

PRONOMINAL 'I', RASTAFARI AND THE LEXICON OF THE NEW TESTAMENT  
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS

by

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I declare that *PRONOMINAL 'I', RASTAFARI AND THE LEXICON OF THE NEW TESTAMENT WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS* is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

Signed-----

### *CURRICULUM VITAE*

Delano ('Kwame') is a graduate of the Cornerstone University (MRE), Caribbean Graduate School of Theology (MA), Carver Bible College (BA) and the Midland Bible Institute (DipTh). Delano also did graduate work at Wheaton College Graduate School (Biblical Hermeneutics) and Denver Seminary (New Testament Exegesis). He is presently a lecturer at the Jamaica Theological Seminary and the Caribbean Graduate School of Theology (CGST). He is also a member of the Swallowfield Chapel and the Christian Ambassadors Footballers. United (CAFU). Delano is the proud husband of Grace (nee Wallace, a member of the library staff of CGST), and father of Karis and Giovanni.

## SUMMARY

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ThD

New Testament

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Anyone familiar with the Rastafari movement and its connection with the Bible is struck by the prevalence of I-locution found in them both. Because the phenomenon is important in the canonical Testaments, more so the New, this study seeks to investigate its significance in certain epistolary pieces (Romans 7 :14-25 ; 15 :14-33), the bio-Narratives and the Apocalypse, in their historical and cultural milieu.

The next stage of the investigation then compares the findings of the aforementioned New Testament books with corresponding statements of the Rasta community to determine their relevance for the ongoing Anglophone theological discussion. In this connection, the following questions are addressed: (1) what are the inter-textual link(s) and function(s) of the 'I' statements in Romans? (2) How do they relate to similar dominical sayings? And (3) can any parallel be established between the language of Rastafari and these?

In sum, the study seeks to bring into critical dialogue the permutative 'I' of the NT with the self-understanding of Rastafari.

### *Key Terms*

Romans; Synoptic Gospels; John's Gospel; Book of Revelation; Caribbean Theology; Dread Talk; Bob Marley; Haile Selassie; Marcus Garvey; Rastafari

To

Delcine, Jamaican matriarch *par excellence*—and her beautiful daughter-in-law, (O' to *Grace* how great a debtor daily I'm constrained to be!);

South Africa president emeritus, Nelson Mandela, and archbishop emeritus, Desmond Tutu—African patriarchs and distinguished *UNISA* graduates;

The memory of 'Rabbi' Glenn Thompson, Marcus Mosiah and Robert Nesta, who changed course just prior to his passing, and who might very well be the one to say to the wailing prophet in Revelation 5: '*No man, no cry!*';

to Him who declares:

`rKo\*z>a, al{ï ^yt,PaJox;w> ynI+[]m;l.  
^y[,Pv'p. hx,îmo aWh± ykiînoa'  
yki'nOa'

*I-n-I a di wan weh, fi fimi sake, rub weh yu dutti way dem, a mi naah memba yu sin dem! (Isa 43: 25)*

ynIåa]w: `ytiyfi' [' ynIÛa] lBo+s.a,  
ynIåa] hb'PyXe-d[;w> aWhê ynIåa]  
`hn"q.zI-d[;w>  
`jLe(m;a]w: lBoßs.a, ynIïa]w: aF'êa,

*Heven wen yu get ol' mi gwine tek cere a yu wid yu gray lox dem; mi gwine carri yu.  
A mi mek yu, so mi gwine defen yu, gi yu jakki ride, an deliva yu (Isa 46:4);*

And to the Son of God who makes the Dialectic of Christian Experience enjoyable:

## Acknowledgements

In 1977 I had the privilege of studying the book of Romans under Professor Keith Bradshaw at the Midland Bible Institute (MBI). It was he who first pointed out to me the possible connection between the ‘I-n-I’ of the Rasta and the New Testament. Ten years afterwards it was again my privilege to do the book of Romans, this time an intense exegetical course with Dr. Richard N. Longenecker at the Caribbean Graduate School of Theology (CGST). This course deepened my appreciation of the mind of the apostle Paul and his love for God, and when it was now my turn to teach Romans at the Jamaica Theological Seminary (JTS), I looked forward to the assignment with much anticipation. I was not disappointed. With a bunch of enthusiastic students, I was to learn a great deal more.

I am grateful to these JTS students and to my colleagues at this school for providing the right kind of academic and spiritual atmosphere in which I have worked for a decade and a half. There were other teachers along the way who helped to sharpen my exegetical skills and theological understanding, and here people like the Rev. Garnet Roper, Drs. Cullen I. Story, Bruce M. Metzger, S. Lewis Johnson, Dieumeme Noelliste, N. Samuel Murrell, Emilio Nunez (all of CGST), David L. Turner (Cornerstone University), Harold Hoehner (MBI), Timothy Erdel (JTS), and McGlory Speckman (UNISA) come readily to mind. Professors Carolyn Cooper and Barry Chevannes, both of the University of the West Indies, Noel Leo Erskine (Emory University) and Cain Hope Felder (Howard University Divinity School) took time out of their busy schedules to discuss vital areas of concern about my work. Their sacrifice is much appreciated.

At a critical juncture of my research I needed the expertise of, not only a New Testament scholar, but someone of the calibre of a Bible translation consultant as well. The ‘I’ divine—in the ‘fullness of time’—provided Dr. Gosnell L. Yorke, who has the rare distinction of wearing both hats comfortably. I could not have asked for a better *Doktorvater*, one who is sensitive to both the intricacies of the text and of the complexities of the African diasporic contexts. He was ably assisted by Prof. J. N. Vorster.

Special thanks too must go to the library personnel of the following schools: UNISA, the Zenas Gerig Resource Centre (especially Grace Maureen), the Universities of Calgary and Toronto, and the United Theological College of the West Indies (Kingston, JA), to my external examiners, and to Alice Pink of CGST who helped with word processing in the early stages.

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And to the many people who prayed and encouraged me from time to time, especially Karis, Giovanni and Lois, I say a big thanks *tu unnu!*

*Soli Christo Gloria*

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### A. Purpose

A perennial problem in New Testament (NT) studies is the determination of the significance of the emphatic first person pronoun in Romans 7:14-25.<sup>1</sup> Since the Reformation period, especially, several proposals have been made to understand this particular pericope, but to date there is still no scholarly consensus. A corollary to this is that very little attention has been paid to chapter 15, a part of the ‘final section . . . [which] is considerably more important than many . . . have implied’ (Wright 2003, 263), and where Paul also makes use of the ‘I’ in a seemingly theologically significant way.

I am particularly interested in the way in which this pronoun is employed in much of the NT and by a religious group, the RastafarI (Rowe 1998, 86 n. 1), which claims continuity with the NT Christian community as a whole.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Nestled in the ‘most majestic set piece [5–8] Paul ever wrote’ (Wright 2003, 248). Wright (2003, 254) treats 7: 1–8:11 as a complete pericope.

<sup>2</sup> Pronominal ‘I’ is said to be one of the most stable linguistic elements; it is numbered among a ‘basic list of words which are known to be change-resistant. . . . That is to say, after the lapse of one thousand years any language would be found to have 86 per cent of these words retained without essential change’ (Cotterell 1978, 152). Of the 7111 words appearing in Romans, the emphatic ‘I’ is one of the 224 distinctive terms, i.e., terms appearing ‘three or more times’ (O’Donnell 2005, 225).

In this connection the following questions will be addressed: 1) What can we say about the relevant dominical 'I' sayings as found in the Gospels? 2) What are the intertextual links<sup>3</sup> and function(s) of the 'I' statements in the two chapters of Romans under study? And 3) can any parallel be drawn between the language of RastafarI and such NT 'I' sayings?

This last question may prove to be critical to my investigation since as yet there is no adequate explanation of the prominent place of the 'I' in Rasta<sup>4</sup> Theology/Christology. Could it be that the dominical 'I' of the NT has influenced RastafarI given the veneration of Selassie as the Christ? And how does one account for the Pauline 'I' vis-à-vis the Jesus tradition preserved in the Gospels and elsewhere?<sup>5</sup> Is there a connection here as well? While these questions may be considered to be important in their own right, they will not be allowed to eclipse the overall objective of this study as outlined above. In other words, the main purpose of the study is to critically compare first century uses of the 'I' as found in the NT with that of contemporary RastafarI.

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<sup>3</sup> 'Within the canon of Scripture itself . . . an intricate pattern of cross-referencing establishes a web of inter-textuality.' (Jasper 1998).

<sup>4</sup> Although the RastafarI (their preferred term) movement is still strongly male dominated, there is very little difference to be seen in the way the sisters use the language as opposed to the brothers (cf. Garifuna: *au* [masculine 'I']; *nugúya* [fem. 'I'] Ross 2001, 375). 'Rasta,' therefore, in this work, has reference to either gender, unless otherwise specified.

<sup>5</sup> The Apocalypse (Bailey and Vander Broek 1992, 201-210) is one of the most important books in Rasta theology. Therefore we will also look at pertinent statements there as well.



## B. Methodology

The NT is not a monolithic piece in terms of its literary constitution. It is made of three main genres, the first of which (to go by the canonical order) is ‘Gospel’.<sup>6</sup> In this broad literary form is found quite a number of the phenomenon that is chosen for scrutiny. Over the years several tools have been designed to study the four documents that fall under the rubric of ‘Gospel’ and each of the documents presents its own hermeneutical challenge.

What, then, is the best approach to the study of the Synoptics<sup>7</sup> and the *Corpus Johanneum* (Theissen 2003, 145-163); and what about Paul’s letter to the Romans? Over a decade ago N. T. Wright published his first tome of an ambitious six-volume project that seeks to re-assess the full gamut of Christian origins. Wright (1992, 31-46) begins by carefully setting out his methodology which seeks to avoid radical post-modern approaches<sup>8</sup> on the one hand, and naïve modernistic historical reconstruction of the NT genres on the other. He

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<sup>6</sup>The question of the precise nature of this genre is still being debated today (Collins 2007, 19-32). It is believed to be a kind of literature ‘created in the early church’ (Kritzinger 2000, 81). There seems to be some agreement on the part of many that ‘Gospel’ is some kind of ancient ‘Christian’ biography (Dunn 2003, 184–186). See also the discussion in Perkins (1998, 241-275) and France (2002, 4-19). ‘Quite a number of biblical texts are autobiographical while ironically pointing beyond the authors through the uniqueness of biblical textual intent . . . [and] read as moments of divine intervention.’ (Gordon 1998, 49).

<sup>7</sup>Luke-Acts may be treated as one work (Bruce 1951, 65; Westermann 1969, 63).

<sup>8</sup>For a sober critique of some of these, see, for example, Moore (1954).

opts for what he calls ‘critical realism,’ an approach that investigates the theological posture of a group by way of its dominant story, praxis and worldview.<sup>9</sup> A modified form of this critical, or ‘practical’ realism (Jewett 2007, 1), employed also by Dunn (2003, 110-111), will be adopted in this thesis.

Today the NT student has a wealth of approaches from which to draw in addressing questions like those outlined above.<sup>10</sup> In light of this it may not be prudent to rule out of hand any tool that might be deemed legitimate (Yorke 1995; Jewett 2007, 2-3). This is an advantage of Wright’s approach. In

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<sup>9</sup>A similar approach is taken by Chevannes in terms of RastafarI (1998). Wright did not elaborate on the important approach of Narrative Criticism (Coggins and Houlden 1990, 488-9; Turner 2006, 9-10. See also n. 11 below), which gives the interpreter latitude to incorporate the suggestion of Robertson (1934, 3) many years ago that NT students should take seriously the findings of linguistic research. Guidelines for carrying out Robertson’s suggestion are discussed in Austin (1971, 560-579), Cotterell and Turner (1989), Louw (1982), and Nida (1964), Cf. Groom (2003), Nida (1991, 5-26), Poythress (1979, 113-137), Turner (1995, 146-174), and Waybright (1984).

<sup>10</sup>For example, from Hirsh’s (1967) ‘authorial’ hermeneutics that is making a comeback in a more nuanced form (Scroggs 1988; Vanhoozer 1998) to Tate’s (1997) ‘integrated’ approach, which studies the world behind, within, and in front of the text (cf. Skinner 1997).

More recently Nolland (2005, xvii-xviii) lays bare his bias toward Narrative Criticism while acknowledging his debt to other approaches: ‘My central concern in this commentary is with the story Matthew has to tell and how he tells it. Though the reader will recognize that I have been influenced by some scholarly methods more than by others, my work is committedly eclectic. . . . The whole commentary is, broadly speaking, redaction-critical.’

such a pursuit, however, one need to recognize the limitations of the tools themselves as well as the situatedness of the personal ‘I’ that attempts to carry out the investigation.

In this regard, a Caribbean theologian reminds the NT interpreter that s/he does not have access to what he calls the ‘primary version’ of the biblical text—‘the live, existential, and dynamic revelation that the biblical writer or speaker received.’ And though it is believed that much of this was captured in the original manuscripts, we today have to be content with copies of these. Consequently, we are left without ‘the immediate knowledge of all the intricacies, inferences, innuendoes and multiple meanings of the biblical text’ (Murrell 1999, 49).

It is therefore critical that the interpreter should ‘demonstrate familiarity with the languages and ideological concepts . . . derived from the world of the text’, while listening to Rasta when s/he says, “nuh cut no style pon mi with . . . de Hebrew and Greek dem. Tell I-an-I the living words of Jah” [Don’t be a show-off . . . just give me the plain words of Jah]’ (Murrell 1997, 24; see also Jennings 2007).<sup>11</sup> On this level as well a kind of ‘hermeneutics of suspicion’ is introduced.

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<sup>11</sup>In seeking to understand the ‘plain words of Jah’ it has to be borne in mind that there ‘are no hard and fast rules about language. Whether the writer is Mark, Matthew, or Luke, usage is always relative as to situation, purpose, place and time. . . . [and] that the language of each Gospel is an idiolect, a deeply individual thing’ (Black 1988, 99; cf. Louw 1982, 1-32).

