

REFORMED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
CHARLOTTE

A FAITHFUL HERMENEUTIC?:
A TEXTUAL, CONTEXTUAL, AND STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS OF PAUL'S USE OF
ISAIAH 8:14 AND ISAIAH 28:16 IN ROMANS 9:33

SUBMITTED TO DR. ROBERT J. CARA
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
NT5250 – ACTS & ROMANS

EVAN C. POTTS
FEBRUARY 2, 2025

Paul's use of the Old Testament is a battleground in biblical scholarship. Many critical scholars call Paul's hermeneutical method unfaithful and accuse Paul of altering the meaning of the passages he cites. One prime example of this is Paul's use of Isa 8:14 and 28:16 in Rom 9:33. While Paul does provide numerous changes to the Hebrew and LXX text and insert Isa 8:14 into his citation of Isa 28:16, Paul's philosophy and methodology of interpretation is not unfaithful. Once one sees the context of these two verses, how Paul cites them is faithful to Isaiah and even integral for the development of Paul's argument. Thus, this paper will seek to show just that. My thesis is: The philosophy and methodology of Paul's citation in Rom 9:33 of Isa 8:14 and 28:16 is faithful to the meaning of Isaiah in light of Paul's redemptive-historical setting.

I will argue this in three stages. First, I will conduct a textual critical study on the wording of Paul's citation in light of the MT and LXX readings of Isa 8:14 and 28:16. The second stage will study the three contexts of Isa 8:14; 28:16; and Rom 9:33. Finally, the third portion of this study will provide a synthesis of Rom 9:33 and the two Isaianic verses in light of the contextual study and linguistic issues. From this, it will be concluded that Paul's use of Isa 8:14 and 28:16 in Rom 9:33 is faithful to Isaiah despite the linguistic challenges it provides.

I. A TEXTUAL CRITICAL STUDY OF PAUL'S CITATION IN ROMANS 9:33

1. *The study.* In Rom 9:33, Paul conflates two passages together into one citation: Isa 8:14 and 28:16.¹ A plethora of textual issues exists with Paul's citation; the following is a concise

¹ These two Isaianic verses are also cited in 1 Pet 2:6 (Isa 28:16) and 2:8 (Isa 8:14). While Peter cites the two verses independently, the usage of the same two verses together in both Rom 9:33 and 1 Pet 2 along with similar language over against the LXX has resulted in many arguing that there was some form of a *testimonium* that had already compiled these two verses together to be used as proof texts against Jews. A third passage that is argued would've been on this tablet is Ps 118:22. Not only is this quoted in 1 Pet 2 with the two Isaianic ones, but Jesus also applies this verse to himself in the Synoptics at the end of the parable of the tenants (Matt 21:42; Mark 12:10–11; Luke 20:17). For a thorough argument in favor of the stone *testimonium*, see J. Rendel Harris, *Testimonies*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1916), 26–32. See also C. H. Dodd, *According to the Scriptures: The Sub-Structure of New Testament Theology* (London: Nisbet & Co., Ltd., 1952), 42–43. For a survey of the testimony work conducted by Rendel Harris, Alessandra Falcetta, “The Testimony Research of James Rendel Harris,” *NovT* 45 (2003): 280–99. David Lincicum, “Israel's Scriptures in the *Adversus Judaeos* Literature,” in *Israel's Scriptures in Early Christian Writings: The Use of the Old Testament in the New*, ed. Matthias Henze and David Lincicum (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2023), 979–99 provides a succinct but detailed description of *adversus Judaeos* literature, but he keenly notes most of this literature is from the 2nd century which is well after the writings of Romans and 1 Peter.

survey of these textual peculiarities.² The text of Rom 9:33 begins with *καθὼς γέγραπται* — Paul’s standard formula to introduce an OT citation in Romans.³ The citation of Isa 8:14 and 28:16 reads⁴

ἰδοὺ τίθημι ἐν Σιὼν λίθον προσκόμματος καὶ πέτραν σκανδάλου,
καὶ ὁ πιστεύων ἐπ’ αὐτῷ οὐ καταισχυνθήσεται.

It is generally agreed that Paul’s use here is A–B–A; the middle section of Isa 28:16 is removed and replaced with a few words from 8:14. Specifically, Paul removes the hope-filled language of a cornerstone and replaces it with the judgment-filled language of a stumbling block. Before examining that section, we must first examine the first phrase. Afterward, I will continue by looking at each phrase individually.

a. *Behold, I am laying in Zion*. To help see the differences and similarities between Paul’s citation and the Hebrew and LXX, the below table contains Isa 28:16 MT, Isa 28:16 LXX, and Rom 9:33.⁵

Table 1

Line	Isa 28:16 MT	Isa 28:16 LXX	Rom 9:33
1	בָּהּ אָמָר לְנָן יְהוָה	διὰ τοῦτο οὕτως λέγει κύριος	
2	הַנּוּ יִסְדַּק	ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ ἐμβαλῶ	ἰδοὺ τίθημι
3	בְּצִוָּן אָבִן	εἰς τὰ θεμέλια Σιων λίθον	ἐν Σιὼν
4	אָבִן בְּחֵן	πολυτελῆ ἐκλεκτὸν	
5	פָּנָת יִקְרָת	ἀκρογωνιαῖον ἔντιμον	
6	מוֹסֵד מִזְבֵּחַ	εἰς τὰ θεμέλια αὐτῆς	
7	יְמִמְמָמָה	καὶ ὁ πιστεύων ἐπ’ αὐτῷ	καὶ ὁ πιστεύων ἐπ’ αὐτῷ

So, even if these passages were compiled on a stone *testimonium*, Christians could’ve done so after seeing them both appear in Romans and 1 Peter.

² For an exhaustive study, see Dietrich-Alex Koch, “The Quotations of Isaiah 8,14 and 28,16 in Romans 9,33 and 1 Peter 2,6,8 as Test Case for Old Testament Quotations in the New Testament,” *ZNW* 101 (2010): 223–40.

