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DID JESUS SAY THAT? A PROSOPOLOGICAL-CONTEXTUAL-TYPOLOGICAL  
INTERPRETATION OF PAUL'S QUOTATION OF PSALM 69:9b IN ROMANS 15:3

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# DID JESUS SAY THAT? A PROSOLOGICAL-CONTEXTUAL-TYOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION OF PAUL’S QUOTATION OF PSALM 69:9b IN ROMANS 15:3

## Introduction

The main question I seek to address in this paper is, “Is Jesus somehow the speaker of Psalm 69:9b in Romans 15:3?”<sup>1</sup> To answer this question, I provide a brief overview of prosopological exegesis (hereafter PE), including some of the accusations leveled against it. Primary among those accusations are that PE is a non-contextual form of exegesis and that proponents of PE denigrate typology. I suggest that Paul does use a hermeneutical method at least analogous to PE. To show this, I first review Matthew Bates’ exposition of Romans 15:3-4. I then present my exposition of the same passage, showing that the form of PE that Paul employs does not erase the significance of the context of Psalm 69 for Romans 15, nor the typological connection between David and Christ. The need for PE stems from an impulse in the New Testament (NT) text itself to find more than a type in the Old Testament (OT). I conclude that a form of PE can be held that is sensitive to the original context of OT texts, and allows for a robust understanding of typology. One requires a prosopological-contextual-typological understanding of Romans 15:3 to do justice to both the divine and human authorship of scripture.

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<sup>1</sup> For Greek and Hebrew texts of Romans 15:3, Psalm 68:10 LXX, and Psalm 69:10 MT with translation, see the Appendix. Little need be said textually. Paul exactly quotes the LXX, which in turn matches the MT.

## Who is Speaking in Romans 15:3?

The suggestion that Christ speaks in Romans 15:3 is prompted by the consideration that Paul appears to quote Psalm 69:9b as a proof that Christ did not please himself. Many commentators believe Paul makes Christ the speaker of these words,<sup>2</sup> though a significant number of commentators do not see Christ speaking here.<sup>3</sup> These lists do not fall along denominational

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<sup>2</sup> Of the commentators I have consulted, those who see Christ as the speaker include Matthew W. Bates, *The Hermeneutics of the Apostolic Proclamation: The Center of Paul's Method of Scriptural Interpretation* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2012), 240–55; Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, Mich: Eerdmans, 1996), 868; Robert H. Mounce, *Romans*, NAC 27, ed. E. Ray Clendenen and David S. Dockery (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1995), 260; Hendriksen, *Romans*, 470; Mark A. Seifrid, “Romans,” in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 686; C. E. B. Cranfield, *The Epistle to the Romans*, vol. 2 of ICC, ed. J. A. Emerton, C. E. B. Cranfield, and G. N. Stanton (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1979), 733; Frank J. Matera, *Romans*, Paideia (Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker Academic, 2010), 321; David E. Garland, *Romans: An Introduction and Commentary*, ed. Nicholas Perrin, TNTC, ed. Eckhard J. Schnabel (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2021), 234, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=2802610&site=ehost-live>; John Paul Heil, *Romans – Paul's Letter of Hope*, AnBib 112 (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1987), 92; Grant R. Osborne, *Romans*, IVPNTC 6 (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2004), 376; Roy A Harrisville, *Romans*, ACNT (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1980), 230–31; Thompson, *Clothed with Christ*, 222–23; Michael P. Middendorf, *Romans 9-16*, vol. 2 of *ConcC*, ed. Dean O. Wenthe and Curtis P. Giese (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2016), 1455; William Sanday and Arthur C. Headlam, *The Epistle to the Romans*, ICC (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark Ltd., 1895), 395; Ernst Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley and Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1980), 380–81; Anthony Tyrrell Hanson, *The New Testament Interpretation of Scripture* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1980), 15–16; Robert Jewett and Roy David Kotansky, *Romans: A Commentary*, ed. Eldon Jay Epp, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007); James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, vol. 2 of *WBC 38B* (Dallas: Word Books, Publisher, 1988), 838–39; Richard B. Hays, “Christ Prays the Psalms: Paul's Use of an Early Christian Exegetical Convention,” in *The Future of Christology: Essays in Honor of Leander E. Keck*, ed. Abraham J. Malherbe and Wayne A. Meeks (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993); Arland J. Hultgren, *Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2011), 525; Brendan Byrne, *Romans*, SP, ed. Daniel J. Harrington (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1996), 425; Scott Hahn, *Romans*, CCSS, ed. Peter S. Williamson and Mary Healy (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017), 259; Siu Fung Wu, “Participating in God's Purpose by Following the Cruciform Pattern of Christ: The Use of Psalm 69:9b in Romans 15:3,” *JSPL* 5.1 (2015): 4; Callia Rulmu, “The Use of Psalm LXIX,9 in Romans XV,3: Shame as Sacrifice,” *BTB* 40.4 (2010): 230; Josiah D Hall, “‘With’ Not ‘for’: An Alternative Reading of Paul's Use of Psalm 68.10b OG in Romans 15.3,” *NTS* 67.4 (2021): 628, <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0028688521000187>; Sarah Heaner Lancaster, *Romans: A Theological Commentary on the Bible*, vol. First edition of *Belief: A Theological Commentary on the Bible* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2015), 246, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=1081934&site=ehost-live>; John Gill, *An Exposition of the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans*, The Newport Commentary Series (Springfield, MO: Particular Baptist Press, 2002), 547; Francis Watson, *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith*, Second edition. (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016), 58; Abelard, *Romans*, 372 (by implication); Gorman, *Romans*, 179 (probably); Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, trans. Edwyn C. Hoskyns (London: Oxford University Press, 1933), 525 (probably).