This is considered ‘crucial in the use of modern translations done exclusively by people’ of other orientations, thus necessitating a re-reading of the primary documents to more effectively ‘bring the horizon of the hearer or reader into conversation with the text’ (Murrell 1999, 55; cf. Yorke 2004).<sup>12</sup>

I have already mentioned the kind of comparison that will be pursued in this study: the pronominal ‘I’ of the New Testament with that of Rastafari. This will at first involve what may be called an ‘intra-testamental’ dialogue before the substantive task comes into focus. Although it is nigh impossible to re-construct the precise chronological framework of the NT documents, the general consensus of NT scholarship is that the Pauline letters preceded the material containing dominical sayings (Theissen 2003, 54-81). This consensus, however, does not preclude and in any way jeopardize a basic canonical approach to frame the study.

In the so-called Authorized Version (Metzger 2001, 70-80), for a long time the preferred Bible of Rastas, there are more than a thousand statements in the Gospels and the Apocalypse that contain the pronominal ‘I’. Approximately seven hundred of these are attributed to Jesus. Therefore, when the Rasta reads from the Synoptics and especially the two main pieces of the Johannine corpus, the Fourth Gospel and the book of Revelation, s/he is bound to be confronted with what one may call a battery of I-words. This study will not be examining

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<sup>12</sup>Similarly, Alexander (2006, 239) speaks of the text as ‘a conversation partner in an ongoing debate, one in which interpretation is never a finished task, an organic process which is always in dialogue with earlier layers [intertextuality?] of the tradition.’

all of these I-statements. It will instead work with that portion of the three hundred and forty seven occurrences of *evgw*, which is deemed dominical, as well as the Pauline 'I' in the book of Romans.<sup>13</sup> Limiting the investigation in this way allows me to concentrate on what Kümmel (1974a) considers to be the main witnesses of the NT—the very ones in whose writings are to be found, arguably, the richest quarry of I-statements. With the possible exception of the Pauline material, these are presumed to be the best samples available to carry out a comparative analysis. The following reasons may further be adduced:

The "I" of revelatory discourse is found in the NT above all in John, Revelation, and in manifestation narratives in the Gospels and Acts. The "I" in NT revelatory discourses are almost always spoken by Christ. Self-revelation by God occurs only seldom in the NT (Schottroff 1990, 1:378).

This study will therefore focus attention on those instances in which (1) the pronominal 'I' is cited in the literature of Rastafari, and/or (2) where the 'I' appears useful to illustrate the rich tapestry of the said discourse.

### C. Motivation

The Rastafari movement as far as I know is the only professedly Christian group that employs the pronominal 'I' in such a distinctive manner. This I find intriguing. The fact that a similar phenomenon is found in their main religious documents is even more interesting. Such matters in my view warrant

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<sup>13</sup>Working directly from the UBS Greek text, 4<sup>th</sup> edition (Aland 1994), I will also translate many of the passages in which the dominical 'I' appears, using, in some cases, the Rasta 'I-n-I' for *evgw*, */eivmi*, (literally, 'I [even] I') and the Jamaican 'unu' and 'yu' (plural and singular 'you,' respectively) for the pronominally challenged Standard Jamaican English. The KJV/NKJV is cited throughout in italics.

investigation. By comparing the results drawn from the NT data with the permutations of 'I' within RastafarI, this study seeks to make a contribution toward the development of an Anglophone/Creole-speaking Caribbean (NT) theology which is now emerging (Callam 1980; Earle 1996; Williams 1991, 1994).<sup>14</sup> Because of its 'unique historical experience and its continuing search for . . . identity' (Chinula 1985, 50) in that context, the Caribbean theological pursuit gains authenticity from being rigorously contextual. In light of this, not a few English-speaking Caribbean theologians have singled out the 'reasonings' of Rastas as perhaps the best example of what it means to 'do theology' in the region. Rastas for the most part are avid students of the NT and the Bible in general, so any examination of their contribution to theology in the region that ignores their use of the canonical writings cannot, in my view, be taken very seriously.

The fact that RastafarI hermeneutics may be considered partial and provisional does not necessarily count against it since such more or less is also true of the predominantly North-Atlantic strains of hermeneutics that have influenced the Caribbean Basin, whether viewed diachronically or synchronically.

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<sup>14</sup>Other major contributors include Dennis (1995), HoSang (1988), Lee (2007), Miller (2007), Mulrain (1995, 37-47), Noelliste (1997), and Taylor (1995; 2006) to name a few. Cf. Davis (1990) and Felder (1991). Other items are to be found in the Unpublished Material section of the Bibliography.

#### D. Literature Review

The first and only official study of Rastafari (Augier *et al.* 1960) was commissioned by the then head of the University College of the West Indies (later the University of the West Indies, UWI), W. Arthur Lewis, at the request of the *de facto* leader of the movement, Mortimo Planno (Birthwright 2005, 44-54).<sup>15</sup> The study, first presented to the government of Jamaica, covered briefly the history, growth and philosophy of the movement but lacked any reference to its creative linguistic expression.

The first work<sup>16</sup> to attempt a comprehensive analysis of the language of Rastas was done by Joshua Peart. His stated objective was to investigate the relationship among the English language, Jamaican Creole, and what he called ‘Dread Talk’ (1977, 1). After briefly outlining the evolution of Rastafari, Peart (1977, 5, 6) stated that ‘It is uncertain how long after the inception of the movement this distinct way of speaking (sc. Dread Talk) developed, just as it is difficult to say at precisely what time French or Spanish began to break away from Latin, or what time they became separate languages.’

In exploring the relation between Jamaican Creole and Dread Talk, Peart observed that the two linguistic phenomena are so close that the line between them is ‘blurred in some areas . . . and much sharper in others. . . . The genetic relationship between “Dread Talk” and English [however] is much more definable’ (1977, 5, 6). In seeking to answer the question as to whether Dread

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<sup>15</sup>Ras Planno died in March 2006.

<sup>16</sup> For a more detailed survey of the literature and some of the growing list of unpublished items, see Richards (1999) and Bibliography.

Talk is a language or a dialect, Peart concluded that it is a dialect of Jamaican Creole with the caveat that Rastas do not use pure Creole ‘because it has been influenced by Imperialist/Colonialist mentality and subjugation’ (1977, 10). The unique feature of Dread Talk, Peart (1977, 11-14) further observed, is its creative employment of the pronominal ‘I’.

Less than a decade later, Pollard published a programmatic and linguistically sophisticated paper as part of a symposium on Rastafari. Her focus was upon the lexical items of Dread Talk, particularly the distinctive pronominal form. Pollard (1985, 34-40) classifies Dread Talk under three main categories.

In the first category we have ‘known items bear[ing] new meanings’, for example, the term ‘forward’ becomes in Dread Talk ‘leave’ in the sentence, ‘I man a faawod’. The second category, observes Pollard, encompasses ‘Words that bear the weight of their phonological implications with some explanations.’ For instance, the English ‘oppress’ morphs into ‘downpress’, as in the sentence ‘Weda di man did blak ar wait an im dounpress me now iz stil siem ai a bon/whether the man is black or white and he oppresses me I am still the one suffering.’ Pollard summarizes the third category thus:

The pronoun “I” of SJE [Standard Jamaican English] gives place to /mi/ in JC [Jamaican Creole] and is glossed as I, my, mine, me, according to the context. It is this “I” of SJE that has become the predominant sound in Rastafarian language though its implications are far more extensive than the simple SJE pronoun “I” could ever bear.



She was to provide a more detailed description of Dread Talk in a monograph (Pollard, 1994) that was later revised (Pollard, 2000), using the same basic categories.

Drawing upon the works of Pollard and Chevannes, Homiak's essay (1998) seeks to reconstruct the earliest years of 'I-ance . . . the category of lexicon which has become the predominant and most creative aspect of Rastafari language' (160). He concedes, along with Chevannes (1998, 1-42), that a detailed account of the subject is virtually impossible to delineate at present, and that Dread Talk, particularly the distinctive employment of 'I', 'is historically continuous with the folk penchant for punning and experimentation with language' (161).

Another stage in the development of 'I-talk' is traceable to members of the 'I-agic' house, who in the 50s were among the first to use 'the self-reflexive nominative case' which has now become the lexical hallmark of the movement. 'This' affirms Homiak, 'would reflect the obvious influence of the Bible' (161). He then cites a first-hand account of what may turn out to be the best recollection of how the colourful linguistic expression came about; the 'speaker' is one I-rice I-cons: 'And de Creator speak to I-n-I through de spirit and fix a new tongue in de latter days [And the Creator speaks to me through the Spirit and establishes a new language in the latter days]' (162).

McFarlane's contribution (1998) to another of the most authoritative symposia to date is an attempt to analyze the distinctive pronominal against the backdrop of popular Jamaican culture loosely within the framework of

Western philosophy. ‘Rasta I-words’, asserts McFarlane (1998, 107), ‘form a well-knit semantic and lexical family structure.’ Within this linguistic framework, Rastas are able to simultaneously resist the culture of subservience imposed on those of African descent, as well as affirm their new epistemological paradigm in contradistinction to that of a dominant Western brand (McFarlane 1998, 108-119).

#### ‘I’ in the New Testament: Some Recent Perspectives<sup>1</sup>

Even though all people on planet earth, as far as we can verify, use the word “I” and its equivalents, the meanings invested in that word in the various social systems of the world are often radically different. . . . The way people deal with the self can be plotted on a line whose extreme axes are individualism (awareness of a unique and totally independent “I”) on the one hand, and collectivism (awareness of an “I” that has nearly everything in common with the kinship group and its spin-offs) (Malina 1996, 44-45).

While it is relatively easy to determine where the NT writers fall on Malina’s continuum (most likely the collectivist), this generalization cannot be used to pre-judge the meaning of such a challenging passage like Romans 7 as even a cursory review of its history of interpretation will show (Baaij 1993, 21-68, up to the Reformation).

The most extensive overview of the I-statements in the Gospels as far as I am aware is still the article by Stauffer (1964). Stauffer makes the insightful observation that divine I-declarations in the NT are extremely rare, being limited for the most part to quotations from the OT.

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<sup>1</sup> There is a wealth of interpreters on which to draw. Those chosen here fairly represent, in my view, the spectrum of various readings. Later others will be highlighted. See also Middendorf (1997: 15-51).

In contrast, one finds *evgw*, (*ego*-‘I’) on the lips of Jesus where normally a divine utterance is expected. This is characteristically true of the I-speeches of Matt 5. Other significant instances, according to Stauffer, are Matt 11:28f where Jesus ‘occupies a central place between God and us’ and Luke 22:32 where this mediatorial position is played out on behalf of a disciple.

Stauffer sees the Gospel of John taking the I-statements to a different level in presenting Christ in special relation to the Father (8:29, 42; 10:30, 38; see also Appendix D). He also mentions the seven or so I-statements (Christ as light, bread, vine, door, road, truth, life) ‘which characterize the uniqueness’ of his person and significance for the human race.

The absolute use of the ‘I am’ predication (e.g., John 8:24) receives special focus as a derivative of OT passages like Ex 3:14; Deut 32:39; and Is 41:4. This borrowing of OT passages is also reflected in the Apocalypse in which the main focus of the I-statements ‘is the union between God and Christ.’

Yet another useful study is that of Seiichi Yagi (1987, 117-134). Although the author’s main purpose was to provide an interpretive framework within which to understand the thought of Takizawa Katsumi as an aid to promote dialogue between Buddhists and Christians, he nonetheless offers an insightful examination of the Christological I-speeches.

The backdrop for this is Katsumi’s distinction of what is termed ‘primary’ and ‘secondary’ contacts with God. The first ‘is the unconditional fact that God is with each of us, no matter what we have done, even though we are usually ignorant of this unity lying at the very ground of the self.’ (117).

When the self is awakened to this fact it now becomes possible for it 'to live in conscious accord with the will of God.' Jesus and Buddha, according to Katsumi, attained secondary contact with God, with the former 'so thoroughly and completely that he became the model for ourselves.' What Jesus was for the Hebrews, Gautama Buddha was for the Indian tradition.

Yagi registers unqualified agreement with Katsumi's perspective, including the notion that the 'ground of salvation is the primary contact of God with the self.' Yagi then goes on to survey the scholarly investigation of the Synoptic traditions and the varied responses to the question concerning Jesus' messianic consciousness in the last fifty years.

He observes that many scholars during this period who employed Form Criticism denied that Jesus understood himself as Son of Man/Messiah, 'though he spoke and acted with unparalleled authority, which surpassed even that of Moses.' Yagi continues, 'but unless I am mistaken, none of these scholars inquired deeply into the meaning of "I" of such statements of Jesus as "But I say. . . ." This "I" has many levels of meaning. We can ask then just what the "I" in the words of Jesus really means.'

Yagi then went on to explore Jesus' 'I' speeches in the Synoptics and the Gospel of John before comparing them with certain features of Zen Buddhism. An important contribution of both Yagi and Stauffer is their treatment of Paul's I-statements in 'parallel' with those of Jesus. But neither writer sought to explain the relation between the two sets of pronominal declaratives.

As was noted earlier, one of the difficulties NT interpreters face is to identify Paul's reference in his use of *evgw*, in Rom 7:14ff. Is it Paul before conversion? Is it Paul as a Christian struggling in his own power apart from the Spirit's help? Or, indeed, is it Paul the Christian even with the Spirit's help? Is the 'I' merely a literary projection whose real reference is Israel<sup>2</sup> and her experience with the Law?

It is Douglas Moo who (1986, 122-135) gives a qualified yes to the last question by combining it with the autobiographical view. For him *evgw*, in Romans 7 is the writer in solidarity with Israel. In support of this Moo cites certain OT passages where the pronominal first person is used for the capital, Jerusalem, or for the entire nation (e.g., Jer 10:19-22; Mic 7: 7-10, etc), as well as the structure of Rom 7:9-10a vis-à-vis the OT account(s) of the giving of the Law.