³ This exact formula occurs 13x in Romans (Rom 1:17; 2:24; 3:4; 4:17; 8:36; 9:13; 9:33; 10:15; 11:8; 11:26; 15:3; 15:9; 15:21). Paul sometimes alters it by removing *καθὼς* and changing the tense of *γράφω* (e.g. Rom 4:23; 10:5). It is interesting to note that whenever Paul uses *καθὼς* with *γράφω* it is always accompanied by the perfect passive indicative of *γράφω*. This is not true the other way around (Rom 14:11).

⁴ All Greek citations are from *Novum Testamentum Graece*, Nestle-Aland, 28th ed.

⁵ This section will focus on lines 1–3 of Isa 28:16, and the third part will look at lines 6–8.

Paul begins his citation of Isa 28:16 by saying ἴδον τίθημι ἐν Σιών but the LXX reads Ἰδοὺ ἐγώ ἐμβαλῶ εἰς τὰ θεμέλια Σιων.⁶ A few things are to note here. First, Paul omits numerous words: the first-person pronoun ἐγώ and the use of θεμέλιον. The omission of ἐγώ is simple to understand since τίθημι is in the first-person singular. On the other hand, Paul's removal of θεμέλιον which alters the prepositional phrase of line 3 is important.⁷ The removal of θεμέλιον and substitution of ἐν for εἰς points to the Hebrew.⁸ It is said that because Peter's citation in 1 Pet 2:6 also lacks the use of θεμέλιον then it is likely they were using a third source such as a *testimonium*.⁹ However, this does not result in the necessity of a third source. Why couldn't Paul (and Peter) omit the word because the Hebrew doesn't have an equivalent for it? The LXX's τὰ θεμέλια is an interpretative translation of the Hebrew יִצְבַּח דָּבָר. The LXX and MT match when it comes to direct object/noun complement;¹⁰ however, τὰ θεμέλια is an insertion into the prepositional phrase. Perhaps, the LXX's use of τὰ θεμέλια was a conflation of line 6 with line 3 of the Hebrew text.¹¹ Whether that is true or not, it is clear Paul's omission of τὰ θεμέλια is more in line with the Hebrew than the LXX is.

Next, Paul's substitution of ἐμβαλῶ for τίθημι is argued to point to a third source since Peter makes the same substitution. However, does that need to be the case? A different hypothesis is proposed by Paul Himes who argues that Peter's use of τίθημi better fits the

⁶ All citations of the LXX are taken from Rahlfs Edition.

⁷ It is not omitted because Paul is weary of applying the word to Jesus for he equates the foundation (θεμέλιον) of the church to Jesus Christ in 1 Cor 3:11.

⁸ J. Ross Wagner, *Heralds of the Good News: Isaiah and Paul in Concert in the Letter to the Romans* (Boston: Brill, 2003), 128.

⁹ While reference to Peter's use of Isa 8:14 and 28:16 is necessary, this paper is not concerned with Peter's citation of the two verses. Thus, while 1 Peter 2 will be mentioned, it will not be examined.

¹⁰ I use the term "noun complement" because biblical Hebrew does not have a morphological accusative, and thus, it would be slightly misleading to use the term direct object. However, in English semantics, that is how "stone" is functioning here.

¹¹ Koch, "Isaiah 8,14 and 28,16 in Romans 9,33," 226. For a dissenting opinion, see Paul A Himes, "Why Did Peter Change the Septuagint?: A Reexamination of the Significance of the Use of Τίθημi in 1 Peter 2:6," *BBR* 26 (2016): 227–44, 236–37.

cornerstone language of Isa 28:16.¹² While his argument is thorough, given Paul's omission of this portion of Isa 28:16, such an argument holds little to no weight here. I propose Paul's substitution better fits the usage of *τίθημι* and *ἐμβάλλω* in the LXX. Isa 28:16 is the only occurrence in the LXX where *ἐμβάλλω* translates *τσι*. While there are zero instances of *τίθημι* translating *τσι* in the LXX, *τίθημι* is more appropriate given the interpolation of Isa 8:14 which contains the words *λίθος*, *πρόσκομμα*, *πέτρα*, and *σκάνδαλον*. The LXX and NT contain zero instances of *ἐμβάλλω* occurring with *πρόσκομμα*, *πέτρα*, or *σκάνδαλον*. The only time *ἐμβάλλω* occurs with *λίθος* is here in Isa 28:16. On the other hand, *τίθημι* occurs with *λίθος* 4x (1 Kgdms 6:15; Hag 2:15; Zech 12:3; Isa 27:9), with *πρόσκομμα* 2x (Isa 29:21; Rom 14:13), with *πέτρα* 3x (Num 4:21; Judg 6:20; Job 22:24), and with *σκάνδαλον* 5x (Ps 49:20; Sir 7:6; Jdt 5:1; Hos 4:17; Rom 14:13). With this summary of use, it is evident Paul is more in accord with the entirety of the Greek usage of verbs given the language of Isa 8:14.

Furthermore, two aforementioned passages of specific interest are the two uses of *λίθος* with *πρόσκομμα*. Just a few verses earlier in Rom 9:20–24, Paul alludes to the imagery of Isa 29:16.¹³ If Paul used Isa 29:16 just sentences before Rom 9:33, it is likely Paul also had with him Isa 29:21 where the two words occur together. Of more importance, however, is the use of these two words along with *σκάνδαλον* together in Rom 14:13. Here, Paul warns not to place a stumbling block or obstacle in front of believers (*τὸ μὴ τιθέναι πρόσκομμα τῷ ἀδελφῷ ἢ σκάνδαλον*). It is evident here that Paul used *τίθημι* with the same stumbling block imagery of Rom 9:33. Furthermore, neither *ἐμβάλλω* nor *βάλλω* are used in the Pauline corpus whereas Paul uses *τίθημι* 16x.¹⁴

¹² Himes, "Why Did Peter Change the Septuagint?," 237–41.