<sup>3</sup> Of the commentators I have consulted, those who have not seen Christ as the speaker include Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, BECNT 6 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1998), 522; Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2016), 707, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=1239548&site=ehost-live>; Frank Thielman, *Romans*, ZECNT 6, ed. Clinton E. Arnold (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2018), 656–57; Charles Hodge, *A Commentary on Romans* (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth

lines (though I admit up front that many reformed commentators do not treat Christ as the speaker in Romans 15:3). The logic for those who see Christ as the speaker appears to be, “Paul says in 3a that Christ did not please himself, and then explains that with a quote from Psalm 69 in 3b where the subject speaks to God. Because the subject of the quote clearly illustrates someone not pleasing himself, then the subject of the quote in Paul’s mind must in some way be Christ.” Not all agree on *how* the subject is Christ. Yet the inference that Christ is portrayed as speaking arises from a plain reading of the text. I assert that a form of PE can account for Paul’s use of Psalm 69:9b here.

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Trust, 1972), 433; Robert Haldane, *An Exposition of the Epistle to the Romans* (Marshallton, DE: The National Foundation for Christian Education, 1970), 610; Kenneth Boa and William Kruidenier, *Romans*, HNTC, ed. Max Anders (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 430; Colin G. Kruse, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, PNTC, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2012), 529; Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, PNTC, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids, Mich. : Leicester, England: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988), 499; John Calvin, *Commentary on The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans*, ed. and trans. John Owen (Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, n.d.), <http://www.ccel.org>, at Rom 15:1-3; Martin Luther, *Lectures on Romans*, ed. Hilton C. Oswald, trans. Jacob A. O. Preus, LW 30, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1972), 515; David G. Peterson, *Romans*, EBTC, ed. T. Desmond Alexander, Thomas R. Schreiner, and Andreas J. Köstenberger (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2020), 503; C. H. Dodd, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans* (London: Hodder and Stoughton Limited, 1932), 221; Barnabas Lindars, *New Testament Apologetic: The Doctrinal Significance of the Old Testament Quotations* (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1961), 103–4; Leonhard Goppelt, *Typos: The Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament in the New*, trans. Donald H. Madvig (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1982), 225; C. Marvin Pate, *Romans*, Teach the Text Commentary Series, ed. Mark L. Strauss (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2013), 279; R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961), 859; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 33, ed. William Foxwell Albright and David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 702–3; Frederic Louis Godet, *Commentary on Romans* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1977), 468; John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, vol. 2 of *NICNT* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1960), 198; Craig S. Keener, *Romans: A New Covenant Commentary*, New Covenant Commentary Series (Cambridge: The Lutterworth Press, 2009), 171, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=813805&site=ehost-live>; Aaron Sherwood, *Romans: A Structural, Thematic, and Exegetical Commentary* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2020), 262, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=2916697&site=ehost-live>; Scott J. Hafemann, “Eschatology and Ethics: The Future of Israel and the Nations in Romans 15:1-13,” *TynBul* 51.2 (2000): 164; C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1957), 269; Franz J. Leenhardt, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1961), 362; John Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans*, ed. George B. Stevens, trans. J. B. Morris and W. H. Simcox, NPNF 1 11, ed. Philip Schaff (New York: The Christian Literature Company, 1889), 536; Steve Mosher, *God’s Power, Jesus’ Faith, and World Mission: A Study in Romans* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1996), 293; Ben Witherington III and Darlene Hyatt, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2004), 342; Peter Stuhlmacher, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans: A Commentary*, trans. Scott J. Hafemann (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994), 230.