Moo's position, though argued with plausibility, is somewhat subtle and one doubts that the original audience would have made such connection.

B. Dodd (1999) broadens the investigation by demonstrating how the apostle's use of *evgw*, through most of his epistles is tied to his desire to exemplify certain Christian virtues. More than that, the apostle's use of 'I' served often to illustrate and consolidate his arguments with some rhetorical flourish. In other words, Paul's personal references demonstrate his skill as a teacher rather than any tendency toward being autobiographical.

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<sup>2</sup>In a later work Moo (1991, 452 n.7) points out that this position is quite rare, citing people like Stauffer (1964, 2:358ff) as among modern adherents. Russell (1994) offers a post-modern reading.

Dodd's work (like that of Lyon's and Chae's below) has the advantage of being a monograph which gives him ample space to develop his thesis—one that I find quite persuasive. I hope to build on this by highlighting an important dimension of Paul's presentation in Romans 7 and 15—chapters that figure very little in Dodd's work. Another feature that Dodd downplays is the occasional autobiographical character of Paul's self references.

The opposite view is shared by Lyons (1985) who marshaled a spirited defense of Paul's employment of the autobiographical 'genre'. In contrast to those scholars who embrace the 'widely' held assumption that Paul writes autobiographically only 'infrequently, incidentally, reluctantly and almost apologetically' (170), Lyons offers a fairly thorough research of the apostle's personal remarks against the background of similar references in antiquity. Working from Galatians and 1 Thessalonians, two of Paul's earliest letters, Lyons concludes that certain features of the writer's autobiographical statements parallel that of ancient philosophers who claimed to be an embodiment of their own philosophies. For example, in Galatians various strands of the evidence come together to support the conclusion that Paul presents his 'autobiography' as a paradigm of the Gospel of Christian freedom which he seeks to persuade his readers to reaffirm 'in the face of the threat presented by the trouble-makers. . . . Despite the close identification between Paul and his message, he remains subject to the gospel (171).' This tantalizing study unfortunately does not treat Romans 7 at all. However, its usefulness in the other areas cannot be ignored.

Another study that is quite relevant to my own investigation is Chae's *Paul: an Apostle to the Gentiles* (1997). Quite apart from its focus on chapter 15, the chapter that Chae feels is most crucial in understanding why Paul wrote the letter, I am very much interested in how Chae develops the theme encapsulated in his subtitle (His Apostolic Self-awareness and its Influence on the Soteriological Argument in Romans). Chae makes the observation that Paul's apostolic self-awareness in respect of his theology remains substantially undeveloped. He then goes on to argue (convincingly in my view) that the apostle's self-awareness has strongly influenced his affirmation of the equality of Jew and Gentile soteriologically, and had even affected his rhetoric.

What I hope to show is that this same apostolic self-awareness is also expressed soteriologically in a slightly different way, one that is complementary to Chae's own thesis.

Baaij's (1993) proposal in his interpretation of Romans 7 is that Paul's language is dominated by Hebrew thought patterns. With this hypothesis in mind, Baaij seeks as much as possible to discover Semitic equivalents for that which is formulated in the original language of Paul's letter to the Romans.

Justification for this approach is seen in the notion that Paul was divinely called as a prophet to all nations, including Israel. Seen in this light, the apostle's ministry should be viewed as in direct succession with those of Isaiah and Jeremiah. Baaij's thesis, though interesting, remains unconvincing, despite the fact that he has provided linguistic equivalents for virtually every term in Romans 7.

I hope to explore some of these equivalents with a view to strengthening my own reading of the controversial chapter. I will argue that Paul's 'I' affirmations constitute another way of employing 'impotence language,' a language that is well illustrated elsewhere in the Pauline corpus, as well as in the Hebrew Scriptures familiar to the apostle.

What follows immediately is an historical overview of Rastafari as a movement, succeeded by a linguistic analysis of the pertinent dominical sayings in their narrative frameworks as recorded by the Evangelists themselves.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Perhaps, we should bear in mind that 'the four parallel narratives about Jesus in the New Testament canon . . . make up almost half of the New Testament text—319 out of 680 "Nestle" pages. The early church evidently preferred vivid narrative to abstract letters . . . for if one adds the *deuterocanonicals* . . . the Acts of the Apostles, also narrative . . . the proportion of the writings which narrate "history/stories" increases to almost two-thirds of the New Testament. . . . Revelation is also connected with the Gospels . . . and the visionary accounts . . . need also to be accounted among the "narrative" writings. Even Paul narrates parts of the "earliest history" in . . . Gal. 1 and 2 . . . Romans 15 . . . and his own biography in Phil. 3:4-7' (Hengel 2000, 8).

This study will focus on the material mentioned by Hengel, therefore exclude the other third of the NT. The order of treatment, with the exception of the majority of Paul's correspondence, is basically that of Wright's (2003, 209-476).



## CHAPTER TWO

### THE STORY OF RASTAFARI

#### A. From Garvey to Marley

From the garden parish of St. Ann, Jamaica, the ‘very religious, overwhelmingly protestant [country that] has many more churches per capita than the US’ (Wedenoja 2002, 141; cf. Afari 2007, 1-5), the country whose impact on the rest of the world is out of proportion to its size (Spencer 1997, 1), sprouted the two most prominent prophets of the Rastafari movement (DeCosmo 2003, 59-75; Haskins 2003, 43-48; Marley 2005; Tafari 1996). Both have gained international acclaim and both are highly regarded in the land of their burial. Marcus Mosiah<sup>18</sup> Garvey is Jamaica’s first national hero, and Robert Nesta Marley is almost certain to become one soon.<sup>19</sup> If Marley

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<sup>18</sup> ‘A remarkably suggestive combination of “Moses” and “Messiah.”’ (Chevannes 2006, 85).

<sup>19</sup> Marley’s 60<sup>th</sup> ‘anniversary’ was simultaneously celebrated in Jamaica and Ethiopia in February 2005. Years earlier he was awarded the Order of Merit by the Jamaican government, ‘entitling him to be called “honorable”’ (Booker 2003, 199; cf. Erskine 2007, xiii). Booker is Marley’s mother and a devoted Rasta. A fine synopsis of Marley’s life and religion is to be found in Murrell *et al.* (1998; cf. Goldman 2006). Other Rastas who have written about the movement and the experience of blackness include Yasus Afari (2007), Jahson Atiba Alemu (1994), Tafari Ama (2004), former SDA pastor, Brooks (2002), Dennis Forsythe (1983, 1985), Leonard Howell [G. G. Maragh] (2001; on this writer, see Lee 2003; Spencer 1998: 361ff), Jahmona (2001), Douglas Mack (1999), Rita Marley (2004), John Moodie (1999), Mutabaruka (2005), Maureen Rowe (1998), former Jesuit priest, Martin

and Garvey are prophets of the movement, they function in strikingly different ways. Marley is responsible more than any other for the worldwide popularity not only of Reggae music, but also of the religion of the dread-locks.<sup>20</sup> Garvey on the other hand was not a Rasta by any means (Lewis 2006). Yet he is the man credited with the birth of the movement. According to the first Rasta to have published a book on the movement, Rastafari 'was a flower in a pigsty, watered by the nourishment of the Prophet Marcus Garvey, swayed by the wind of local political change, and cherished by the Black man's long withheld desire to hold his head upright' (Hannah 2002, 6; cf. Afari 2007, 13-16; Tafari 1985). It is believed that the flower was planted for the Rasta<sup>21</sup> by the following prophecy that was made when Garvey was departing his homeland in 1929 (1916! in Schade 1996, 45): 'Look to Africa where a king would be

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Schade (1996), Leahcim Semaj (1985)), Ikael Tafari (2001), and Williams (2005).

The secondary literature is also growing. Some important English works are Barrett (1997), Campbell (1987), Chevannes (1994), Edmonds (1993, 2003), Erskine (2007; 2007a), Farley (2007), Mais (2004), Partridge (2002), and Spencer (1999). One can also find pieces in Spanish (Serbin 1986), German (Weiss 1981), as well as French (Lieberhern 1987; Lee 1999). Japanese (Nagashima 1984) and Dutch (Dijk 2007) writers have also joined the fray.

<sup>20</sup> See, for example, Steffens (1998, 253-265).

<sup>21</sup> In this work the 'Rasta' stands for Rasta wo/man; and at times for the Christ.

crowned, for the day of deliverance is near' (Ahkell 1999, 7. Cf. Marley<sup>22</sup> 2004, 37 and Rogers 2000, 83; see also Barrett 1997, 67; Chevannes 2006, 85).

The fact that no documentation has been found in Garvey's writings for the prediction have [sic] led some scholars [e.g., Mansingh 1985, 111] to believe that it was fabricated by early exponents of Rastafari. However, it is likely that Garvey made some oral declaration to that import and that it was kept alive in the memory of people steeped in oral tradition (Edmonds 2003, 147 n. 34; cf. Afari 2007, 27; Erskine 2007, 67-70; Tafari 2001, 420-421).

But one does not have to look very far into the writings of Garvey to see the kind of afrocentric emphases that sparked the imagination of his followers.<sup>23</sup> 'Let Africa be our guiding star—OUR STAR OF DESTINY.' 'The whole world is my province until Africa is free.' 'I have a vision of the future, and I see before me a picture of a redeemed Africa' (Garvey 1925, 6, 37, 78, respectively). These and many other references to the mother-land coupled with the coronation of Ras Tafari as Haile Selassie in November 1930 inspired 'some men of African descent both in Jamaica and New York to study their Bibles and the teachings of Garvey more closely' (Hannah 2002, 8; Ahkell 1999, 7-9). One of these men was Leonard Howell (Lee, 1999), a well traveled Jamaican and an ex-soldier 'in the Ashanti war of 1896.'

### B. The Story of Selassie

According to Hannah, Howell was fluent in several African languages and it was he who first proclaimed the divinity of Selassie 1 (Hannah 2002, 8).

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<sup>22</sup>Here (p. 43), Bob's widow testifies of having seen a nail-print in Selassie's palm on his visit to Jamaica in 1966; cf. John 20:24-29; Middleton (2006, 160).

<sup>23</sup>Garvey also 'proclaimed Jamaica to be the vanguard of race uplift' (Patsides 2005, 47).

Unlike Hannah, Mack (1999, 30-32; also Alemu 1994, 1-38) traces the roots of Rastafari as far back as the accounts of King Solomon recorded in 1 Kings 10, 2 Chronicles 9 and 'The Kebra Nagast (The Glory of Kings)'. According to Mack, after Queen Makeda of Sheba visited Solomon she bore him a son, who 'later became Emperor Menelick 1 of Ethiopia.' Mack (1999, 35; cf. Felder 1995, 32-34; Yamauchi 2006, 352-353) goes on to say that 'Since that blood lineage continues to H. I. M. Emperor Haile Sellassie I, there can be no doubt who Sellassie really is. Undoubtedly, Jesus Christ is truly an ancestor of Haile Sellassie 1.' For Mack the colour of Selassie's 'ancestor' is also of paramount importance, since Europe's artists 'missed their mark and made the portrait of Christ look not dark, but of Caucasian features.'

To understand how significant it is for Selassie/Christ to be black one has to at least understand how the white race that once enslaved 'Jah children' came about.

From Nesta [Bob Marley] I [Bob's Mother] learned the true story of Cain and Abel: that Cain lusted after his sister, whose favourite had been Abel. In a rage of jealousy, Cain slew Abel, and knew his sister. [Jah then] cursed Cain, turned him white, and cast him out from among his own. Thus begun the race of white men on the earth (Booker 2003, 149).

Apparently, similar stories were circulated during the days of slavery. For example, we read that:

Charles Gentry, a slave who took to preaching, taught that all the first humans were black: 'Cain he kill his brudder Abel with a great big club . . . and God he cum to Cain, an' said, "Cain! Whar is dy brudder Abel?" Cain he put a lip, and say, "I don' know: Why ye axin' me fur? I ain't me brudder Abel's keeper". De Lord he gets in airnest [angry], and stomps on de ground, and say, "Cain! You Cain! Whar is dy brudder Abel? . . . Cain

he turn white as bleech in da face, and de whole race ob Cain dey bin white ebber since' (Segal 1995, 64-65; cited in Yorke 2004, 159).

What is implicit in these two citations is made explicit in Garvey's insistence that the 'Black man evidently was the first man. Adam and Eve were black. Their two children, Cain and Abel, were black' (Garvey 1986, 104; cf. Moodie 1999, 7).

It stands to Rastafari reason, then, that both the first Adam and the Last Adam (1 Corinthians 15: 45) were black. This last Adam, who to the Rasta is Selassie, was crowned in 1930 as King of Kings and three years later Leonard Howell was proclaiming his 'six principles' of Rastafari (Ahkell 1999, 10): 1) Hatred for the white race; 2) The complete superiority of the Black race; 3) Revenge on whites for their wickedness; 4) The negation, persecution and humiliation of the Government and legal bodies of Jamaica; 5) Preparation to go back to Africa; and 6) Acknowledging Emperor Haile Selassie<sup>24</sup> as the Supreme Being and only ruler of Black people.

But despite sharing a similar protology as we have seen above, neither 'Jam-ican' (that is, Garvey nor Marley) subscribed to all six of Howell's principles. In fact Garvey could only be linked categorically to number five (repatriation).

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<sup>24</sup> During the emperor's World War II exile in England, 'Most of his speeches were written by Miss Una Marson . . . the girl from Santa Cruz [Jamaica], who became world famous' (Johnson 2001, 19).