¹³ Benjamin E. Reynolds, "Isaiah in the New Testament," in *Israel's Scriptures in Early Christian Writings*, 795–815.

¹⁴ Rom 4:17; 9:33; 14:13; 1 Cor 3:10, 11; 9:18; 12:18, 28; 15:25; 16:2; 2 Cor 3:13; 5:19; 1 Thess 5:9; 1 Tim 1:12; 1 Tim 2:7; 2 Tim 1:11. Even if one views the pastorals and contested letters as inauthentic, the total use of the verb is still 11x to the 0x of *ἐμβάλλω* or *βάλλω*.

Along these lines, Paul has changed the pi'el perfect of **תָּשַׁׁיַּ** to a Greek present use of **τίθημι** where the LXX has a future of **ἐμβάλλω**. While the perfect aspect of biblical Hebrew typically denotes an action in the past, the pi'el perfect can speak of an action in the past, present, or future.¹⁵ Given the context of Isa 28:16, a past action is more likely; this is the choice of the ESV translators. However, Paul uses the present of **τίθημι** despite the 362 uses of the aorist in the LXX and 68 uses in the NT. This is still in accord with the possible semantic field of the pi'el perfect, but it does warrant more discussion because Paul doesn't agree morphologically with the Hebrew or LXX. It is tempting to say Paul's use of **τίθημι** is a historical present, but given its person (first), that is highly unlikely.¹⁶ Maybe this is a futuristic present, but given the LXX's future verb, if **τίθημι** was futuristic and Paul was using the LXX, he likely would've kept the verb in the future tense-form. Perhaps more possible is that **τίθημι** is a perfective present. Given the contextual factors, this is certainly possible. Furthermore, **τίθημι** in the perfect tense-form only occurs 8x in the LXX and 6x in the NT; Paul uses it only once (Rom 4:17). The infrequency of use favors the possibility Paul's use of **τίθημι** is a perfective present which would align with the Hebrew over against the LXX. This is further validated if one considers the qal participle of **תָּשַׁׁיַּ** in 1QIs^b. Moreover, the witnesses of α' , σ' , and θ' suggest the possibility of a participle vocalization (**תָּשַׁׁיַּ**).¹⁷ The Targum and Peshitto also contain a participle.¹⁸ Nonetheless, whatever *Aktionsart* is denoted by **τίθημι**, the simple fact Paul's verbal usage nor tense-form agrees with the LXX shows support that Paul translated this from a Hebrew scroll.

¹⁵ Bill T. Arnold and John H. Choi, *A Guide to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, Second edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 66–67.

¹⁶ Scholars debate on whether a historical present must be in the third person. It is agreed that the vast majority (if not all) are third person. For more information, see Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 526–32.

¹⁷ Wagner, *Heralds of the Good News*, 128.

¹⁸ For a further analysis of the translation difficulties with the Hebrew verb, see J. J. M. Roberts, "Yahweh's Foundation in Zion (Isa 28:16)," *JBL* 106 (1987), 27–29.

b. *A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense.* Paul now inserts portions of Isa 8:14 into his quotation. Table 2 contains the MT and the LXX readings of Isa 8:14 and the two phrases of Paul in Rom 9:33.

Line	Isa 8:14 MT	Isa 8:14 LXX	Rom 9:33
1	וְהַיָּה לְמַקְשֵׁשׁ	εσται σοι εις ἀγίασμα	
2		καὶ οὐχ ὡς	
3	וְלֹא בָּן נָגָר	λίθου προσκόμματι	λίθον προσκόμματος
4	וְשָׁעַר מַכְשֹׁול	συναντήσεσθε αὐτῷ οὐδὲ ὡς	
5		πέτρας πτώματι	καὶ πέτραν σκανδάλου
6	לֹשֶׁבֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל לְפַח	ό δὲ οἶκος Ιακωβ ἐν παγίδι	
7	וְלֹמְזָקֵשׁ	καὶ ἐν κοιλάσματι	
8	לִיזְבָּם יְרוּשָׁלָם:	ἐγκαθήμενοι ἐν Ιερουσαλημ	

Paul says the Lord is laying in Zion a λίθον προσκόμματος καὶ πέτραν σκανδάλου. Lines 4, 5, and 6 of Isa 28:16 (see *Table 1*) are replaced with lines 3 and 5 of Isa 8:14. I will discuss the theological implications of this insertion and the omission of the cornerstone language in Isa 28:16 under the synthesis section. For now, I want to focus on the wording of Isa 8:14 Paul uses because it appears λίθον προσκόμματος comes from the LXX but πέτραν σκανδάλου from the Hebrew.¹⁹

Beginning with line 3, it is quite apparent this was most likely taken from the LXX. The wording of the LXX here is the same. Albeit, both words are in different cases but that is simply because the stumbling stone concept plays a different role in Isa 8:14 than in Rom 9:33.²⁰ Whereas in Rom 9:33 the imagery is the direct object, in Isa 8:14 the imagery functions as a

¹⁹ Christopher D. Stanley, *Paul and the Language of Scripture: Citation Technique in the Pauline Epistles and Contemporary Literature*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 69, ed. G. N. Stanton (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 122–23 says this entire section is closer to the Hebrew, but then suggests he is using a LXX edition that has been revised according to the Hebrew.

²⁰ Minuscules 301 and 538 have προσκομματος in Isa 8:14, but as Koch, “Isaiah 8,14 and 28,16 in Romans 9,33,” 233 points out, this is likely an attempt to match the LXX with Paul.

predicative nominative. Nonetheless, Paul follows the translation of the LXX. Furthermore, in the LXX, Isa 8:14 is the only point where *πρόσκομμα* translates נָגָר which suggests Paul used the LXX here. Thus, there is no need to consider Paul's use of the Hebrew here given the parallel wording of the LXX and Rom 9:33, but the same cannot be said for the next phrase.