## A Brief Introduction to Prosopological Exegesis

As a source of academic inquiry, PE surfaced in the twentieth century in studies concerning OT exegesis in church fathers such as Tertullian and Justin Martyr.<sup>4</sup> Matthew Bates defines PE as

a reading technique whereby an interpreter seeks to overcome a real or perceived ambiguity regarding the identity of the speakers or addressees (or both) in the divinely inspired source text by assigning nontrivial prosopa (i.e., nontrivial vis-à-vis the "plain sense" of the text) to the speakers or addressees (or both) in order to make sense of the text.<sup>5</sup>

That the Fathers who received a Greco-Roman schooling would employ this rhetorical practice of seeking to identify an ambiguous speaker in a dialogical text is beyond question.<sup>6</sup> according to Bates PE is described in the writings of Quintilian (ca. 35–100 AD), Philo of Alexandria (ca. 20 BC–50 AD) and even Aristarchus of Samothrace (ca. 214–144 BC). Bates argues further that PE can be found in the writings of the New Testament. Jesus' exegesis of Psalm 110 in Mark 12:35–37, Peter's exegesis of Psalms 16 and 110 in Acts 2:25–35, and the author of Hebrews' scripture catena in Hebrews 1:5–13 all reflect PE.<sup>7</sup> Bates then goes to argue for six instances where Paul employs PE, one of which is Romans 15:3.<sup>8</sup> These instances of PE in scripture frequently identify moments of dialogue that occur during stages in the protocreedal, kerygmatic narrative that Paul

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<sup>4</sup> For a brief history of PE, see Michael Slusser, "The Exegetical Roots of Trinitarian Theology," TS 49.3 (1988): 461–76. For a more in-depth discussion of PE, see chapter four of Bates, *Hermeneutics of Apostolic Proclamation*, 183–221.

<sup>5</sup> Bates, *Hermeneutics of Apostolic Proclamation*, 218. He further defines "plain sense" as "the narrative or poetic sequence (ἱστορία) or the 'exact wording' (κατὰ τὸν λόγον) or the *verba* of the text, apart from appeal to any extratextual *res* to which these *verba* might be thought to point." See 218, note 117.

<sup>6</sup> The classic example comes from Justin Martyr's *First Apology*, where he states, "But when you hear the utterances of the prophets spoken as it were personally, you must not suppose that they are spoken by the inspired themselves, but by the Divine Word who moves them. For sometimes He declares things that are to come to pass, in the manner of one who foretells the future; sometimes He speaks as from the person of God the Lord and Father of all; sometimes as from the person of Christ; sometimes as from the person of the people answering the Lord or His Father, just as you can see even in your own writers, one man being the writer of the whole, but introducing the persons who converse." See Justin Martyr, *The First Apology of Justin*, ANF 1, ed. Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe (Buffalo: The Christian Literature Company, 1885), chap. 36.

<sup>7</sup> Bates, *Hermeneutics of Apostolic Proclamation*, 212–15.

<sup>8</sup> See Bates, *Hermeneutics of Apostolic Proclamation*, 223–328.

employs as a hermeneutical grid.<sup>9</sup> when reading the OT. Hence PE is a key piece of Bates' argument that Paul "received, utilized, and extended an apostolic kerygmatic narrative tradition centered on certain key events in the Christ story as his primary interpretative lens."<sup>10</sup>

PE has created a wide range of responses in the reformed and evangelical world. Historical and systematic theologians have come to appreciate and herald it as a key piece in the development of trinitarian doctrine.<sup>11</sup> PE has also made its way into exegetical studies of the book of Hebrews.<sup>12</sup> Other scholars, primarily in the world of biblical studies, have been more hesitant. It is doubtful whether PE, or PE-analogous techniques were employed by the apostles,<sup>13</sup> and it is claimed that PE ignores texts in their intended contexts and disregards biblical typology.<sup>14</sup> PE is accused of

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<sup>9</sup> Bates, *Hermeneutics of Apostolic Proclamation*, 108. These eight kerygmatic stages, which are derived from 1 Cor 15 and Rom 1 are, "(1) preexistence, (2) human life in the line of David, (3) death in behalf of our sins, (4) burial, (5) existence among the dead ones, (6) resurrection on the third day, (7) initial appearances, and (8) installation as 'Son-of-God-in-Power.'"

<sup>10</sup> Bates, *Hermeneutics of Apostolic Proclamation*, 329.