In respect of principles one, two and three, Garvey is on record as saying, ‘Folks try to misrepresent me and say I don’t like white people. That is not true. Some of the best friends I have are white men.’ He continues:

I have respect for every race. I believe the Irish should be free.... I believe the Jew should be free and the Egyptian should be free, and the Indian and the Poles. I believe also that the black man should be free. I would fight for the freedom of the Jew, the Irish, the Poles. (Garvey 1925, 214-215).

Marley likewise is equally emphatic about his mission and vision of race: ‘I believe in freedom for everyone, not just the black man. . . . If you’re black and you’re wrong, you’re wrong; If you’re white and you’re wrong, you’re wrong; If you’re Indian and you’re wrong, you’re wrong. It is universal . . . . My father was a white guy, my mother was a black woman, and I came in between.’ (Marley 1993, 54).

Where Garvey and Marley differed sharply was on their perception of Selassie. Marley followed Howell in affirming the divinity of His Imperial Majesty. For example, Marley declares, ‘I am sure Haile Selassie is almighty God—without apologies’ (Marley 1993, 59), whereas ‘At the very beginning of the Rastafarian movement, Garvey challenged Leonard Howell’s claim that Selassie was divine’ (Lewis 1998, 151). In fact, Garvey saw himself as a Christian, although it was thought otherwise:

There is no evidence in the record to show that I at any time ever asserted the belief of being a Messiah; the records will show, to the contrary, that I have always been a Christian and was confirmed by the Catholic Bishop who testified in my behalf. (Garvey 1925, 252).

Marley apparently became a ‘born-again’ Christian just before he died (Case 2007, 11; Palmer 2004, 86), but throughout his adult life he had serious misgivings about the established or traditional church (Steffens 1998, 259).<sup>25</sup> One of the reasons Rastas oppose the church is that they see themselves exclusively as the people of God in the modern era. If we follow Wright (1992, 125) in investigating a movement in terms of its dominant story, praxis, symbols and questions, we discover that, like Judaism and Christianity, Rastas are committed to what Wright describes as creational, providential and covenantal monotheism.<sup>26</sup> The major difference between Judaism and Christianity, according to Wright, is the radical assertion of the latter that Jesus is the climax of the covenant of the former. Rastas are in agreement with this affirmation. They only insist that the Christ of the NT, the Jah<sup>27</sup> of the OT, is none other than the Power of the Trinity (‘Haile Selassie’ in Amharic; Afari 2007, 38; Ahkell 1994, 34; Moodie 1999, 38) in this century.

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<sup>25</sup> Cf. his ‘inflammatory’ lyrics, ‘I feel like bombing a church / Now that you know that the preacher is lying’ (Boot and Goldman 1981, [13]; Steffens 1998, 258).

<sup>26</sup> Rasta monotheism, as we will see below, needs further exploration. For Rasta praxis (ganja smoking [Brown 2000], etc.) and symbols such as the wearing of locks and red, gold, and green, see Afari (2007) and Erskine (2007). One scholar (Bisnauth 1989, 165-194) views the movement as part of the ‘Africanisation of Christianity’.

<sup>27</sup> The form of the name of God appearing in Psalm 68: 4 (A.V; *hy* in the MT; cf. Lieber 2004, 330). Why this is chosen over against the longer form (*hw" ihy>/Jehovah*, or better, YHWH [LORD]) is unknown; Waltke (2007, 11) translates the tetragrammaton as ‘*I AM*’ throughout his *magnum opus*.

As we have pointed above, a favourite text of Rastafari in this regard is Revelation 5, which purportedly identifies Emperor Haile Selassie as King of Kings, the conquering lion of the tribe of Judah (Brooks, 1996, 176).

But according to Chisholm (1994, 43), the ‘motto The Lion of the Tribe of Judah . . . culled from Revelation 5: 5, was used by [Ethiopian] Emperors on their seals to indicate the Christian nature of the empire.’ ‘This tradition,’ Chisholm informs us, ‘goes back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century [CE].’<sup>28</sup> So then while the movement may be charged with deifying Emperor Selassie, it is not primarily responsible for seeing HIM as the lion-king of Revelation 5 or as part of the Solomonic dynasty. In fact, there is evidence that the Emperor himself, like many of his countrymen, believed in the main document that forms the basis of such a claim of the ‘lion line’. For instance, when Selassie visited the UK in the autumn of 1954, the editor of the *Sunday Dispatch* (Oct. 24) asked him about the Makeda–Solomon--Menelik legend; Selassie ‘replied in a firm and forthright manner: “This is not a Legend! It is based on the most universal book in the world—the Holy Bible”’ (Hubbard 1956, 5).

In a sense the Emperor was correct, for one of Hubbard’s findings is that the *Kebra Negast* [KN] is permeated with OT quotations and allusions.

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<sup>28</sup> Brooks (1996, 176) places the date three centuries earlier. The Solomonic dynasty was restored by Yekumo Amlak, who ruled between 1270 -1285. This made way for the ‘legitimate heirs of the Aksumite line as defined by traditions of the *Kebra Negast* [KN]’ to take up their rightful place, Selassie ‘being the 225<sup>th</sup> rebirth of Solomon and direct descendant of the union of King Solomon with the queen of Sheba.’ The ‘descent of the Ethiopian Kings from Solomon and the Queen of the South’ is one of the dominant themes of the KN (Hubbard 1956, 3).



‘Narratives, genealogies, legal material, specific details, alleged quotations, and phrases woven into the text of the KN comprise the major types of references’ (Hubbard, 56).<sup>29</sup>

One of the persons present at the coronation of Ras Tafari in 1930 was Leonard P. Howell, whom we have already identified as the first Jamaican to proclaim the divine kingship of His Imperial Majesty, lion of the tribe of Judah. Ten years after, Howell purchased ‘Pinnacle estate in Sligoville, St. Catherine [JA. WI] . . . the first free village established after “given emancipation” in 1938’ (McPherson and Semaj 1985, 117). It was at this site that ‘lionism’ and other fundamental RastafarI tenets were first developed.

Since then:

It is clear from a detailed observation of Rastafarianism that the omnipresent symbol of the movement is in fact a dread lion. Rasta dreadlocks are the symbolic reincarnation of indication of the lion in man form, both in face and body. . . . In all of their hairy and natural variations Rastas bear the face, power, strength and fearlessness which come with the powerful self-realization I-AM-LION-MAN, in spite of all that has happened to deprive “I” of its natural manhood expression (Forsythe 1985, 73).

Those, then, who recognize the God-like status of His Imperial Majesty constitute the people of God today (not African-Americans, as we have been informed by the *Oxford Paperback Encyclopaedia* [1998, 1132]). Thus Dr. Tafari Ama (2004, 98) boldly confesses: ‘I recognize the divinity of Ras Tafari, His Imperial Majesty, Haile Selassie I, King of Kings, Lords, [sic]

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<sup>29</sup>Hubbard (pp. 54, 83) alleges that there are also fabricated OT quotations, and that the KN does not hesitate to alter a passage to make a more suitable proof-text.

Conquering Lion of Judah . . . . [This] is the antithesis of modern day missionaries who embrace Jesus Christ as the Messiah.’ ‘The only true practitioners of this Christianity [then] are those who call themselves Rastafari . . . [who] believe that the African race is the true Tribe of Israel, having been enslaved, and still in possession of their earthly Zion’ (Hannah 2002, 30, 35; cf. Ahkell 1999, 9; Alemu 1994, 64).<sup>30</sup>

But there is one branch of Christianity that a few Rastas find to their liking—the Ethiopian Orthodox Church (EOC).<sup>31</sup> This was the church given to Jamaica as a gift from Emperor Haile Selassie after his visit in 1966 and after learning that he was being worshipped as God by some Jamaicans. This was the church in which Marley and his mother were baptized (Booker 2003, 152; Marley’s baptismal name was Berhane Selassie, ‘Light of the Trinity’),<sup>32</sup> and

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<sup>30</sup>For useful summaries of the movement with various scholarly appraisals, see Edmonds (2003, 127-139), Johnson-Hill (1995, 3-65) and Murrell (1998:1-17). The outline above is based for the most part on primary sources, like Afari 2007.

<sup>31</sup>According to Johnson-Hill (1995, 18), Joseph Hibbert, one of the early heralds of Selassie’s divinity ‘established the Ethiopian Coptic [*sic*] Church . . . [a] congregation . . . characterized by mystical orientation coupled with Masonic discipline.’

<sup>32</sup>Evidently there was another baptism: ‘In his last year, Bob’s spiritual emphasis broadened to include Garvey and Christ, even being baptized in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church in the name of Christ. “Africa in ten years times? Africa will be dreadlocks. . . . Christ’s Government will rule,” he said in an interview broadcast on the day of his death’ (Hannah 2002, 62). The mention of ‘Garvey’ here seems strange, since Marley (except for the issues of Selassie’s divinity and marijuana use) was Garveyite for most of his adult life.

of which the late Emperor Selassie himself was a part.<sup>33</sup> Therefore, one can understand the disappointment of Hannah (2002, 103) when she questions the wisdom of I-Three member, Judy Mowatt, for having rejected the EOC for its fundamentalist Christianity (cf. Afari 2007, 138). But this is an isolated case.

Today the Rastafarian movement has become, in the language of one of their own, a world religion--the only one to do so in the twentieth century (Greschat 2005, 484).

And the type of Rastafarianism embraced by others apart from Jamaicans has a definite Marley ring to it.<sup>34</sup> This should come as no surprise because Bob Marley has still remained the movement's greatest evangelist. We now turn to the Rastafarian use of language.

### C. The Story of Dread Talk<sup>35</sup>

As was pointed out earlier, University of the West Indies professor, Velma Pollard, is the only scholar to date to have written exclusively on the speech of Rastafari (cf. Bennett 1968). Her first contribution is an essay which treats Rasta talk 'as an example of local expression within a Creole system' (Pollard 1985, 32; cf. Chen 1994). The 'System' in question here is the heart language

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<sup>33</sup> 'His Imperial Majesty Emperor Haile Selassie I is a Christian who follows Christ.' writes Afari (2007, 242), a Rasta.

<sup>34</sup> See for example Hannah's (2002, 51-59; 123-151) chapter on 'How Rastafari has Spread' and the corresponding 'White Rastas.'

<sup>35</sup> 'The upper case *I* on the ending of the word [Rastafari] is deliberate and carries special significance for a Rastafarian writer', declares Rowe (1998, 86, n. 1). The 'I' is the most distinctive element of Rastafarian speech.

of the vast majority of the Jamaican people, regularly called ‘Patois,’ or ‘Creole’ or ‘Jamaican Talk’ (JT) (Cooper 1993, 16 n. 2; See Appendix B).<sup>36</sup>

The genesis of JT has been a matter of dispute among Creole linguists. Some of these scholars hold to what is called the mono-genetic theory which traces all Caribbean Creoles to a common Portuguese based pidgin.

Other linguists support the poly-genetic model which theorizes that JT and others like it have developed independently (Mufwene 1996, 163-196). Along these lines Jones (1963, 9; cited by Dillard 1972, vii) writes:

It is absurd to assume, as has been the tendency among a great many anthropologists and sociologists, that all traces of Africa were erased from the Negro’s mind because he learned English. The very nature of the English the Negro spoke and still speaks drops the lie on that idea.

The above is similar to the observation of one missionary/translator from Jamaica to Nigeria (cited in Wariboko 2007, 89; italics his):

The Ibo language is a very fascinating study. The sort of English or Jamaica dialect . . . commonly heard on our streets in Jamaica contains many Ibo words. For example, *unu* for you, [and] *soso* for only . . . *The presence of these and other words in our every day speech seems to indicate that a large proportion of our people are descendants of the Ibos.*

Whatever the proper account of how JT originated, the study of its linguistic character has progressed to the point where at least two dictionaries

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<sup>36</sup> Or simply ‘Jamaican,’ the preferred term of some linguists (Alleyne 1988, 120-148). For African linguistic retentions in JT and others like it, see Parkvall (2000). JT ‘the devalorised, hybrid language created by African peoples in Jamaica, is the preferred medium for rewriting and voicing-over the flipped script of cultural autonomy’ (Cooper 2002, 274). More recently the editor of the first JT lexicon by a Rasta suggests ‘Jamic’ (Reynolds 2006, i).

(Cassidy and LePage 2000; Reynolds 2006) and a grammar (Adams 1991) have been produced. And following the lead of Haiti and St Lucia, Christian scholars, in association with the Bible Society of the West Indies, are in the process of translating the Bible into JT whose pronominal system closely parallels Gullah (Sea Island Creole).<sup>37</sup> These are a far cry from the days when the preface to one of the accounts of Jamaican Creole read in part, ‘This little work was never intended originally to meet the eyes of the public; the writer merely prepared it as a source of social amusement to such of his friends as of a literary turn’ (Romaine 1988, 7).

Certain features of the JT syntax ‘have attracted particularly close attention,’ writes linguistics professor, Pauline Christie (2003): ‘These include tense-aspect [cf. NT Greek in recent years; Appendix C]’ . . . . For example, in Derek Brotherton’s *Dynamics of Creole System* [and] Donald Winford’s *Predication in Caribbean English Creoles*.

While it would be interesting to give an overview of the entire JT grammar, including phonology and morphology, our particular focus will only allow us to examine briefly its pronominal system and its expanding lexicon under the influence of Rastafari (Reynolds 2006). The personal pronouns (JT) are as follows (Adams 1991, 20; Christie 2003, 31; cf. Cassidy and LePage 2000, 233; Kuck 2004, 4; Roberts 2007, 64):

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<sup>37</sup>Cf. ‘*Oono must neba be like dat*’ (Luke 22: 26a; *De Good Nyews Bout Jedus Christ* [1995, 120]).

