this (possible) allusion to Eden is not to focus on humanity's progenitor, but rather to reduce humanity to a commonality and thereby to address Jew and Gentile as ἄνθρωπος, as Adamic humans.

Read within this rhetorical and theological intention, Paul's apparently crude collapsing of types of idolatry takes on new significance. Hidden within Paul's undifferentiated description of false worship is what we might call an unsubtle sophistication—a subversively un-nuanced account of cultic practice which has the effect of collapsing both the difference between types of religion and the associated differences between their practitioners.<sup>84</sup> In Wisdom of Solomon, false religion exists on something of a sliding-scale that moves from mildly condemnable (μέμψις ὀλίγη, 13.6) to 'most foolish' (πάντες ἀφρονέστατοι, 15.14)—that is, from nature worship (13.1–9) to Egyptian animal worship (15.18–19). It is the object of cultic devotion that distinguishes Egyptian from Greek, and ultimately Egyptian and Greek from Jew. In this variegated religious scheme, Israelite religion is set in contrast to a highly differentiated assortment of false religion. Although all non-Jewish religion is false insofar as it is not directed to the one God of Israel, the object of one's worship remains theologically relevant. Worshiping the works of the creator is closer to the truth than idolising animals that even the creator did not bless (15.18–19). In this sense, there is true religion (Israel) and progressively less true religion.

Paul's perspective is different. Those who worship human images, birds, four-footed animals and reptiles are all guilty of the single sin of serving the creature rather than the creator (Rom 1.23). Thus, for Paul, cultic practice is not a definitive distinguishing mark of Greeks, Jews and Egyptians. The formal differences between types of false religion only serve to conceal a fundamental material identity. The particular image of cultic devotion is ultimately inconsequential. Either one worships the one God, or one does not. By relativising the anthropological significance of religious differences Paul effectively broadens his polemical scope. In contrast to Wisdom of Solomon's portrayal of Israel in juxtaposition to a range of false religion (15.1–4; 18.9), for Paul there is only true worship and its opposite. Despite its diversity non-Jewish religion is essentially a singular

84 Watson (*Hermeneutics*, 407 n. 82) considers this possibility: 'The Pauline conflation might be regarded either as a crude misunderstanding or as a sign of theological sophistication'.

entity; and insofar as Israel is complicit in Adamic humanity's history of idolatry—a reality that Paul's allusion to the Golden Calf episode in Rom 1.23 forces the reader to concede—Israel is placed on the wrong side of the true/false worship divide. Here again, Paul's alterations to the Hellenistic Jewish polemical tradition have the effect of producing an antithetical anthropology in relation to Wisdom of Solomon's Jew/Gentile dualism. Whereas Wisdom of Solomon contrasts Israel with various types of idolaters, Paul reduces idolatry to terms reflected in Israel's original sin at Sinai and thereby includes Israel within humanity's common hamartiological history.

### Conclusion

In the words of Rom 3.22, 'there is no distinction'. But for Wisdom of Solomon, there is a distinction. Anthropology is reducible no further than the difference between Jew and Gentile because Jews know God and Gentiles are idolatrous. Wisdom of Solomon 13–15 serves to reinforce this division by contrasting the idolatry and immorality of non-Jews with Israel's innocence in relation to idols and the consequent immorality. Paul's engagement with Wisdom of Solomon 13–15 makes precisely the opposite point. The contextualisation of the Pauline polemic within the apocalyptic and kerygmatic context of Rom 1.16–18, together with the various alterations Paul introduces into the polemical tradition, serve the single rhetorical and theological aim of eliminating the difference between Jew and Gentile by eliminating the imagined difference between non-idolatry and idolatry. The story of Rom 1.18–32, even as it tells the diverse stories of Adam, Israel and the Gentiles, is, as 1.18 states, the story of the ἄνθρωπος. By narrating these various stories within and as a single story Paul effectively creates a common human history. Thus, in contrast to Wisdom of Solomon's irreducible anthropological dualism, Paul announces the essential oneness—*coram deo*—of all persons; he announces the human.