<sup>11</sup> See Matthew W. Bates, *The Birth of the Trinity: Jesus, God, and Spirit in New Testament and Early Christian Interpretations of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015); Craig A. Carter, *Interpreting Scripture with the Great Tradition: Recovering the Genius of Premodern Exegesis* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018), 191–201 (which Dr. Smith had us read in ST 1!); Madison N. Pierce, "Hebrews 1 and the Son Begotten 'Today,'" in *Retrieving Eternal Generation*, ed. Fred Sanders and Scott R. Swain (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017), 117–31; Madison N. Pierce, *Divine Discourse in the Epistle to the Hebrews: The Recontextualization of Spoken Quotations of Scripture*, SNTSMS 178, ed. Edward Adams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020); Kyle R. Hughes, *The Trinitarian Testimony of the Spirit: Prosopological Exegesis and the Development of Pre-Nicene Pneumatology*, VCSup 147, ed. D. T. Runia and G. Rouwhorst (Boston: Brill, 2018), 12–19; Scott R. Swain, *The Trinity: An Introduction*, SSST, ed. Graham A. Cole and Oren R. Martin (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2020), 38–43; Slusser, "Exegetical Roots." Fred Sanders, "Trinitarian Theology's Exegetical Basis: A Dogmatic Survey," *MJT* 8.2–1 (2010): 85–87, refers to it as "retrospective prosoponic identification."

<sup>12</sup> See Susan E. Docherty, *The Use of the Old Testament in Hebrews: A Case Study in Early Jewish Bible Interpretation* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009); Pierce, *Divine Discourse in Hebrews*.

<sup>13</sup> Peter J (Peter John) Gentry, "A Preliminary Evaluation and Critique of Prosopological Exegesis," *SBJT* 23.2 (2019): 108.

<sup>14</sup> Gentry, "A Preliminary Evaluation and Critique of Prosopological Exegesis," 119–20. I readily acknowledge that both Bates, *Hermeneutics of Apostolic Proclamation*, 133–48, and Carter, *Interpreting Scripture*, 194–97, are too critical of typology as a modernist development. David Stephen Schrock, "Reading the Psalms with the Church: A Critical Evaluation of Prosopological Exegesis in Light of Church History," *SBJT* 25.3 (2021): 89, is right to criticize Bates and Carter for ignoring the way typology "has been articulated by Protestants for centuries prior to the enlightenment."

being a non-contextual form of exegesis that “opens the door to a postmodern reading where meaning is supplied by the community,”<sup>15</sup> and of destroying the doctrine of Sola Scriptura, returning us to Roman Catholic reliance on Tradition.<sup>16</sup> The unity of scripture and “the principles of the Reformation itself” are at stake if one accepts PE!<sup>17</sup>

I do not intend to resolve all of these issues. Some cautions are warranted and welcome (we do not want to adopt a Postmodern hermeneutic), and others warrant further investigation (how much one reads a “theodramatic” setting into instances of PE, and the influence of G-R rhetorical practices upon Jesus and apostolic authors).<sup>18</sup> But as I turn to make the case for PE in Romans 15:3 I argue that Paul employs PE in a contextually sensitive and typological fashion.

### **A Prosopological-Contextual-Typological Interpretation of Romans 15:3**

#### **Bates’ Interpretation of Romans 15:3**

Most of the debate surrounding PE from an exegetical standpoint centers around Acts 2 and Hebrews 1, and the OT texts (Pss 2, 16, and 110) employed therein. The critics cited in this paper do not interact with Bates’ treatment of Pauline PE. In arguing for PE in Romans 15:3, Bates pits himself against others who see Christ as the speaker of Psalm 69:9b. Bates argues, with many commentators, that the articular form ὁ Χριστός is significant here, indicating that the messianic

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<sup>15</sup> Schrock, “Reading the Psalms,” 88.

<sup>16</sup> Schrock, “Reading the Psalms,” 91.

<sup>17</sup> Schrock, “Reading the Psalms,” 89. For a more balanced criticism, see William James Dernell, “Typology, Christology and Prosopological Exegesis: Implicit Narratives in Christological Texts,” *SBJT* 24.1 (2020): 137–61.