Singular	Plural
1 <sup>st</sup> <i>Mi</i> (I)	<i>Wi</i> (we/us)
2 <sup>nd</sup> <i>Yu</i> (you)	<i>Unu</i> (you)
3 <sup>rd</sup> <i>Im /Shi / i</i> (he/she/it)	<i>Dem</i> (they)

The Rasta also uses these pronouns but with the following exceptions: for the first person singular it is ‘*I, I & I, I-man*’ (Adams 1991, 22; cf.; Afari 2007, 114; Allsopp 1996, 302; Reynolds 2006, 65). For the first person plural, *I-n- I* is used almost exclusively. The following ‘I-terms’ illustrate some of the ways in which the Rasta employs the distinctive pronoun to make new words and modify others (Mack 1999, 25):

*Idren* - brother (s)

*Ifficial* - official

*Incient* - ancient

*I n I* - us, we

*Inison* - unison

*Irator* - Creator

*Ises* - Praises

*Ivinity* - Divinity.<sup>38</sup>

So far the only documented examples of DT as an expansion of JT is provided by Pollard (1994, 35-37):

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<sup>38</sup>Other interesting terms in the Rastafari vocabulary include *sistren* (sister/s), *Jah-mek-ya* (Jamaica; from the original Arawak word meaning; ‘isle of springs’ (Cassidy and LePage). *Jah-mek-ya* is paronomasia for ‘Jah has made this land’, just like ‘Jam-ICAN’; cf. Green (2006) and Irving (2006). See also Cooper (2002) for additional terms.

<i>I aan</i>	-	I am here
<i>I an I a knaka</i>	-	My heart is good
<i>I-bage</i>	-	Cabbage
<i>I-cieve</i>	-	Receive
<i>I-ah</i>	-	Me [man]
<i>Ichin [I-Iy]</i>	-	Ganja
<i>I-ditate</i>	-	Meditate
<i>I-dure</i>	-	Endure
<i>I-hold</i>	-	Behold
<i>I-krel</i>	-	Mackerel
<i>Imes</i>	-	Time
<i>Inderstand</i>	-	Understand
<i>Inite</i>	-	unite
<i>I- nointed</i>	-	anointed
<i>I-mally</i>	-	Annually, Continually
<i>Ipa</i>	-	pepper
<i>I-quality</i>	-	equality
<i>I-rate</i>	-	Create
<i>I-ration</i>	-	Creation
<i>Irie</i>	-	Alright, good, Salutation
<i>Irie skip</i>	-	Yes friend
<i>I-tons</i>	-	guns
<i>I-sanna</i>	-	Hosanna

<i>I-shense</i>	-	Incense
<i>I-smit</i>	-	Transmit
<i>I-ssembly</i>	-	Assembly
<i>Ital</i>	-	vital; pure, natural, without salt
<i>Ital bath</i>	-	River Bath

Of course, DT is much more than a litany of ‘I-sentiments.’ Pollard places it on a continuum between English, the official language of Jamaica, and the heart language of the majority, JT,<sup>39</sup> because ‘in Jamaica diglossia is a long established feature of the language situation’ (2004, 281).

As can be seen from the partial listings above, the Rastas use the nominative pronoun in a variety of ways. Though their language is basically JT, it appears they are in the process of creating their own. In fact this is the opinion of Nettleford (in Owens 1976, iv):

The Rastafarians are inventing a language, using existing elements to be sure, but creating a means of communication that would faithfully reflect the specificities of their experience and perception of self, life and the

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<sup>39</sup>Says Christie, a linguist, (2003, 34): ‘Dread Talk is basically Jamaican Creole with some modifications of the forms and meanings of words.’ On page 4 of the same work she gives an interesting example of code-switching by the Most honourable P. J. Patterson, former Prime Minister of Jamaica: ‘*“I man didn’t quarrel with anybody . . . I man just make sure the people-dem get water, light, hospital beds, telephones and roads”*.’ Her italics.

The present attitude toward JT/DT is strikingly similar to that toward English in the Middle Ages: ‘It is not generally realized that the languages of the elite in English society in the early fourteenth century were French and Latin. English was seen as the language of the peasants, incapable of expressing anything other than the crudest and most basic of matters. . . . [H]ow could such a barbaric language do justice to such sophisticated matters as philosophy or religion? To translate the Bible from its noble and ancient languages into English was seen as a pointless act of debasement’ (McGrath 2001, 24).



world . . . [it is a] relexification of African forms into the language of the [slave] masters.

This can be seen by the Rasta's consistent replacement of *mi* (JT nominative) with 'I' which is already an integral part of the Queen's language. But this replacement must not be thought to be an attempt to return to the language of 'Babylon'; there is indeed a method to the language game of Rastafari (Wittgenstein 1963). As Pollard has pointed out, the Rasta's use of 'I' is not a part of such agenda.

How shall we, then, assess the function of the subject pronoun in Rastafari? Given the nature of our investigation we are especially interested in how it is used in a theological sense,<sup>40</sup> but that part of the study is probably best deferred until after we have explored Paul's use of the corresponding pronoun in Romans in order to facilitate the comparison.

In the meantime a linguistic model may be employed to explore the question of the distinctive function of the Rastafarian 'I'. 'According to Eugene Nida, we employ language in thinking (cognitive function), to give injunctions (imperative function), to make emotional gestures (emotive function), to maintain inter-personal relationships (integrative function) and to effect a change in someone else's status (performative function)' (in Palmer 1996, 20). Obviously, the Rasta uses the subject pronoun cognitively, emotively and possibly in the last sense as well. What some may find

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<sup>40</sup>This notwithstanding Barr (1961, 231): 'The concentration on theological uses of words produces its most peculiar results with words of very general application ['I'?].'

surprising is the imperative function, perhaps best described in the following analysis:

The I-words of Rasta talk, though stated in the indicative mood, are guided by the form and principle of the imperative “I”. . . . The power of the “I” lies in its ability to command the self; its reflexiveness is its strength, and its purpose is to create a new identity and meaning for the speaker [performative function?]. Rastas take instructions from no one outside of themselves . . . all commands come from within unless issued by a Rasta to “an unbeliever”. So even though it sounds odd to have the imperative in the first person it makes “Rasta sense” to be directed by the I, buttressed by I-n-I. (McFarlane 1998, 108).

This function of the ‘I’ resembles the Hebrew cohortative which ‘lays stress on the determination underlying the action, and the personal interest in it’ (Kautzsch 1910, 319).

If the African influence on JT is already established, one wonders if the Semitic influence on DT (the cognate of JT) is not somehow intruding into the peculiar imperative ‘I.’ Indeed the name (‘Iyaric’) given to DT by some Rastas is most certainly an onomatopoeic creation of Amharic, the national Semitic language of Ethiopia. In this regard one of their scholars writes:

Iyaric essentially involves . . . [t]he prefixing of words—especially the very significant ones like “Sellassie,” “height” or “meditate”—with the letter I (e.g., Ilassie, ites, iditate). The rationale is that the “I” is the same as the number “1” (i.e. the first—hence the Alpha, the Beginning, the Almighty One). The indwelling power of the “I” represents Creator, and since this power dwells within us all, it is the real source of unity, hence the concept of “I and I,” the collective [Hebrew corporate personality?] . . . . Also, for the Rastafari the fact the sound of “I” and “eye” is identical is much more than coincidence. Language possesses an inner life and logic of its own. Thus, the Rastafari see their language in terms of putting the “I”—representing the God consciousness—back . . . at the centre of things (Tafari 2001).

What is at least clear from the above is that Rastafari is linked to the ‘Alpha’

(cf. Schade 1996), who in turn is identified with the 'I' of the Gospels.<sup>41</sup>

As we have seen above, one of the main tenets of Rastafari is the divinity and messiahship of Emperor Haile Selassie. Virtually all analysts of the movement make this point (e.g., Charles 2007, 11-12). But a question that is seldom posed is: What is the origin and background of Rasta 'I' language? Very few have even bothered to take a serious look at their language.

Here I want to posit, in reference to the above query, that the background of the prominent personal pronoun is to be found in the Rastafarian use of the Bible.<sup>42</sup> In other words, Rastas do not only see their Messiah in a verse like Rev. 22:16 but also find the very impetus for their linguistic focus in terms of

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<sup>41</sup>A Rastafarian 'brother who lived in the Bronx belonged to an organization called INRI . . . "I, Negus Rule Israel"' (Hill 1999, 122). INRI is of course the abbreviation of *Iesus Nazarenus Rex Iudaeorum*; 'Negus' is related to an Amharic term for king. The Rastafarian version is a reminder of how much Selassie/Rasta ('Negus') is identical to Jesus, and how much the pronominal 'I' is somehow grounded in the NT.

Tafari-Ama (2006, 131-132) attempts to put everything in perspective by writing: 'Adherents of the *Livity* [Rastafarian way of life] posit that the pronoun for the first person singular, the *I* (the Eye), or self, constitutes the singular and plural as the indivisible *I*, or *I-and-I* . . . thus repudiating the divisiveness embedded in the hierarchical binary opposition of the pronouns *you* and *me*. . . Besides using *Patwah*, as the local Jamaican Creole is called, Rastafari has also articulated a *discourse* and language of its own in a semantic and linguistic representation of African resistance to domination. Despite efforts by the upper classes to invalidate these verbal expressions, '*Rasta-talk*' facilitates identity reclamation through investment in the rich oral resources of the grassroots. The extensive Jamaican grassroots linguistic repertoire has long undermined the hegemony of Standard English, the official medium of communication and, by extension, the power structure that it represents.'

<sup>42</sup> 'The Rastas give special significance to the King James Version of the Bible, but they do not accord all Scriptures equal weight. Particular significance is given to the Old Testament and apocalyptic passages in the New Testament' (Erskine 2007, 203 n. 14).

the 'I' and the 'I am' which are unambiguous references, in their understanding, to his Imperial Majesty.

When they move to the Gospels a similar treatment is also given to the various dominical statements involving the 'I', because the NT in particular continues to be for Rastas an authoritative source not only for their theology, (or better, Christology) but their very language of identity as well.<sup>43</sup> When it is borne in mind that the typical Rasta reads the NT only in English in which is found an abundance of dominical 'I' statements, the proposal becomes even more plausible.

#### D. From Dread Talk to God-Talk

A better appreciation of what is posited above can be gained by taking a historical glance at the Bible in RastafarI affairs. According to former University of the West Indies Chancellor, 'The Hebrew Bible remains an indispensable source of inspiration for Rastafarians' (Nettleford 1998, 320). But this has not always been so for one of the founders of the movement, Leonard Howell, is reported to have written a piece which had canonical status among early Rastas greater than that of the Bible. Yet the booklet is replete with biblical quotations and allusions. For example, we read about 'Eve as the Mother of Evil,' the book of Exodus being for blacks exclusively, the humiliation of 'the Anglo Saxon white people' as a fulfillment of 'Isiah 9 [sic] 47<sup>th</sup> chapter,' the obeisance of an Anglo Saxon leader, called the Duke and

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<sup>43</sup>Says Breiner (1985, 38): 'Along with authority, identity, and doctrine, the Bible also supplies Rastafarianism with the beginnings of its cult-language.'

other diplomats to Rastafari (later crowned Haile Selassie, King of Kings) in Psalm 72:9-11, the spiritual blindness of some in Matthew 3:13, the opening of the Samaritan woman's eyes, an allusion to Rastafari being 'the foundation of the faith' (1 Cor 3:11) and a host of references to king Alpha and queen Omega, possible allusions to the book of Revelation (Spencer 1998, 372ff; Hood 1990, 90-91).<sup>44</sup>

But despite the obvious dependence on the Bible, we also read 'All that Ethiopians have to do now is build anew. Get out a new dictionary [Rasta language?] and a *new Bible* . . . The outfit shall be called Black Supremacy; signed by His . . . Majesty Ras Tafari.' (Spencer 1998, 372ff; my emphasis).

It is a text like this that accounts for the Rasta's ambivalence toward the Bible to this day. However, the fault cannot be laid squarely on *The Promised Key*. Two earlier pieces also contribute: *The Holy Piby-The Blackman's Bible* by Robert Athlyn Rodgers (2000), which was first published in 1924 and another entitled *The Royal Parchment Scroll of Black Supremacy* (Pettersburgh 1996) upon which Howell heavily drew (Hill in Scott 1999, 135).

In fact, Ras Sekou Sankara Tafari in his foreword to *The Holy Piby* says 'Howell's book *The Promise Key* . . . seems to have been a slight carbon copy of *The Holy Piby*.' Identifying a different source, Hill (in Scott 1999, 135) puts it stronger, '*The Promised Key* was a plagiarization of *The Royal Parchment Scroll of Black Supremacy*' (Pettersburgh 1926/1996). The author (Rodgers,

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<sup>44</sup> For the full text of Howell's work, in addition to a commentary on it, see Spencer's article in Murrell *et al.* (1998, 361-389).

1924/2000) of *The Holy Piby*, while claiming the Spirit's inspiration for his work, was nevertheless resentful of the Holy Bible.

'This was due mainly to that so-called wicked and evil curse imposed on the Ethiopian Race in Genesis chapter 9,' says Miguel Lorne in his 'Introduction' to *The Holy Piby*. Later he writes 'I-n-I refer to The Holy Piby as ivine [divine] Doctrine serving to liberate the African Races. It was clearly the intention of Athlyi Rodgers . . . to replace The Holy Bible with The Holy Piby.'

What we see emerging is a virtual Rastafarian canon consisting of at least four books including the Bible, the book that, in the eyes of many Rastas, is the least trustworthy (Afari 2007, 230-231, 242; Williams and Murrell 1998, 326-329). Yet it is the Bible, it would appear, that provides the foundation for much of Rasta theology/Christology (Erskine 2007); and, as I am positing, the inspiration for the distinctive element of DT, the language of Rastafari. The situation is probably best summarized in the following:

The relationship between oral and textual sources of authority are [sic] now also complex. While in the earlier days of Rastafari there were few texts available to all, with the exception of the Bible, in the 1990s many more relevant writings became widely accessible, in particular, the collected speeches of Emperor Haile Selassie [e.g., Philpotts 1999]. Based on the themes of recent international Rastafari conferences as well as publications by Rastafari, H.I.M's words will likely become a more common practice among Rastafari in the twenty-first century (Yawney and Homiak 2001, 285).<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> 'How closely to adhere to the Bible' (Salter and Tafari 2005, 7627) is now one of Rastafari's greatest challenges. Yet we also read that Selassie 'prescribes and recommends the Bible as the rallying point of all humanity' (Afari 2007, 246).