When Paul goes from a stone of stumbling to a rock of offense (line 5), he does not follow the LXX in multiple ways. First, he completely omits line 4 of the LXX which has no parallel in the Hebrew.²¹ This omission shows the possible use of the Hebrew since Paul brings in the two surrounding phrases of lines 3 and 5 but not line 4. Second, the LXX reads *πέτρας πτώματι*. The difference lies in Paul's replacement of *πτῶμα* with *σκάνδαλον*. As pointed out by Stanley, *πτῶμα* is not found in the Pauline corpus but *σκάνδαλον* is quite frequent.²² So maybe Paul just replaced the wording of the LXX to better suit his linguistic style, but a look at the Hebrew suggests otherwise. The MT reads לְשׁוֹר מַכְשׂוֹל, and the word in question is מַכְשׂוֹל. Since Paul diverges from the LXX here, is it possible Paul translated מַכְשׂוֹל with *σκάνδαλον*? A survey of the MT and the LXX suggests yes.

There are three instances where the LXX translates מַכְשׂוֹל with *σκάνδαλον* (Lev 19:14; 1 Kgdms 25:31; Ps 118:165 (119:165 English). Perhaps most interesting is Lev 19:14 where Moses commands to never put a stumbling block (לְשׁוֹר מַכְשׂוֹל; *σκάνδαλον*) in front of a blind person lest he trip over it. Furthermore, these two have similar if not identical semantic uses. The word מַכְשׂוֹל brings into light an object that one stumbles over, i.e. a stumbling block.²³ Likewise, while *πρόσκομμα* would be a more literal translation of לְשׁוֹר מַכְשׂוֹל, Gustav Stählin points out that the closeness of meaning between *πρόσκομμα* and *σκάνδαλον* resulted in an assimilation of meaning

²¹ Wagner, *Heralds of the Good News*, 130 notes that οὐδὲ ὡς could be a loose equivalent for the Hebrew וְ and הַ which is present in the Hebrew, but συναντήσεσθε αὐτῷ clearly has no equivalent whatsoever.

²² Stanley, *Paul and the Language of Scripture*, 123.

²³ “לְשׁוֹר מַכְשׂוֹל.” HALOT 2:582.

between the two words.²⁴ Furthermore, Symmachus which is known for its attempt to better match the Hebrew also has *σκάνδαλον*. Given the closeness in semantics and the few occurrences where the LXX translates **לִשְׁבַּת** with *σκάνδαλον*, it may be concluded that Paul's *πέτραν* *σκανδάλου* is an appropriate translation of the Hebrew **לִשְׁזַר**.

3. *Whoever believes in him will not be put to shame*. Moving back to Isa 28:16 (and *Table 1* line references), Paul writes *καὶ ὁ πιστεύων ἐπ' αὐτῷ οὐ καταισχυνθήσεται*.²⁵ The major issues here are found in lines 7 and 8. Starting with line 7, the LXX contains the phrase *ἐπ' αὐτῷ*.²⁶ However, the Hebrew has no equivalent. Paul's inclusion of the LXX addition shows reliance on it here.

This sentence has numerous aspects worth mentioning. First, a major difference exists between Paul's version and the MT when it comes to verbal agreement in line 8. Where the MT reads “will not be in haste” (**וְיִתְחַרֵּךְ**), Paul says “will not be put to shame” (*καταισχυνθήσεται*). Meyer calls this verb a “deviation” from the original Hebrew **שׁוֹן**.²⁷ The more appropriate verb to be translated by *καταισχύνω* would be **בָּוַשׁ** as in Ps 71:1 (70:1 LXX). If the verb was from **בָּוַשׁ** and matched the tense-form, aspect, person, number, and gender of **שׁוֹן**, then it would read **יִבְּשַׁ**. Koch hypothesizes the translator saw the qal imperfect **יִבְּשַׁ** of **בָּוַשׁ**.²⁸ In either instance, it is easy to see how similar the two verbs look. While this is likely an instance of a graphical misreading

²⁴ Gustav Stählin, “*σκάνδαλον, σκανδαλίζω*,” *TDNT* 7:338–57, 341. Stählin even says that when *σκάνδαλον* translates **לִשְׁבַּת** it carries the same sense of a stumbling block.

²⁵ Numerous manuscripts include *πᾶς* before *ὁ πιστεύων*. The witnesses to this addition include four uncials (K, L, P, and Ψ), a plethora of minuscules, the Latin witnesses, and the sy^h; it is the majority text reading. However, this is likely a scribal assimilation of Paul's citation of the same verse in Rom 10:11 where he includes *πᾶς* which is not omitted in any extant manuscript. Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament: A Companion to the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament*, 3rd ed. (Germany: United Bible Societies, 1975), 324. However, Stanley, *Paul and the Language of Scripture*, 124 points out that of the LXX tradition, only one copy includes *πᾶς* in Isa 28:18. The so-called heavy hitters of K, A, and B do not include *πᾶς*. Given these three facts, it is likely the original reading does not include the word. However, even if it does, the meaning would hardly be altered.

²⁶ B does not have *ἐπ' αὐτῷ* in Isa 8:14.

²⁷ Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer, *Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The New Testament Handbook to the Epistle to the Romans*, trans. John C. Moore, Edwin Johnson, and William P. Dickson, vol. 1, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1874), 166. Likewise, William Sanday and Arthur C. Headlam, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 5th ed., ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1992), 281 states Paul's verb is “either an incorrect translation of the Hebrew, or based on a different reading.”

²⁸ Koch, “Isaiah 8,14 and 28,16 in Romans 9,33,” 227.

by the LXX translators, given Paul's verbal agreement with the LXX, its use must be defended. The synthesis section will show that the difference in these two verbs contextually points toward the same thing: deliverance from judgment. Thus, while it is a peculiar translation, it does not provide a total change to the passage's meaning.²⁹

Furthermore, the use of *καταισχυνθήσεται* is interesting because it doesn't seem to agree with the MT or the LXX. It is closer to the LXX than the MT since it is the same verb (*καταισχύνω*), but Paul's version of it doesn't fully agree with the LXX either (and therefore Peter as well who follows the LXX). A textual variant exists (*μη καταισχυνθῆ*); however, this is likely an attempt to bring Paul in accord with the LXX and Peter. The only witnesses for the variant are D, F, and G. The evidence is overwhelmingly for *καταισχυνθήσεται* which is also used in Paul's citation of Isa 28:16 in Rom 10:11.