<sup>18</sup> Though on this note, Bates, *Birth of the Trinity*, 66, argues that Jesus did not need to have been consciously aware of PE as a reading strategy. Rather, he “need only to have believed that David, under the inspiring influence of the Holy Spirit... was capable of taking on a different *persona* when speaking as a prophet.”

office of the speaker is in view here.<sup>19</sup> He then notes the intertextual uses of Psalm 69 in other NT texts (which likely took into account the surrounding context of Ps 69:6-9), concluding that there is “a strong intertextual basis for supposing that Paul likewise considers *the Christ* to be the speaker of the second half of the verse, that is, Ps 68:10b LXX.”<sup>20</sup>

After describing the views of A. T. Hanson, who argues for “the real presence of the pre-existent Jesus” in Psalm 69,<sup>21</sup> and Richard Hays, who argues for a double-typology in the royal lament psalms where the suffering David “becomes a symbol for the whole people and—at the same time—a prefiguration of the future Anointed One.”<sup>22</sup> Against Hanson, Bates argues that instead of a preexistent Jesus, “the divine author was speaking in advance through the psalmist in the prosopon of *the Messiah*... whose exact identity as the man *Jesus* was shrouded in enigmas prior to the revelation of Jesus as the unique Messiah in the Christ event.”<sup>23</sup> This explains why Paul would ascribe the words of scripture to the prophet or psalmist at times, even when “for Paul the words *ultimately* belong to Christ or another.”<sup>24</sup> Against Hays, he argues that Paul did not see David as “both type of Israel and a type of the future Messiah” but rather “believed that the divine author was placing an in-character speech on the lips of the psalmist.” PE also explains why Paul view of David as a prophet, and does not have much interest in David’s sufferings and the “alleged imitative relationship between David’s own... suffering/vindication and those of the future

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<sup>19</sup> Bates, *Hermeneutics of Apostolic Proclamation*, 242–43. See also Cranfield, *Romans*, 732, note 5; Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 838; Jewett and Kotansky, *Romans*, 879; Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, 382; Matera, *Romans*, 321; Peterson, *Romans*, 503; Schreiner, *Romans*, 522.

<sup>20</sup> See Bates, *Hermeneutics of Apostolic Proclamation*, 243–46, especially 246.

<sup>21</sup> Bates, *Hermeneutics of Apostolic Proclamation*, 248–49. See Anthony Tyrrell Hanson, *Jesus Christ in the Old Testament* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1965), 7.

<sup>22</sup> Bates, *Hermeneutics of Apostolic Proclamation*, 249–51. See Hays, “Christ Prays the Psalms,” 130.

<sup>23</sup> Bates, *Hermeneutics of Apostolic Proclamation*, 251.

<sup>24</sup> Bates, *Hermeneutics of Apostolic Proclamation*, 251.



Christ.”<sup>25</sup> He concludes that instead, Paul thinks David employs the *perfectum propheticum*, using the past tense to describe an event “that was regarded by Paul as *still in the future* for the Psalmist.”<sup>26</sup> In light of the revelation of Christ in the “Christ drama,” Paul can now see that in this text, “the enthroned Lord Christ is speaking to God the Father in a reflective manner about the things he had experienced...namely...the suffering and humiliation of the cross.”<sup>27</sup> Paul’s exegesis in Romans 15:3 therefore is grounded in stages (1), (2), (3), and implicitly (6) and (8) of the kerygmatic, christological narrative.<sup>28</sup>

### My Interpretation of Romans 15:3

I agree with the general thrust of Bates’ argument, though it exhibits some weaknesses. To call PE “a reading strategy common in Paul’s day” is no doubt overstating the matter.<sup>29</sup> Bates’ preference for intertextual arguments over exegetical arguments can also be easily misused, especially when he justifies his reading of Paul by appealing to a figure as late as Origen.<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, Bates also rejects Hays typological reading as unduly complex without considering other typological readings.<sup>31</sup> What is interesting about Bates’ rejection of typology in this instance is that at the start he grants the greatest reason for a typological reading, namely, the articular use of Χριστός and its titular significance. “The Christ” is in view in Romans 15:3. But for him, the

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<sup>25</sup> Bates, *Hermeneutics of Apostolic Proclamation*, 252.

<sup>26</sup> Bates, *Hermeneutics of Apostolic Proclamation*, 252.

<sup>27</sup> Bates, *Hermeneutics of Apostolic Proclamation*, 253.

<sup>28</sup> Bates, *Hermeneutics of Apostolic Proclamation*, 254. For the eight stages of the kerygmatic, protocreedal narrative, see note 8 above.

<sup>29</sup> Bates, *Hermeneutics of Apostolic Proclamation*, 252.

<sup>30</sup> Bates, *Hermeneutics of Apostolic Proclamation*, 246–47.

<sup>31</sup> Bates, *Hermeneutics of Apostolic Proclamation*, 252.

title indicates that in Psalm 69, only *the Messiah* is speaking, though through David the prophet. Bates overemphasizes the divine author to the detriment of the human author.