There was also a failed ‘attempt’ on the part of Ras Max Romeo (Romeo 1972) to introduce the Apocrypha into the canonical equation:

*You gave I King James Version King James was a white man  
You built I dangerous weapon To kill I own black man  
You sold the land God gave I And taught I to be covetous*

*What other wicked things Have you got in mind?  
Tell me, what are gonna do To stop these daily crimes?*

*Bring back Macabee Version That God gave to black man  
Give back King James Version Belongs to the white man*

*You suffer I and you rob I You starve I, then you kill I  
But what are you gonna do Now that your sword have turn against  
you?*

*Black man, get up, stand up Find your foot  
And give black God the glory Black man, get up, stand up  
Find your foot And give black God the glory*

*Bring back Macabee Version That God gave to black man  
Give back King James Version That belongs to the white man*

If the Christology of Rastafari is grounded in Scripture, what kind of a hermeneutic<sup>46</sup> do Rastas employ to lead them to the radical conclusion concerning the identification of Jesus with Selassie? And by what approach do they ‘I-identify’ themselves with the dominical sayings of the Gospels and Apocalypse?

‘To understand the Bible,’ says John Moodie (a.k.a. Prince Michael, 1999, 26, 36), ‘one has to be guided by spiritual insight by the Comforter. One has to know oneself.’ Later Moodie speaks for the community when he declares,

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<sup>46</sup>Or ‘How, for example, might Rasta hermeneutics help in the process of self-affirmation. . . . The way we interpret the Bible must be influenced and informed by cultural realities’ (Mulrain 2004, 51).

‘Rastafarians have used history and the Bible with spiritual guidance of the Comforter . . . we are a truth that must reach the four corners of the Earth.’ On the surface of it all this sounds like an almost traditional Christian approach to Scripture. One does not sense here the rhetoric of earlier Rastas who were greatly suspicious of the Bible as a white man’s book. Instead, what we find in Moodie’s writing is a plethora of biblical references, which, in his reading, all point to the foci of Selassie as Jesus returned and Ethiopia as terrestrial heaven.

But is Moodie’s approach typical of most Rastas? It would appear that way. Furthermore, their approach to Scripture for the most part could be described as one of simplicity in so far as they lay bare their own presupposition/s in the hermeneutical task. Whereas many traditional Christian scholars still aim for complete objectivity based upon a ‘presuppositionless’ exegesis, Rastas openly confess their hermeneutic of blackness from the start. But while most Rastas subscribe to this hermeneutic of blackness, it is also important to note that some are extremely literalistic, while others employ a type of hermeneutic of suspicion based on the belief that the biblical text has been tampered with by whites.

Because the Bible was originally written in Amharic (so Rastas),<sup>47</sup> Europeans, when:

they attempted to translate . . . hardly understood the language. Due to the intricacy and succinctness of Amharic, the white translators were

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<sup>47</sup>For others, ‘The basis of the claims of the inaccuracies of the Bible lies in the allegation that the Bible is a version of the Egyptian Book of the Dead.’ Hannah (2002, 91). The entire Bible was translated in sub-Saharan Africa for the first time during the 6th century in Ethiopic (Yorke 2007, 114).



forced to leave out large segments, with the result that the English Bible that we now have is greatly reduced in size from the original (Owens 1976, 31).

According to Ras Arthur the common English version:

is not true to I. It is not of I origin. It is not of I tradition. That authorized Bible was only by King James. That was not ordered or authorized from Ethiopia. So that mean the Ethiopian supposed to have a different Bible, a different teaching, according to his religious *knowings*. . . . The Bible [also] contradicts itself in many passages (Owens 1976, 34, 35).<sup>48</sup>

Another Rasta, Dennis Forsythe (1985), employs a different kind of hermeneutic of suspicion when he castigates others for too heavy a reliance on the Bible, a reliance which leads to ‘mystic interpretations.’ Forsythe’s radical approach has led him to even deny the divinity of Selassie.

There are Rastas, too, who feel that ‘the Bible is little more than a set of myths’ (Hannah 2002, 93). On this account it is the entire Christian canon, not just the Gospels, that is subject to a process of demythologization. In regard to Rastafari hermeneutics on a whole, it can be posited that:

Ultimately, scholars may have to judge [it] on its own merit--as a *tertium quid* (a different kind)--rather by criteria that the academy sanctions but which are rejected by Jah people . . . . Clearly, the Rastas’ hijacking of the Judeo-Christian Scripture as a vehicle through which to articulate their faith and theology as well as define their reality is not unprecedented in history. (Murrell and Williams 1998, 314).<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup>Hannah (2002, 92) believes that the AV/KJV has ‘many errors and omissions.’ Similarly, Ahkell (1999, 9).

<sup>49</sup>For useful summaries of the practice of biblical interpretation in the Caribbean from the 18<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> century, see Erskine (2000, 209-226), Holder (2000, 119-142), and Russell (2000, 95-118).

If Rastas have indeed ‘hijacked’ the Judeo-Christian Scriptures and their use of them ‘is not unprecedented,’ then perhaps we can locate within their varied approaches to the understanding of Scripture traces of Judeo-Christian hermeneutics which have survived into the present, even one that the ‘academy’ recognizes. Here, I am referring to the *peshet* approach which was employed by the Qumran community, for example.<sup>50</sup>

Although this approach is now being recognized by some scholars as representative more of a literary approach than anything else (Brooks 531), its hermeneutical value within the community should not be underestimated. A feature of the method which parallels, or better, is reflected in Rasta hermeneutic, as well as in the speeches of the first century ‘Selassie’ (Longenecker 1999, 54-72) is outlined thus:

[Peshet] interpretation describes, albeit in a veiled manner, something relevant to the present experience of those for whom it is intended. Past events, whether real or imagined, are depicted to give the community an identity; thus Habakkuk (1QPHab) is made to predict what happened to the Teacher of Righteousness. (Brooks 1996, 532; cf. HoSang 1988, 150-151; Vermes 1997, 429-502).

It is true that in their interpretation of Scripture Rastas do not use a term like ‘peshet’ to introduce their ‘overstandings.’ Nor I am saying that the group as a whole is familiar with this aspect of the history of hermeneutics. My point is that the peshet method and Rasta hermeneutic are strikingly similar at points, and such resemblance cries out for some explanation. Thus for Rastas the scattering and gathering of African slaves are prophesied in Isaiah 43: 5-7.

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<sup>50</sup>According to Malcolm X (1965, 300), the community was African, and Christ was a member.

Similarly, ‘Isaiah 49, verse 1, Listen O isles unto me, and hearken ye people from afar. The Lord hath called from the womb, from the bowels of my mother (Africa) hath He made mention of my name.’ Rastafari!’ (Mack 1999, 52-53; cf. Ahkell 1999, 8). Isaiah 51:5; 60:9; Hebrews 11:14; and Genesis 2:10-14 all receive similar treatment. As for the scriptural support for the divinity of Emperor Haile Selassie, the genealogy of Matthew 1 as well as Revelation 17, 19, and 22 are cited in almost peshet style. Accordingly, Dawes’ (2002, 119) observation is certainly correct that ‘Marley [for instance] is so thoroughly imbued in the language of the King James Bible that it makes sense that he would reflect these patterns in his songwriting.’ Along similar lines, Peter Tosh, an original member of the Wailers, released an album (‘Equal Rights’) in the summer of 1969 with a piece entitled ‘I Am That I Am’ (cf. Exodus 3:14; KJV).

However, for the vast majority of Rastas there is one central method of reading Scripture summed up in Hannah’s reasoning: ‘if we say “Selassie is Christ”, then surely we must worship Selassie in the earlier Christ persona’ (Hannah 2002, 96); after all, Selassie is *Christus revivendus* (Jennings 2007, 57) and therefore ‘His name shall be called EMMANUEL I Rastafari with us’ (Beckford 2007, 49). This is not just a statement concerning ‘Selassie-latry.’ It underlines as well how Rastas read their NT—something to which we now turn.

## CHAPTER THREE

### PRONOMINAL 'I' IN THE SYNOPTIC TRADITION

In this section we explore dominical 'I' sayings in Mark, Matthew and Luke. We also attempt to bring certain concerns of Rastafari in conversation with the various pericopae which contain significant pronouncements of the first century 'Selassie' (The 'I').

As we have seen before, Rastas see themselves as the people of God today. 'Modern Christianity' is how one devotee presents Rastafari, though she acknowledges that her religion springs from 'Judaean-Christian roots' (Hannah 2002, 100-101). One of the more recent converts also defends the view that the Christ is both the Alpha and the Rasta (Schade 1996, 38-64). It therefore means that when the Gospels are read the *ipsissima vox* or better, the very *ipsissima verba* of Selassie are heard, notwithstanding Rasta's ambivalence toward the Scriptures. It is within this context that we should understand Marley's lyrics, 'Give us the teachings of His Majesty, for we no want no devil philosophy' (Alemu 1994, 39). In this regard, Hannah (2002, 100) can also testify that:

On Good Friday each year I celebrate by reading a Bible Gospel and contemplating the story of the life of Jesus of Nazareth that led to . . . his horrible crucifixion, death and reported resurrection. As a Rasta, my action is inspired by the teaching of Emperor Haile Selassie I, Ras Tafari, whose life and reverence by Rastafari inspired me to take a fresh look at the Christ.

Rastas are encouraged to read the Bible in particular because:

Today man sees all his hopes and aspirations crumble before him. He is perplexed and knows not whither he is drifting. But he must realize that the solution to his present difficulties and guidance for his future action is the Bible. Unless he accepts with clear conscience the Bible and its great message, he cannot hope for salvation. For myself, I glory in the Bible (Selassie; cited by Alemu 1994, 47).

Of course, the ‘great message’ of which Selassie speaks is about his own divinity and messiahship, according to Rasta hermeneutic. So ‘although the Emperor is said to have refuted the notion that he was God, Rastafarians take this as evidence of the Emperor’s divine humility, who although human in form was born to David’s root to fulfill prophecy’ (Ahkell 199, 34).

#### A. The Gospel of Mark

We are now in a position to examine some dominical (i.e., of ‘Sellassie I, the Black Christ’ [Tafari 2001, xxxvi]) statements through the prism of RastafarI. If as is held by many NT scholars that Mark is the first Gospel (e.g., Dunn 2003, 143-146; Fenton 2001; Moule 1965, 2), then it would be of interest to the Rasta that the first instance of the distinctive ‘I’ in the new Gospel genre actually appears in a citation of Jah: ‘Behold, I send my messenger before<sup>51</sup> thy face.’ (Mark 1:2; Collins 2007, 135f). The citation sounds like a line from the influential RastafarI text with the sub-title, *The Blackman’s Bible*: ‘I shall send my angels and they shall dwell among the Athlyians [followers of the author] and teach them new things’ (Rogers 2000,

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<sup>51</sup>‘Although this might be viewed in terms of physical proximity, the point seems to be a temporal one’ (Decker 2001, 89).

68). In Mark's Gospel the citation from Malachi points to John the Baptizer, who, interestingly, is the first to use  $\epsilon\nu\gamma\omega\ \psi$  in the Gospels (Mark 1:8; cf. Matt 3:11).<sup>52</sup>

And no one familiar with the early history of Rastafari can miss the similarity of John's rustic appearance (Mark 1:6) and that of the Dread (Akell 1999, 14, 28). The various images of Marley around the world, typical of the modern Rasta, are rustic enough to support the point. Although the rustic Baptizer (as well as his playful way with words in Mark 1:8) somewhat reminds one of the Rasta, it is doubtful that the few references to him in the NT have any bearing on the movement. However, the one to whom John points with his pun on  $\beta\alpha\pi\tau\iota\ ,\ \zeta\omega$  (immersion/identification; Mark 1:8), the one Mark calls 'Jesus' and the Rasta dubs 'Selassie,' is definitely the most influential figure in Rastafari. And the first employment of  $\epsilon\nu\gamma\omega\ \psi$  by this 'Selassie' appears quite significant.

#### The 'I' on the Water (Mark 6: 45-52)

After the feeding of the five thousand, the only miracle story recorded by all four Evangelists, Mark begins the account of another miracle story, 'a weird sea scene' (Marshall 2004, 67; cf. Collins 2007, 333-338), with the term 'Immediately.' The Greek word that stands behind this term appears forty two times in Mark, the shortest of the canonical Gospels (Bock 2006, 393), and only once in Luke, the longest. The term gives to the pericope a sense of

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<sup>52</sup> The parallel to Matt 3: 11a (John 1:26:  $\epsilon\nu\gamma\omega\ .\ \beta\alpha\pi\tau\iota\ ,\ \zeta\omega\ \epsilon\nu\ \nu\ \alpha\ \delta\alpha\tau\iota$ ) is thought to be a Johannine redaction by Fortna (1970, 235).

urgency and anticipation (Powell 1998, 41). In other words, what is Jesus going to do next, after having made his disciples go in the boat?

According to Mark, he went to pray by himself. But when he saw the disciples in some difficulty he went to their aid. He chose to walk on the lake in order to reach them, and when they saw him walking on water they became terrified. If the first ‘immediately’ in this pericope underscores Jesus’ need to have audience with his father, the second one in verse 50 highlights the disciples’ need to regain their composure. Jesus met this need by joining them in the boat, but not before he pronounced himself *evgw❖ eivmi*, (I am he) sandwiched by *qarsei/te* and *mh. fobei/sqe* (stop being afraid).<sup>53</sup> What is the significance of the I-declaration in this context?