It may seem important to note Paul's change from the aorist passive subjunctive of the LXX to the future passive indicative, but ultimately, there is no real change in meaning here. Given the context of Isa 28:16 *καταισχυνθῆ* is futuristic which matches the future use of the verb in Rom 9:33. Furthermore, both verbs convey perfective aspect which is required to speak of events that will not take place.³⁰ Whether Paul used *καταισχυνθῆ* or *καταισχυνθήσεται* does not affect the meaning; those who believe in Christ will not be put to shame in the future.

Another change regarding the verb is Paul's removal of the double negation *οὐ μὴ*. Hon Lee Kwok says the change from an aorist subjunctive to a future indicative resulted in the

²⁹ This does not mean Paul is saying the MT is incorrect. Neither does this mean Paul is saying the LXX is inspired. Instead, it suggests that Paul, living on the other side of the Christ's incarnation, agrees with the Messianic hope of the LXX translators. The phenomena when a NT author agrees with the LXX over the MT is appropriately called derivative authority by Greg Lanier and William A., *The Septuagint: What It Is and Why It Matters* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2021), 167–90. When this occurs, the LXX text is given authority only as much as the NT author uses it. See also *WCF* 1.6 and 1.9.

³⁰ Constantine R. Campbell, *Basics of Verbal Aspect in Biblical Greek*, eBook (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2018), chap. 7. For a more detailed discussion of the relationship between the future and aorist subjunctive, see C. F. D. Moule, *An Idiom Book of New Testament Greek*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960), 20–23.

“corollary” change of the double negative *οὐ μὴ* in the LXX to just *οὐ*.³¹ However, *οὐ μὴ* can be used with the future indicative.³² The removal of the double negation, then, was purposeful of Paul. While the lack of the double negation loses an emphatic sense of negation, the meaning is still the same. So, maybe this was a linguistic choice by Paul who didn’t like to use the double negation with the future, but in Gal 4:30 where he cites Gen 21:10, he does use *οὐ μὴ* with *κληρονομήσει* even though the LXX only has *οὐ*. Thus, there is uncertainty here. Paul could’ve used the double negation *οὐ μὴ*, but he chose not to.³³ A convincing reason cannot be found for Paul’s change here or in Rom 10:11, but the meaning is still the same with the soft negation. It is just less emphatic of a negation.

3. *Summary.* This study of Paul’s use of Isa 8:14 and 28:16 in Rom 9:33 has shown Paul not only used the LXX but also translated from the Hebrew in his conflated citation of the two verses. There is a clear dependence of the LXX in the final clause of Rom 9:33 (lines 7 and 8 of *Table 1*), but at other points, the evidence suggests Paul translated from the Hebrew. The following table summarizes these findings.³⁴

Table 3	
Rom 9:33	
<i>ἰδοὺ τίθημι ἐν Σιών λίθον προσκόμματος καὶ πέτραν σκανδάλου, καὶ ὁ πιστεύων ἐπ’ αὐτῷ οὐ καταισχυνθήσεται</i>	

Isa 8:14 MT	Isa 8:14 LXX	Isa 28:16 MT	Isa 28:16 LXX
שׁׁדָּקָמָלָה וְיִהְיֶה	ἔσται σοι εἰς ἀγίασμα	לְנִזְנָה אָמָר אֶלְעָנָה	διὰ τοῦτο οὕτως λέγει κύριος יְהוָה

³¹ Hon Lee Kwok, “The Use of Isaiah in the Pauline Letters with Special Reference to His Self-Conception of being an Apostle to the Gentiles” (PhD diss., The University of Edinburgh, 2009), 132–33.

³² E.g. Matt 26:35. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, 468.

³³ Paul uses the double negation with the aorist in Rom 4:8; 10:18; 1 Cor 8:13; 5:16; 1 Thess 4:15; 5:3. He uses it twice with the present (1 Cor 9:4; 5). The only instance where it occurs with the future in the Pauline corpus is Gal 4:30.

³⁴ A single underline indicates Rom 9:33 matches with the LXX. A bold underline indicates Paul agrees with the Hebrew instead of the LXX. A double underline means the word could be translated from the Hebrew or taken from the LXX.

καὶ οὐχ ὡς	הַנּוּ יָסֵךְ
וְלֹא בָּנוּ גַּגְתָּ	וְלֹא בָּנוּ אַבָּנוּ
συναντήσεσθε αὐτῷ	εἰς τὰ θεμέλια Σιων λίθου
οὐδὲ ὡς	אַבָּנוּ בְּחָנוּ
וְלֹא צָרָב מִכְשֹׁלָן	πολυτελῆ ἐκλεκτὸν
לֹא יָנִי בְּתִי יְשָׁרָאֵל לְפָנָי	פָּנָת יִקְרָת ἀκρογωνιαῖον ἔντιμον
וְלֹא מִקְשָׁלָן	מָוֶסֶד מוֹסֵד εἰς τὰ θεμέλια αὐτῆς
לֹא יָשַׁב יְרוּשָׁלָם:	הַמִּזְבֵּחַ καὶ ὁ πιστεύων ἐπ' αὐτῷ
Ιερουσαλημ	לֹא יִחַשׁ ֤וּ μὴ καταισχυνθַּיְ

II. A CONTEXTUAL AND STRUCTURAL UNDERSTANDING OF ISAIAH 28:16; 8:14; AND ROMANS 9:33

1. *Isaiah 28:16*. The verse that makes up the majority of Paul's citation comes from a section focused on judgment. After the so-called apocalyptic section of Isa 24–27, Isaiah switches to a series of woes. The opening word of chapter 28 is *הִזֵּה* which has not occurred since 18:1; however, it occurs 6x in 28–33 (28:1; 29:1; 15; 30:1; 31:1; 33:1) suggesting we are in a section focused on judgment. Zooming in on the more immediate context, the theme of judgment also comes to the forefront; however, 28:16 plays a unique role amid all the judgment language of 28:15–18. Isaiah's rhythmic prose has placed the message of salvation in 28:16 as the centerpiece of these verses. The following table shows how 28:15–18 is composed of a series of bicolons.³⁵