### ***Psalm 69 contextualized in Romans 15***

Romans 15:3 comes towards the end of the hortatory section that began in Romans 12:1, as well as the sub-section beginning in Romans 14:1 where Paul begins to discuss issues related to strong and weak Christians. The weak Christians were most likely those observing Jewish customs, while the strong understood that certain parts of the Old Testament law had been abrogated with the coming of Christ.<sup>32</sup> After calling for the strong and weak to pursue peace (cf. 14:19), Paul concludes his argument in Rom 15:1-6. First he lays out the obligations of the strong to bear the burdens of their weaker brothers instead of pleasing themselves (15:1), and all Christians to please their neighbors for their own good (15:2). He grounds these obligations in the example of Christ (15:3a), and to clarify what the example of Christ is, Paul quotes Psalm 69:9b. Why do the strong (15:1) and all Christians (15:2) have to not seek their own good, but the good of each other and their neighbors? Because Christ did not seek his own good (15:3a), which is perfectly expressed by the words of Psalm 69:9b (15:3b). Psalm 69:9b is not an obvious choice for Paul to cite to defend his point, unless the greater context of Psalm 69 is in view. Given the rest of the New Testament's use of Psalm 69, it makes sense that Paul would assume that his readers were familiar with it.<sup>33</sup> It is one of the most frequently cited psalms, often cited or alluded to in reference to Christ's passion and surrounding events (cf. Matt 27:34, 48; Mark 15:23, 36; Luke 23:36; John

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<sup>32</sup> Thielman, *Romans*, 627–29.

<sup>33</sup> This is where the basic value of Bates' intertextual argument is found. Wide usage of a scripture in the documents of the early church should indicate a greater level of familiarity with that scripture in the early church. See Bates, *Hermeneutics of Apostolic Proclamation*, 243–46.

2:17; 15:25; 19:28-29; Acts 1:20).<sup>34</sup> So as Paul quotes Psalm 69:9b, he likely has Psalm 69:9a (zeal for your house has consumed me) in his mind.<sup>35</sup> In Romans, Paul is discussing the unity of the church, God's house. David claims in Psalm 69:9a that it was zeal for God's house that led to him enduring the reproaches directed at God. Like Christ, the Christians in Rome ought to have zeal for peace and unity in God's church. This contextual reason, alongside the rhetorical punch this quotation packs ("If Christ did not please himself, but instead died for you while receiving the mockery of men on the cross, how bad is it for you to put aside your qualms over meat and drink for the sake of unity?"),<sup>36</sup> and the implicit call for them to be like Christ in seeking God's glory first and identifying themselves with his cause, explains why Paul would employ Ps 69:9b at this point in Romans.<sup>37</sup>

The greater context of Psalm 69:9 makes further sense of Romans 15:4. In light of Paul's quotation of Psalm 69, he feels the need to explain why he used an Old Testament scripture instead of an example from Christ's life and ministry. He cites Psalm 69:9b because everything (ὅσα) written in the Old Testament was written for the instruction of Christians, with the purpose that Christians might have hope "through the endurance and through the comfort of the scriptures" (διὰ τῆς ὑπομονῆς καὶ διὰ τῆς παρακλήσεως τῶν γραφῶν). Michael Thompson suggests that both the

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<sup>34</sup> See Schreiner, *Romans*, 522. The ultimate defeat of Christ's enemies (through the cross) was also in view (cf. Rom 11:9-10).

<sup>35</sup> See Hendriksen, *Romans*, 471; William S. Plumer, *Commentary on Romans* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1993), 622; J. V. Fesko, *Romans*, LCECNT, ed. Joel R. Beeke and Jon D. Payne (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2018), 403. See also Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 3:407: "Christ never for a moment lived for himself (Rom. 15:3), but always for his church to leave it an example."

<sup>36</sup> See Sherwood, *Romans*, 262.

<sup>37</sup> See Hodge, *Commentary on Romans*, 433. See also Abelard, *Romans*, 372.

endurance of Christ and that of believers is in view here.<sup>38</sup> This dual reference makes sense given the context of Psalm 69:9b. David twice uses ὑπομένω in Psalm 69. In Psalm 69:6 (LXX 68:7) he prays that those who wait for (ὑπομένοντες) the Lord would not be made ashamed because of him (μὴ αἰσχυνθείησαν ἐπ’ ἐμοί). In 69:20 (LXX 68:21) David says he himself waited for one to be sympathetic (ὑπέμεινα συλλυπούμενον). In Psalm 69, ὑπομονή characterizes both the people of God and David himself, and the people suffer for their endurance because they are identified with David.<sup>39</sup> If the context of Psalm 69 is in view here, Paul’s seemingly sudden reference to endurance makes sense.<sup>40</sup> The Christ, who did not please himself but rather identified himself with God’s cause, endured in the face of reproach; this instructs the Christians in Rome that they will endure with Christ as they are identified with him. This instruction on endurance is in fact part of the comfort that the scriptures brings them, so that they might have hope. This explains why Paul cites Ps 69 to characterize the experience of Christ. By doing so, he can show the Christian church how the Old Testament instructs in endurance as it gives them a picture of the endurance of Christ, and how they are wrapped up with him. It is clear from this that Paul intended his audience to consider the wider context of Psalm 69 when they read his reference to a half a verse.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> He first suggests that τῆς ὑπομονῆς is anaphoric, referring to the endurance of Christ. He develops his thought and suggests that the ὑπομονή that ought to characterize believers lives is ultimately “an extension of Jesus’ experience, and a necessary part of conformity to Christ,” who is “the supreme example of ὑπομονή.” What is in view in Romans 15:4 therefore is believers identifying themselves with Christ in their suffering in the vein of 2 Cor 4:10 and Col 1:24. See Thompson, *Clothed with Christ*, 227–28, 226.