R.T. France (2002, 273) argues that the declaration is nothing more than Jesus’ way of identifying himself (contra Marcus 2000, 427). Because the disciples thought they were seeing a ghost, *evgw❖ eivmi* only serves to dismiss that false notion. To support his interpretation France points out that the phrase is a kind of colloquialism that is normally used for self-identification (e.g., Matt 26:22, 25; John 4:26; 9:9; 18:5). Williams (2000, 215-228), on the other hand, gives to the phrase a more pregnant sense based on the following considerations.

First, the intriguing Markan clause translated in the NRSV as ‘He intended to pass them by’ (v.58) seems to echo Jah’s self-revelation in passing by

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<sup>53</sup> Mark’s full statement reads, *kai. le,gei auvtoi/j\ qarsei/te( evgw, eivmi\ mh. fobei/sqe* *auvtoi/j* is omitted in 2427 (Mitchell and Duncan 2006, 24), giving a more pointed declaration on the part of the ‘I’.

Moses and later Elijah (Ex. 33:19, 22; 35f; I Kings 19:11). The inter-textual link is made by the verb *pare, comai*, giving the Markan passage a theophanic flavour. Second, the combination of Jesus' walking on water (cf. Job 9:8), stilling the gale (Mark 6:51; Matt 14:32), and making the boat arrive at its destination in short order (John 6:21) strongly suggests the image of extraordinary divine power.

When we add to this Zimmerman's (1960, 270; cited by Williams 2000, 223 n. 36) central thesis that '*Das absolute evgw❖ eivmi im Munde Jesu ist die alttestamentliche Offenbarungformel*' in light of the sea crossing motif of Exodus 14-15 (cf. *evgw❖ eivmi ku, rioj* in 14:4, 18; cf. Hooker 1991, 170), it is highly probable that we have here in Mark a divine self-revelatory declaration (cf. Hurtado 2005, 283-315; and Collins 2007, 335: 'Jesus is being portrayed here as divine in a functional, not necessarily in a metaphysical, sense').

To tell this to the Rasta is to speak to the converted. But what the Rasta would understand readily in terms of seeing *evgw❖ eivmi* as 'an echo of the OT revelation formula of God (Exod 3:14; Isa 41:4; 43:10-11)' (Guelich 1989, 351), the disciples failed to grasp (Mark 6: 52). The mention of their failure at this point appears to be a part of Mark's characterization technique (Crossan 1996, 18; Tannehill 1979).

#### The 'I' in Exorcism (Mark 9:14-29)

This pericope continues the motif of the failing disciples (vv. 14-18). It also contains another miracle story in which Jesus uses his power to meet human need as well as the importance and urgency of prayer (vv. 28, 29). The pericope represents one of the more impressive examples



of Mark's tendency to tell at greater length and with fuller circumstantial detail a story which Matthew and Luke can deal with much more concisely. Mark 9:14-29 consists of 272 words, whereas Luke 9:37-43a tells the same story in 144 words, and Matt 17:14-20a in a mere 110. (France 2002, 362).

For our purpose what is most striking about the account is that one of Mark's 'extra' words is the  $\epsilon\upsilon\gamma\omega\upsilon\epsilon\iota\upsilon\mu\iota$  which lends some weight to the command issued to the unclean spirit in verse 25. The successful exorcism which results is another of Mark's eighteen 'detailed miracles stories' performed by Jesus—the highest rate of miracles per page in all four Gospels' (Fenton 2001, 91; Collins 2007, 436-439). The inability of the disciples in this story is reminiscent of a similar episode in the life of Marley in which the burning of incense was resorted to (Booker 2003, 199-201).

#### The 'I' as Suffering Servant (Mark 10:35-45)

Mark continues to characterize the followers of Jesus as embarrassing students. Following Peter's insightful Christological declaration in Caesarea Philippi (8:27-30), Jesus, as he makes his way to Jerusalem, begins to instruct his disciples concerning the true nature of his messiahship and the substantive role he would play in redemptive history (8: 31ff; 9:30-32; Collins 2007, 80ff). However, despite this major focus in Jesus pedagogy the disciples continue to harbour visions of grandeur and display very little understanding of their teacher's mission (9:33-37; 10: 13-16, 28-31). But Jesus is not put off by the disciples' slowness to grasp his core curriculum. He sticks to the pedagogical dictum of *repetitio est mater studiorum* (10:32-34).

Against this background Mark places the ambitious request of James and John for special kingdom privileges (10:35-37). ‘But Jesus said to them, “You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?”’ The disciples answer in the affirmative. Jesus’ rejoinder follows: ‘The cup that I drink you will drink; and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized’ (10:38, 39). Both responses by Jesus have intertextual links with 1:8. There the Baptizer employs both ‘I’ and ‘baptize’ in a pun. Jesus does something similar in 10:38, 39:

o` de. VIhsou/j ei=pen auvtoi/j\ ouvk oi;date ti,  
 aivtei/sqeÅ du,nasqe piei/n to. poth,rion o] evgw.  
 pi,nw h' to. ba,ptisma o] evgw. bapti,zomai  
 baptisqh/naiÈ oi` de. ei=pan auvtw/|\  
 duna,meqaÅ o` de. VIhsou/j ei=pen auvtoi/j\ to.  
 poth,rion o] evgw. pi,nw pi,esqe kai. to.  
 ba,ptisma o] evgw. bapti,zomai baptisqh,sesqe.  
 (And Jesus said to them: ‘Do you understand what kind of request you are making; are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or the baptism that I will experience to experience?’ And they said to him: ‘We are able’. Jesus then said to them: ‘The cup from which I-n-I<sup>54</sup> drink, you will drink, and the baptism that I will experience you will experience.’)

The key word ‘baptize’ and its cognates only bear a metaphorical sense<sup>55</sup> in Jesus’ pronouncement to James and John (cf. Decker 2001, 100). In 1:8, only the second occurrence of the verb is metaphorical. But the major difference between the two passages is that Jesus’ verbals are all in the passive voice,

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<sup>54</sup> ‘Rasta’ rendering of evgw, followed by the verb.

<sup>55</sup> ‘To be overwhelmed by some difficult experience or ordeal’ (Louw and Nida 1989, 286). It would appear that Jesus was impressed with the Baptizer’s rhetorical language of Mark 1:8 (Q 3:16b [? Robinson 2000, 14]), cf. Acts 1:5.

whereas John's two verbs are both active. In 1:8 Jesus will baptize. In 10: 38, 39 he along with the sons of Zebedee will be baptized. The predictions, in respect of Jesus, are fulfilled in reverse order; for the disciples, it is the other way around (contra Bultmann 1968, 24).

The Rasta does not respond favourably to this kind of language that speaks of suffering and even shame. Thus Hannah (2002, 93), for example, can reject the 'teaching of Jesus Christ as a blood-dripping, crucified martyr . . . and believers as "sinners" perpetually in need of salvation and redemption' precisely because such doctrine does very little to empower people to become whole and spiritually healthy. Ironically, many Rastas experienced persecution and even martyrdom for their faith in the first thirty years of existence (Mack 1999, 59-68; Hannah 2002, 10-11; Williams 2005; cf. Suetonius 1979, 221), but none of them saw their suffering as any fulfillment of the Mark 10:39 prophecy of the 'I.'

Interestingly, *The Holy Piby: The Blackman's Bible* (Rogers 2000, 98; cf. 4Q541; Brooke 2005, 151-157), first published in 1924, has a striking parallel from another 'I':

I shall be dragged about, mocked, scorned, and persecuted because of this gospel, which the Lord, God of Ethiopia, has commanded unto you through me. Many of you this day will desert me your shepherd because of fear. But blessed are the brave and faithful. They shall be rulers over rulers. Thine enemy shall shed your blood because of this Holy Piby, but the blood of thy veins shall richen the soil for the gospel. I am Messiah unto Ethiopia therefore my word reign forever and ever. I shall be cast into prison for your sake, but my spirit shall go out of jail and fight for Ethiopia. Nations shall perish because of my persecution, for I am not a mere man but a Messiah upon the earth. Whosoever persecuteth me,

committeth a crime against the Holy Ghost, in which there is no forgiveness, therefore the consequence is hell eternal.<sup>56</sup>

One disciple, who, unlike Hannah, did not apparently mind being labeled ‘Sinner,’ and who, unlike Bultmann (1968, 24; cf. Crossan 1996), did not believe that verses 38, 39 are a classic case of *vaticinium ex eventu*, writes about the fulfillment<sup>57</sup> of the prophecy concerning James and John:

Eivpw.n ga.r o` ku,rioj pro.j auvtouj Du,nasqe pie/n to. Poth,rion o[ poth,rion o] evgw. pi,nw kai. Kataneusa,ntwn proqu,mwj kai. Suvqemenwn. To. Poth,rion mou, fhsi,n pi,esqe kai, to. ba,ptisma o] evgw. bapti,zomai baptisqh,sesqe./ ‘For when the Lord said to them, “Are you willing to drink the cup which I drink?” and they eagerly assented and agreed, he said: “you will drink my cup and will be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized”’. (Holmes 1999, 572/573).

The enduring paronomasia involving ‘baptize/baptism’ cited by George Hamartolos from Mark 10:38f seven or so centuries later, seems to have been a favourite of Luke as well (Luke 3:16; 12:49; Acts 1:5; 11:16). But it is clearly not a literary preoccupation for Mark. As many have pointed out, what Mark shows much interest in is the way in which the disciples respond to Jesus’ central teaching in the central section of his Gospel. This begs the question of how much did James and John understand from the dialogue presently under review. Yes, they did agree to drink the ‘cup’ and undergo ‘baptism’. But did

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<sup>56</sup>According to Spencer (1999, 10), ‘Today *The Holy Piby* has been relegated to obscurity.’ A year after it was reprinted by a Rastafari publisher and further reviewed by Murrell (2000, 271-306). The author of *The Holy Piby* (2000, 81-83) held Garvey, his contemporary, in high regard.

<sup>57</sup> According to Nolland (2005, 14), ‘NT scholarship has a curious capacity to identify as “genuine” prophecy that which failed to be fulfilled and, all too often, to insist that fulfilled prophecy is only after-the-event description dressed up as prophecy.’

they really understand what they were saying? Did *any* of the other disciples get the point?

According to Kelber (1979, 55-56), it is highly doubtful that any of these questions can be answered in the affirmative. Kelber's skepticism is based on the observation that the crucial dialogue of 10: 35ff is bracketed by two miracle stories, both of which having to do with the restoration of sight (8:22-26; 10:46-52).

These framing stories signify the purpose of Jesus' journey from Caesarea Philippi to Jerusalem. As Jesus traveled . . . he tried to open the eyes of the disciples first and foremost to the reality of his suffering, dying, and rising. By now the reader who has traveled along the way has come to the realization that the disciples have remained blind. The net result of this journey is not the opening of their eyes, but their incorrigible blindness. The reader who has reached this conclusion is compelled to take yet another look at Mark's framing composition: the disciples do not see, but the two blind men at the beginning and at the end do see.

With the request of the Zebedee boys (vv. 35-37) and its sequel<sup>58</sup> directly preceding the story of sighted Bartimaeus, Kelber's observation has a ring of truth to it.

The typical Rasta, unlike the disciples in Mark's Gospel, places a great deal of emphasis on seeing and understanding, or as s/he prefers to say, 'overstanding.' For example, RastafarI poet, Yasus Afari ('gift of vision') in the opening lines of his book, *I (Eye) Pen*, (1998, pp. G, H) writes, 'Eye Pen re-presents & reflects the vejahns ['visions'] flowing from I pen . . . [and] I

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<sup>58</sup>Vv. 41-45: 'when the ten heard this, they began to be angry with James and John. . . . For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many' (NRSV).

hereby acknowledge The Most High Haile Selassie I for His Sacred Inspiration, the vision, the energy and will to conceive and complete this book’.

In Matthew’s version, it is the mother of Zebedee’s sons who come to Jesus with a quite ambitious request (Matt 20:21). It is not difficult to imagine that the promise of the previous chapter (19:28; that in the Eschaton the followers of Christ would occupy seats of power) fired the imagination of the Zebedee family. For the wife of Zebedee whose sons had ‘abandoned’ both ‘father and mother’ (19:29), the request must have been quite reasonable, given the sacrifice of both parents and children.

The response of Jesus seems to suggest that their sacrifice pales in significance when compared to his: ‘You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?’ (Matt 20:22; NRSV). What seems clear here is that the gravity of Jesus’ impending suffering is in part underscored by his use of *εὐγω*, . In the Markan parallel, as we have seen above, the thought is further emphasized by the use of another powerful metaphor (Mark 10:38b).

#### The ‘I’ in Controversy (11:27-33)

Jesus finally arrives in Jerusalem (v. 11) and what does he find? A tree without fruit (vv.12-14), a temple without prayer, trainees still without a clue (vv. 20-25), and worst, teachers without integrity. It is this last group-- consisting of priests, scribes and elders—that takes him on. The conversation follows:

By what authority are you doing these things? Who gave you this authority to do them? Jesus says to them, ‘I will ask you one question; answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things. Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin? Answer me.’ They argued with one another, ‘If we say, “From heaven,” he will say, “Why then did you not believe him?” But shall we say, “Of human origin?”’--they were afraid of the crowd, for all regarded John as truly a prophet. So they answered Jesus, ‘We do not know.’ And Jesus said to them, ‘Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things’ (vv. 28-33; NRSV).

Evidently, the Jewish teachers initiate the dialogue with questions related to the temple cleansing. Jesus concludes it with an emphatic refusal to answer their queries on account of their recalcitrance to come to grips with the truth: *ouvde. evgw. le, gw u`mi/n evn poi, a | evxousi, a | tau/ta poiw/Å* (Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things; cf. Matt 21:27; Luke 20:8).<sup>59</sup>

#### The ‘I’ in Gethsemane (Mark 14:32-42)

Previously in dialogue with the sons of Zebedee Jesus predicts his own partaking of the ‘cup’ and ‘baptism’ (10:38, 39). He had undergone a baptism at the beginning of his ministry (1:9-11). He now prepares himself for another (vv. 32-34)—one that will be significantly more overwhelming than the bitter experience of Gethsemane (15:33-34; cf. 10:45).