Table 4

Bicolon	Colon	Isa 28:15–18 MT
A	1	כְּרֹתָנוּ בְּרִית אַתְּמֹות
	2	וְעַם-שָׂאֹל עַשְׁיָנוּ הַזֹּה

³⁵ This table omits the prophetic introduction of verses 15 and 16. Also, because this is rhythmic prose and not poetry, a fixed syllable symmetry should not be expected. However, one should still expect symmetry on concepts between each colon of a bicolon which holds true.

B	3	שָׁיט שׁוֹטָךְ בַּיִ-עַבְרָ
	4	לֹא יָבֹא נָנוֹ
C	5	כִּי שְׁמַנוּ בָּזָב מִחְסָנוֹ
	6	וּבְשָׁקָר נִסְתְּרָנוּ
D	7	הָנָנִי יִסְדּ בְּצִוּן אָבִוָּן
	8	אָבָוָן בְּחָן פְּנַת יִקְרָת מָוסֵד מוֹשֵׁךְ
E	9	הַפְּאָמִין
	10	לֹא יִחְיֶשׁ
F	11	וִשְׁמַתִּי מִשְׁפָּט לְלָנוֹ
	12	וִצְדָּקָה לִמְשָׁקָלָת
G	13	וַיַּעֲהַ בָּרְדָּל מִחְסָה בָּזָב
	14	וּסְתָּר מִים יִשְׁטְפוּ
H	15	וְכָפֵר בְּרִיתְכֶּם אֶת-מְוֹתָה
	16	וְתַזְוִתְכֶם אֶת-שְׂאֹול לֹא תָקָומָ
I	17	שָׁוט שׁוֹטָךְ בַּיִ-עַבְרָ
	18	וְהִיִּתֶם לֹא לִמְרָמָס

There are a couple aspects of this structure worth noting. First, there is a clear rhetorical effect indicated by the contrasting bicola. A contrasts with H, B with I, C with G, and D with F. Second, there is almost a literary *chiasm* here, but Isaiah did not invert bicola A (H) and B (I) at the end.³⁶ Nonetheless, there is a thematic *chiasm*:

- A. Covenant with death: protection from judgment (Bicola A and B)
- B. False security and shelter (Bicolon C)
- C. Foundation of the cornerstone (Bicolon D)
- D. Salvation from belief (Bicolon E)
- C'. Foundation of justice and righteousness (Bicolon F).
- B'. False security and shelter destroyed (Bicolon G).
- A'. Covenant with death: destruction from judgment (Bicola H and I).

Another possibility with the same center but a different structure is as follows:

³⁶ Perhaps A and B were written as a rare tetracolon and that is why Isaiah does not invert the relationship between the two bicola at the end.

- A. Covenant with death: protection from judgment (Bicola A and B)
- B. False security and shelter (Bicolon C)
 - C. Salvation and hope (Bicola D, E, and F)
 - B'. False security and shelter destroyed (Bicolon G).
- A'. Covenant with death: destruction from judgment (Bicola H and I).

Whether the first or second thematic *chiasm* is to be preferred, the structural center remains the same: salvation and hope. In his commentary, J. Alec Motyer appropriately calls verses 16–17a (what I have labeled as C in the second *chiasm*) “true security” in contrast with Jerusalem’s false alternatives.³⁷ In sum, in its original context, Isa 28:16 functions as a message of salvation in the middle of judgment.

2. *Isaiah 8:14*. The historical setting of Isa 8 is the Syro-Ephramite agreement threatening King Ahaz of Judah.³⁸ Instead, of turning to God for help, Ahaz looked to the Assyrians for deliverance (2 Kings 16:7; 2 Chron 28:16). Isa 8:5–8 shows the Lord’s response to Judah’s betrayal is that it is Assyria who will become their folly. Ahaz turned to Assyria for help, but in the end, Assyria will be their doom. Verse 11 serves as a warning to Isaiah to not follow in Judah’s ways but to trust in the **יְהוָה צְבָאֹות** (Lord of hosts). The object of Isaiah’s trust is important to note because verse 14 begins with the masculine third person **וְהִנֵּה** which raises the question of who the implied “he” is. The most obvious referent, both linguistically and semantically, is the Lord of hosts.

The title Lord of hosts consists of the covenantal name **יְהוָה** and the noun **צְבָאֹות** which comes from the militaristic verb **צָבָא**. The use of **צְבָאֹות** occurs exclusively as a divine epithet,³⁹ and one of the themes it helps carry along is the divine warrior theme. The Lord, as a divine

³⁷ J. A. Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1993), 233.

³⁸ Dane C. Ortlund, “The Insanity of Faith: Paul’s Theological Use of Isaiah in Romans 9:33,” *TJ* 30 (2009): 269–88, 270.