<sup>39</sup> While Thompson makes the observation above the use of ὑπομένω in Psalm 69, he does not tease out this connection. These observations are my own. Bates, *Hermeneutics of Apostolic Proclamation*, 245, however, notes a similar connection, though with no attention to the LXX’s use of ὑπομένω.

<sup>40</sup> The reference to endurance fits within the context of the book of Romans (cf. Rom 5:2-5), but the sudden discussion of endurance in Romans 15 makes sense in light of the Psalm’s context.

<sup>41</sup> In general I agree with Aaron Sherwood, *Romans: A Structural, Thematic, and Exegetical Commentary* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2020), 27, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=2916697&site=ehost-live>, that “There is every sign that for Paul, proper interpretation of the scriptures he references requires a maximal awareness of their original contexts.” C. H. Dodd, *According to the Scriptures: The Sub-Structure of New Testament Theology* (London: Nisbet & Co., Ltd., 1952), 57–59, 127, considers Psalm 69 to be one of the large

### ***Typological use of Ps 69 in Romans 15:3***

Typology, though a subpoint under the broader discussion of the context of Psalm 69, is addressed separately to focus on the distinct typological elements involved in reading Psalm 69:9 contextually in Romans 15:3. The general argument is that Jesus Christ in a fuller sense fulfilled the words of Psalm 69, while allowing that the words were first penned by David about circumstances that he went through. David “as a righteous sufferer was forsaken by his friends and attacked by his foes”, and these realities are reflected more fully in the life of *the* righteous sufferer, Jesus Christ.<sup>42</sup> More than a righteous sufferer, David, functioning as God’s anointed one, creates a pattern in his suffering that *the Anointed One* (ὁ Χριστός) fulfills.<sup>43</sup> Perhaps in light of his awareness of the Jewish tradition that applied the Psalm exclusively to David, Paul feels the need to explain himself in verse 4: “Even though the psalm spoke originally of David, it really refers to Christ.”<sup>44</sup> The Psalm, which shows God’s Messiah moving from his current embattled state to a place of hope in God who will bring future days of praise and triumph (cf. Ps 69:30-36) explains the flow of Romans 15:3-6 from the implicit exhortation to endure reproach to the prayer that the God who gives endurance and encouragement will grant harmony in the church, resulting in future praise. Thus, Psalm 69 as a whole points forward from David to David’s greater son.

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sections of scripture employed in the early church that were meant to be understood as wholes, even when small portions of them were cited.

<sup>42</sup> Schreiner, *Romans*, 522.

<sup>43</sup> Peterson, *Romans*, 503–4. See also Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, ed. James T. Dennison Jr., trans. George Musgrave Giger (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing Company, 1994), 2:355, who says “a particular type was not wanting in the sufferings of David described in Pss. 22 and 69.”

<sup>44</sup> Goppelt, *Typos*, 225.

### *The Prosopological Impulse in Psalm 69:9*

For all this, there is a draw to take seriously the implication that Paul places the words of Ps 69:9a on the lips of Christ. There is the awareness that John likewise records the disciples recognizing the voice of Christ in Ps 69:9a. There is also an awareness that some parts of Psalm 69, such as verse 5, do not settle as easily on Christ's lips as they do on David's.<sup>45</sup> We are taught usefully by this that the antitype exceeds the type. Yet this also limits how we might use Psalm 69 as a whole typologically.<sup>46</sup> There is a recognition that where typology ends there is a sense that some scriptures are *more truly* spoken of, and even by, Christ than they are of and by their human author, though his historical experiences prompted him to write the psalm.<sup>47</sup>

There is a “both/and” to Psalm 69's testimony about Christ. It speaks of him, typologically points to him, and at the same time is spoken by him. This is why Paul quotes Psalm 69:9b as the words of Christ. The words spoken can truly be ascribed to David, not “unto him personally and absolutely, but merely considered as a type of Christ. What, then, is principally and directly intended in the words is to be sought for in Christ alone.”<sup>48</sup> One does justice to the reality of human

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<sup>45</sup> See Godet, *Commentary on Romans*, 468.

<sup>46</sup> I recognize that we can appropriately apply both the words of confession and the words of imprecation to our Lord in his role as, respectively, our mediatorial high priest and king. See Richard P. Belcher Jr., *The Messiah and the Psalms: Preaching Christ from All the Psalms* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, Ltd., 2006), 31–41, 76–89. Yet there is an awareness that Christ does not speak the words of Ps 69:5 *about himself*. If one does apply them to Christ *himself*, there's a necessary amount of extra meaning that must be found (at the level of the divine author of course) in those words, such that David says “you know my folly; the wrongs I have done are not hidden from you” with one implication (that though he may be innocent now, he has folly and has committed wrongdoing), while Christ says the same words with another implication (that God knows that there has not ever been any folly or wrongdoing in him).

<sup>47</sup> So C. H. Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1966), 2a:175: “If any enquire, ‘of whom speaketh the Psalmist this? of himself, or of some other man?’ we would reply, ‘of himself, and of some other man.’ Who the other is, we need not be long in discovering; it is the Crucified alone who can say, ‘In my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.’ His footprints all through this sorrowful song have been pointed out by the Holy Spirit in the New Testament, and therefore we believe, and are sure, that the Son of Man is here.” Spurgeon both says that the Psalmist speaks about Christ, and that Christ speaks.

<sup>48</sup> John Owen, *An Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews*, ed. W. H. Goold (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1980), 3:134. He derives these principles from the exposition of Psalm 2 in Hebrews 1, and claims, based on

authorship by recognizing David as a type of Christ, and seeing that the original context of Psalm 69 informs Paul's use of it in Romans 15:3; one does justice to the reality of divine authorship by acknowledging that Paul sees Christ as the *prosopon* speaking in Psalm 69:9. If the latter does not fit Bates' definition, it fits the more generic way PE is described by Fred Sanders, as a retrospective prosoponic identification OT speakers, in light of our having met Christ and the Spirit.<sup>49</sup>

### Conclusion

ST scholars and BT scholars will continue to debate over the proper way to read the Old Testament in light of Christ. The former at times emphasize divine authorship, while the latter at times emphasize human authorship. In order to understand the meaning of a text, one needs to take both into account. When it comes to Paul's quotation of Ps 69:9b in Romans 15:3, one needs to have an awareness of that Paul intends his readers to have a maximal understanding of the context of his quotation. One also needs to recognize that Paul sees David's words in Ps 69 typologically pointing toward their fulfillment in Christ. But one also must take into account Paul's framing the words of Ps 69:9 as the words of the Christ. PE provides a way to understand how the words of Psalm 69 can be most truly the words of Christ, breathed into them through the Spirit. The best solution takes all three of these realities into account. One needs a prosopological-contextual-typological interpretation of Paul's quotation of Psalm 69:9b in Romans 15:3.

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Peter's interpretation of Psalm 16 in Acts 2, that "we have a rule given us by the Holy Ghost,—That where any thing seems to be spoken of any one to whom it doth not properly belong, there the person is not at all to be understood, but the Lord Christ himself immediately" (3:133).

<sup>49</sup> Sanders, "Trinitarian Theology's Exegetical Basis: A Dogmatic Survey," 85.

APPENDIX. THE GREEK AND HEBREW TEXTS OF ROMANS 15:3 AND PSALM 69:9b

(68:10b LXX; 69:10b MT) WITH TRANSLATION

Rom 15:3 NA28

καὶ γὰρ ὁ Χριστὸς οὐχ ἑαυτῷ ἠρεσεν, ἀλλὰ καθὼς γέγραπται· οἱ ὀνειδισμοὶ τῶν ὀνειδιζόντων σε ἐπέπεσαν ἐπ' ἐμέ.

Translation

For even the Christ did not please himself, but as it is written, “The reproaches of the ones who reproached you fell upon me.”

Ps 68:10b LXX

καὶ οἱ ὀνειδισμοὶ τῶν ὀνειδιζόντων σε ἐπέπεσαν ἐπ' ἐμέ.

Translation

And the reproaches of the ones who reproached you fell upon me.

Ps 69:10b MT

וְחַרְפוֹת הַוּרְפִּיךָ נָפְלוּ עָלַי:

Translation

And the reproaches of the ones who reproached you fell upon me.



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