³⁹ Wilhelm Zobel, “**צְבָאֹות**,” *TDOT* 12:215–231, 215.

warrior, vanquishes his enemies, and here, God's chosen people have become an enemy.⁴⁰ They too will be destroyed. They will stumble over the stumbling stone. This result of Israel's disobedience is thematically placed at the center of Isa 8:9–22:⁴¹

- A. Judgment of destruction (8:9)
- B. Vein counsel (8:10)
 - C. Isaiah given a warning (8:11–13)
 - D. The result of Israel's disobedience (8:14–15)
- C'. Isaiah gives instructions to heed the warning (8:16–18)
- B'. Vein counsel (8:19–20)
- A'. Judgment of destruction (8:21–22)

Zooming into 8:14–15, we see the severity of Israel's disobedience through the repetitive use of a 'י of result. The Lord of hosts will become a sanctuary, a stone of offense, a rock of stumbling, a trap, and a snare to his people (8:14). As there are five examples of what the Lord is going to become in 8:14, there are also five verbs in 8:15 used to explain what is going to happen as a result. Israel is going to stumble (**כָּשֵׁל**), fall (**נִפְלֶה**), be shattered (**שִׁבְרָה**), caught in a snare (**יִקְשַׁר**), and taken away (**לִכְדָּה**). This language suggests a complete destruction with no hope. The LXX inserts a positive translation at the end of verse 15 (*καὶ ἀλώσονται ἀνθρώποι ἐν ἀσφαλείᾳ ὄντες*), but there is no reason to include a note of hope at the end. The Hebrew lacks it altogether, and the context does not support such a rendering either. To summarize, Isa 8:14 is the center of a judgment oracle focused on the rebellious actions of Israel. Because of their sin, they will encounter the Lord of hosts as a stumbling block and a rock of offense.

3. *Romans* 9:33. Paul's conflated citation of Isa 28:16 and 8:14 occurs in the Israel narrative of Rom 9–11.⁴² Its immediate context is Rom 9:30–33, but there is debate on whether or not this section serves as a conclusion to the previous unit (9:6–29) or an introduction to the

⁴⁰ While the immediate context suggests Isaiah is speaking to Judah, verse 15 tells us both houses of Israel will fall over the stumbling stone.

⁴¹ The following *chiasm* is a decently modified one of the *chiasm* found in Motyer, *Isaiah*, 93. Motyer has his A (v. 9) / B (v. 10) / C (v. 11) / D (v. 12) / E (v. 13) / E' (v. 14a) / D' (vv. 14b–15) / C' (vv. 16–18) / B' (vv. 19–20) / A' (vv. 21–22).

⁴² Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 469.

following one (10:1–13). Rom 9:30 begins with the saying *Tί οὖν ἐποῦμεν*. Grammatically, this phrase could serve as a transition to a conclusion or introduction.⁴³ The question revolves around how the logical conjunction *οὖν* is being used. If it is inferential, it serves as a summary of the preceding unit. If it is transitional, it introduces the next unit.⁴⁴ Moo argues it is to be seen as transitional given the similar vocabulary of 9:30–33 with the following unit.⁴⁵ The following section also includes another citation to Isa 28:16 which thematically links the two units (Rom 9:11). However, 9:6–29 focuses on whether God’s word has failed since ethnic Israel was not saved; 9:30–33 would serve as an appropriate conclusion to Paul’s argument there. However, 9:6–29 focuses on the Gentiles and spiritual-ethnic Israel whereas 9:30–33 speaks about ethnic Israel which is carried along in 10:1–3. So, I conclude it is more appropriate on a grammatical level to place 9:30–33 in the following unit, but it still must be interpreted in light of the truths found in 9:6–29.

The truths of 9:6–29 tell us that all Israel does not belong to Israel (9:6); in fact, there is a remnant of Israel that will be saved (9:27). Furthermore, God has called Gentiles into his family (9:24)! Paul goes on to explain this is because non-spiritual ethnic Israel pursued a works righteousness. Righteousness (*δικαιοσύνη*) occurs 3x within four words (English translations cannot replicate this smoothly) which suggests it is a key theme of the passage.⁴⁶ In total, the word occurs 9x in 9:30–10:13. Paul is contrasting righteousness by works and righteousness by faith.⁴⁷ Righteousness by faith is the antithesis to the Jewish belief of a righteousness based on

⁴³ This saying occurs 6x in Romans (4:1; 6:1; 7:7; 8:31; 9:14; 9:30) and its parallel *Tί οὖν* occurs 6x in the letter (3:1; 9; 6:15; 6:21; 9:19; 11:7). There are no clear rules for these uses; thus, they are not too helpful in the discussion that follows.

⁴⁴ See Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, 673–74.

⁴⁵ Douglas J. Moo, *The Letter to the Romans*, 2nd ed., NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018), 636.

⁴⁶ James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, WBC 38B (Dallas: Word, 1988), 580.

⁴⁷ Scholars who adhere to the New Perspective on Paul would say the righteousness based on works is not speaking of justification but of “staying in” covenantal requirements. This view of Paul requires a different understanding of Second Temple Judaism than the traditional works righteousness one. For a critique on how NPP views Second Temple Judaism, view the grand slam work Robert J. Cara, *Cracking the Foundation of the New Perspective on Paul: Covenantal Nomism Versus Reformed Covenantal Theology*, Reformed, Exegetical, and Doctrinal Studies (Geanies House, Fearn, Ross-shire: Christian Focus, 2017).

works.⁴⁸ Spiritual-ethnic Israel pursued righteousness by faith, Paul implies, but non-Spiritual-ethnic Israel pursued righteousness based on the works of the law which can justify no man (3:20). Because of this, non-spiritual-ethnic Israel will not be saved but judged. Paul then goes on to explain how this happened and what non-spiritual-ethnic Israel missed.

Before Paul's explicit conflated citation, he most likely alludes to Isa 8:14 in Rom 9:32 when he writes *προσέκοψαν τῷ λίθῳ τοῦ προσκόμματος*. The conflated citation in 9:33 serves as a bridge that explains the stumbling stone message by equating stone to "him" (*αὐτῷ*).⁴⁹ The referent has not yet been identified, but in the following verses, Paul says Christ is the end (*τέλος*) of the law (9:4).⁵⁰ What this means (in part) is that the law pointed to Christ; he is the fulfillment of it. Anyone who pursued the law not looking to Christ by faith, pursued the law by works (i.e. non-spiritual-ethnic Israel). Paul says they have a zeal for God, but their zeal is not *κατ' ἐπίγνωσιν* (10:2; cf. Gal 1:14). Or, their zeal for God is a zeal for the law itself and not for Christ who is the *τέλος* the law. Because of this, they will be judged. It is only those who believe in Christ that will not be *καταισχυνθήσεται* (put to shame) as Paul says in Rom 9:33.

III. HERMENEUTICAL SYNTHESIS

1. *The solution.* Having now examined the differences between Rom 9:33 with Isa 8:14 and 28:16 and placed each verse in their respective context, it is now appropriate to see if Paul's alterations of the two Isaianic verses are a faithful understanding of the text. This section will not reference all of the findings of the first section. Instead, the focus will be the major issues such as Paul's insertion of Isa 8:14, his agreement with the "in him" of the LXX, and whether or not *καταισχύνω* changes Isaiah's original meaning.

⁴⁸ Herman Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology*, trans. John Richard de Witt (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 246.

⁴⁹ Since *αὐτός* is second declension, it could be a neuter and not a masculine. However, the language of believing suggests a personal trust in a person, not an object.

⁵⁰ Space does not allow for a discussion of this phrase, but needless to say, it is a hot topic in scholarship.

a. *The interpolation of Isa 8:14.* Arguably the most problematic portion of Paul's citation is that he brings in a completely different verse into Isa 28:16. However, this *problem* is easily explained when looking at the context of two Isaianic verses. As shown, Isa 28:16 is a sliver of hope amid judgment. The central focus of its context (whether following the first or second *chiasm* I presented) is on salvation. Paul captures that message since he includes the end of 28:16. However, he purposely leaves out the cornerstone imagery (more hope) and replaces it with imagery of judgment.

This substitution is more than warranted given the context of Rom 9:33. Paul is speaking about the judgment on non-spiritual-ethnic Israel because of their pursuit of righteousness by works. He does not want his message to these people to be all about hope. If Paul had not inserted Isa 8:14, then the citation would be entirely about hope which would be counterproductive to Paul's goal. The interpolation, then, serves to establish the judgment of non-spiritual-ethnic Israel which is Paul's chief concern in Rom 9:30–33. This being said, it makes more sense for Paul to insert Isa 8:14 into 28:16 rather than citing only 28:16.

b. *The insertion of “in him”.* While the MT does not have a parallel phrase, the fact Paul follows the LXX here further serves his theological point of the passage. Paul's attempt to dichotomize a righteousness by faith and a righteousness by works is textually supported by the keeping of this prepositional phrase. Paul explains that belief must be in a person, namely Jesus Christ. There is a specific object of belief. If Paul had removed the LXX addition, one could still reach that conclusion, but it would be more difficult and carry less weight. Thus, Paul's keeping of ἐπ' αὐτῷ is appropriate, but does such a statement hold for the context of Isa 28:16?

Isaiah does not explicitly tell his audience who to believe in, but the context points towards the cornerstone (גָּתָה) of the previous colon. Now it must be shown that it was appropriate for Paul to identify the cornerstone with Christ. 1 Peter 2:6 applies the cornerstone

language directly to Christ, but are there any earlier sources messianically interpreted the cornerstone imagery? 1QS 8:1 sees the cornerstone language as eschatological in nature and applies the imagery to the community itself. 1QH 6:26–27 uses stone and plumb line language like Isa 28:16–17 in an eschatological manner.⁵¹ In light of this, it can be said Paul’s eschatological interpretation is warranted but his Christological one is not. However, such a disjunction between eschatology and Christology denies not only the impact of the Christ event but the reality of it. Living in a time after Christ’s humiliation and his works therein, Paul is within reason to view the eschatological cornerstone as Christ. Jesus himself applies cornerstone language to himself when he cites Ps 118:22 in Matt 21:41; Mark 12:10–11; and Luke 20:17. The intertestamental witnesses speak of an eschatological understanding of Isa 28:16, and the early Christians believed Christ to be the eschatological fulfillment of the cornerstone in Zion. Paul’s interpretation is in accord with these beliefs.

c. *The verbal disagreement.* Even though Paul followed the LXX in the peculiar translation of the verbal root שׁׁמַן with καταισχύνω, the meaning of Isa 28:16 is kept in full. The role καταισχύνω plays in Rom 9:33 is to explain the benefits of believing in the stumbling stone. Those who believe will be saved from judgment. Similarly, Isaiah’s use of שׁׁמַן is to tell his readers what will happen if they believe in the cornerstone: they will be saved from the coming judgment. Although the word choice is certainly interesting, Isaiah’s focus on salvation from judgment is not lost in Paul’s citation; it is faithfully kept.

2. *Summary.* The above study of the three major textual problems with Paul’s citation shows that these issues do not make Paul’s interpretation unfaithful. The interpolation of Isa 8:14 into 28:16 further helps Paul prove his point that judgment is coming to those who pursue righteousness based on works. The fact that Paul kept the LXX addition of “in him” does not

⁵¹ These two examples were taken from Ortlund, *The Insanity of Faith*, 278.

alter Isaiah's meaning either; instead, it interprets the cornerstone language of Isa 28:16 in light of Christ which is more than appropriate given the eschatological interpretations found in Second Temple Judaism and the early Christian community. Lastly, the verbal disagreement at the end of Paul's citation does not change the meaning found in Isaiah. Whoever believes will be saved from judgment. In sum, none of the textual issues that would lead to Paul giving an unfaithful interpretation of Isa 8:14 and 28:16 prove that argument.

IV. CONCLUSION

I have argued that the philosophy and methodology Paul uses in his citation of Isa 8:14 and 28:16 in Rom 9:33 is faithful in light of his redemptive-historical setting. I attempted to show this in three phases. I first examined the textual issues with Paul's citation. I then looked at the context and structure of the three verses in question. Finally, I showed that the most problematic textual issues with Paul's citation do not unfaithfully alter Isaiah's meaning by examining the issues in light of the context and structure of Isa 8:14; 28:16; and Rom 9:33. From this, I concluded that Paul's use of these verses is faithful to the fuller meaning of the two Isaianic texts in light of Christ. Those who pursue a righteousness by works will stumble over Christ, the stumbling stone, and be judged. However, those who pursue a righteousness by faith and believe in Christ will be saved from judgment.