His preparation basically consists of intense prayer (vv.35-36a, 39; cf. Heb. 5:7) and his mood echoes the personal lament of the Psalmist (41:5, 11 LXX; Cranfield 1959, 431)—a mood which would eventually become: *Elwi elwi*

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<sup>59</sup> ‘Whoever has experienced the unbridgeable abyss of the “I” will feel the necessity of keeping his own identity veiled, revealing it only to those for whom the subject-object division is overcome.’ (Panikkar 2004, 154).

lema sabacqani<sup>ⲉⲛ</sup> (Mark 15:34a; cf. Mark's translation with, *o`  
 qeo.j o` qeo,j mou pro,scej moi i[na ti,  
 evgkate,lipe,j me ...evgw. de, eivmi skw,lhx kai.  
 ouv k a;nqrwpoj* <sup>ⲉⲛ</sup> (Psa 21:2a, 7a [I am a worm and not human]  
 LXX) <sup>ⲉⲛ</sup>

Again the failure of the disciples is noted (vv. 37, 40, 41, 42; here only Peter, James, John—and Judas; Horsley 2001, 79-81). In contrast to the failing disciples, Jesus manages to make a success out of wrestling with God's will (cf. Jesus' affirmation in Clement: 'On your behalf *I* wrestled . . . with death.' [cited by Pfitzner 1967, 131] emphasis mine). It was not easy for the disciples to stay awake on account of the weakness of the flesh (v. 38a). Neither was it easy for Jesus to drink his cup (36a). However, he was able, possibly, to commit himself fully to the task because of the 'willing' Spirit (v. 38b). With this Spirit, Jesus was able to say with some measure of resoluteness, *avllv ouv ti, evgw. qe,lw avlla. ti, su,*<sup>62</sup> <sup>ⲉⲛ</sup> 'the last word in Mark 14: 36 is not Jesus' "I" but the "you" of God' [Brown 1994, 175]; cf. Matt 6:10; Evans 2001, 414) and with the same Spirit he was enabled to offer himself a ransom for many (10: 45; cf. Heb. 9:14). So although Jesus was

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<sup>60</sup>'My God, my God! Why have you abandoned me?'--an Aramaic utterance (Vorster 1999, 32).

<sup>ⲉⲛ</sup>The Hebrew behind *evgw*, (*ykiänOa*) is not without psychological focus (Waltke-O' Connor 1990, 295).

<sup>62</sup> 'On the contrary, not what I want but what you--'



‘enticed by his human weakness to avoid his fate . . . [he] nevertheless steels himself to be resolute’ (Marshall 2004, 74).

The first person singular pronoun (+qe, lw) is retained by Matthew (26:39) but is curiously absent from Luke’s record. Also in Luke, as well as in the available Rastafari texts, there is no mention of Gethsemane<sup>63</sup> (Mark 14:32, Matt 26:36), the singling out of Peter, James and John (Mark 14:33, Matt 26:37), Jesus’ emotional state, the spiritual weakness of the disciples (Mark 14:38; Matt 26: 41), the three points of contact (Mark 14:33-34, 37, 41) and the three times of prayer (Matt 26:39, 42, 44. Luke will make his own emphasis, in terms of recording Jesus’ warning to his disciples; 22:39-40).

#### The ‘I’ on Trial (Mark 14:53-65)

After the Gethsemane experience, Jesus is betrayed, arrested and led before the Jewish council headed up by the high priest. There is an attempt to get credible (?) witnesses<sup>64</sup> to condemn the Nazarene but their contradictory testimonies prove frustrating for the anxious Sanhedrin members. And so the high priest interjects: ‘Have you no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against you?’ (Mark 14:60; NRSV). Jesus remains silent.

Again the high priest asks him, ‘Are you the Christ, the Son of the

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<sup>63</sup>Borg (1999, 86) sees this episode as part of the NT’s ‘Imaginative elaboration’ since the information it shares could not have been known by any one else. But see Cranfield (1959, 430).

<sup>64</sup> In the Synoptic tradition, Mark 14:57; Matt 26: 60-61; cf. John 2:19 and *Gos. Thom.* 71: ‘I shall [destroy this] house, and no one will be able to build it’ (Dunderberg 1998, 56).

Blessed?’ Jesus responds: *evgw, evimi*, (I am; vv. 61-62). If the Gethsemane experience was where ‘the real struggle took place rather than later’ (Marshall 1978, 828), then the *evgw*, in the context of the trial is an extension of that struggle and the beginning of victory for Jesus. The significance of Jesus’ response is highlighted by the contrasting use of the first person singular in the allegation (vv. 5-58) and in the affirmation of Jesus himself. The former underlines a serious error, and the latter stresses a truth of paramount importance. It may be significant that neither Matthew nor Luke took over Mark’s special features at this point. But can we further define the nature of ‘truth and error’ that Mark apparently finds so appealing in the trial?

To Gundry (1993, 885) the witnesses’ claim to have heard Jesus utter the ‘I’ *logion* is false. But is there another possibility? He concedes that the witnesses in question ‘may have seen and heard’ Jesus on the occasion recorded in 11:15-17. If in fact they were present, could they have heard Jesus saying, ‘destroy this temple and I will raise it up in three days (John 2:19; cf. *Gos. Thom.* 71)? In this case, the falsehood would be in the witnesses’ failure to discern Jesus’ real intention. If John 2:19 is not a true parallel to 11:15-17, the witnesses’ citation of its substance could reflect hearsay. What is curious is that the prosecutors (some of whom may have been present at the cleansing) did not bother to use it as evidence against Jesus.

The other I-statement in Mark 14 (vv. 62-63) is well defined by the accused himself. It is complete with a LXX quotation of Ps. 110:1-2 (The ‘son of man’ reference in 62b may be an Aramaic circumlocution for ‘I’ [Vermes

1981, 162-188]; but see Stuckenbruck 1995, 211-218). ‘In contrast to the claims of false messiahs proclaiming “I am” (13:6), Jesus’ words will be substantiated’ (Hooker 1991, 361). This was the kind of evidence the council needed. Jesus had incriminated himself (14:64-65). The passage Mark 14:62 is the final I-statement in the Gospel and therefore forms a fitting climax to Jesus’ self-revelation (cf. 6:50). Along with the centurion’s confession, it forms a powerful testimony to the uniqueness of the Servant (15:39).

But in Luke’s version of the trial, instead of the unambiguous *evgw*, *evimi*, found in Mark, we have *u`mei/j le, gete o[ti evgw, eivmi* (You [*unu*] say I am) in direct response to a question put to Jesus concerning his divine sonship (Luke 22:70). Here the presence of *evgw*, is intriguing given the interesting form of the answer.

## B. The Gospel of Matthew

### The ‘I’ as Messianic Teacher (Matt 5:21-37)

One way to view the structure of Matthew’s Gospel is to see within its pages five distinct narratives, each of which is coupled with a didactic material on discipleship (France 1985, 60-61). Viewed in this way, Jesus is presented in this Gospel, particularly in 5-7, as a kind of second Moses,<sup>65</sup> thus echoing the giving of the law from the mountain. My interest at this juncture is in the six antithetical statements that more or less interact with Mosaic stipulations or interpretations of such. The statements ‘will present Jesus as much more than a

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<sup>65</sup> *Pace* the Gospel according to Mary: ‘Nor I have given any law like the lawgiver’ (Hennecke 1963, 341).

lawgiver, and [their] explicit comparison of Jesus' teaching with the Mosaic Law will stress newness as well as continuity' (France 1985, 107). If there is anywhere in the NT in which we find the 'teachings of His Majesty' (Alemu 1994, 43) grounded in the authoritative 'I' (McFarlane 1998, 107), it is right here at 5:22ff.

### Murder

The first illustration of *die größere Gerechtigkeit* (Limbeck 1998, 84; Matt 5:20) which Jesus expounds and which the kingdom demands deepens the popular first century understanding of murder (5:21). Thus we have a new reading of Ex. 20:13/Deut. 5:17 in the words *evgw. de. le, gw u`mi/n o [ti pa/j o` ovr gizo, meno j tw/ | avdelfw/ | auvtou/ e; nocoj e; stai th/ | kri, sei*<sup>§§</sup> (But I say to you, every who is angry with his brother will bear his guilt at the judgment; 5:22). If murder back then was taking human life without divine sanction, then the wrath that fueled it, as well as the words that accompanied it, was equally reprehensible (vv. 22b-26).

Rastas, generally a peace loving people, endorse these words of wisdom from the 'I.' However, when it comes to matters of justice they are prepared to

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<sup>§§</sup> Nolland (2005, 230 n. 133) furnishes the following emphatic parallels: 'Test. Dan. 2:1; Test. Naph. 4:1; I Enoch 94:1; 99: 13; and esp. Test. Reub. 1:7.' Cf. 'Truly [*Amen*] I say to you' of the Gospel of Judas (Kasser *et al.* 2006, 27); other dominical 'I' statements are on pages 21, 23, 33, and 41. For other Jewish parallels, see Blomberg (2007, 21-23).

fight. And they are quick to point to texts like Matthew 10:34, 35<sup>67</sup> and 21:12, 13 to justify their position. Marley, for example, believed that ‘There should be no WAR<sup>68</sup> between black and white . . . [because] The God who mek [made] I and I, him create techicolor people . . . Now if someone wan’ kill I, if someone wan’ try and hurt I . . . than I and I make him hurt I, and if the only thing I can do is defend I-self . . . We nuh come like no sheep in dem slaughter, like one time. Dem just don’t have power fe do certain things to I and I’ (Marley 1993, 53-54, 72).

### Adultery

One of the features of church that the Rasta finds particularly distasteful is its hypocritical sexual practices.<sup>69</sup> Hence ‘If true Christianity is as universal and correct as Christians proclaim, we would not be having today’s scandals of homosexuality . . . and sexual depravity being revealed’ (Hannah 2002, 105). Jesus, via the seventh commandment, speaks to the heart of this issue in his second I-pronouncement thus:

evgw. de. le, gw u`mi/n o[ti pa/j o` ble, pwn  
 gunai/ka pro.j to. evpiqumh/sai auvth.n h;dh  
 evmoi, ceusen auvth.n evn th/| kardi, a| auvtou/Å

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<sup>67</sup>Cf. *Gos. Thom.* 10: ‘I have hurled fire on the world [“Babylon” to Rasta] . . . I’m guarding it until it blazes up’ (Robinson *et al* 2002, 127) and Marley’s sentiments in n. 4 above.

<sup>68</sup> But see his incorporation of Selassie’s words in ‘War’ (Tafari 2001, 323-324).

<sup>69</sup> And rightly so, because ‘Conversion is mostly valuable if it throws a revealing light . . . across the social life of which we are a part’ (Rauschenbusch 1945, 99).

(But I say to you [*unu*], any man who looks at a wife/woman to lust at her has already committed adultery in his heart; v. 28).

Whether we translate verse 28 as the NRSV ('But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart') or like that suggested by Davies and Allison (1988, 523: 'Whoever looks at a woman so that she desires, has already misled her to adultery in his heart'), we have before us a formidable ethical challenge to any group that would dare to follow the 'I' who utters it.<sup>70</sup>

According to Jesus, then, at the heart of sexual immorality (represented by adultery in the Decalogue) is the rebellious desire for that which God proscribes, and the way to deal with such a desire is to take radical action against the self (vv. 29-30; Edwards 2006).

### Divorce

The next pronouncement (evgw. de. le, gw u`mi/n o[ti pa/j o` avpolu, wn th.n gunai/ka auvtou/ parekto.j lo, gou pornei, aj<sup>71</sup> poiei/ auvth.n moiceuqh/nai ( kai. o]j eva.n avpolelume, nhn gamh, sh| ( moica/tai/But I-n-I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except in the case of sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery; and whoever should marry a divorcee commits adultery-v. 32) on matters having to do with the proper grounds for divorce

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<sup>70</sup> Thus confesses a famous Rasta: 'I-man is a saint. My only vice is plenty women. Other than that I-man is a saint' (Marley 1993, 79).

<sup>71</sup> 'Certainly [these words] cannot be dominical' (Davies and Allison 1988, 528). But there is no manuscript evidence to suggest otherwise. The lack of multiple attestation is insufficient basis to reject them.

and re-marriage hardly comes into Rastafarian reckoning. This is so because, with a few exceptions like Bob and Rita Marley, Rastas tend to shun traditional (Western) marriages as a part of the ‘babylonish’ system which is evil. Moreover, with the tendency of many male Rastas toward polygyny (Rowe 1998, 82), it is difficult to assess this dominical saying within the *Sitz im Leben* of Rastafari. In the common-law system of marriage in Jamaica, the rate of ‘divorce’ was over sixty-percent at one time (Gerig 1967, 27), so the solemn pronouncement of the ‘I’ should bear some relevance in this milieu.

#### Swearing

If Jesus’ pronouncement on divorce seems hardly relevant to the ethos of Rastafari, the one on taking oaths, and the like, is even more so. For example, although the use of expletives in the Jamaican public is illegal, Rastas insist that their right to free speech, including the use of divine names, should be totally unfettered (cf. The strange terms in Marley 1993, 91). But what really is the meaning of *evgw. de. le, gw u`mi/n mh. ovmo, sai o[lwj\ mh, te evn tw/| ouvranw/| ( o[ti qro, noj evsti.n tou/ qeou//* But I-n-I say to you: Do not swear at all; certainly not by heaven because it is the throne of God (5:34-37)?

Against the background of Jewish casuistry in which a person’s truth claims were properly corroborated by the right kinds of oath taking, what Jesus is insisting on for his followers is a certain perspective on life that sees matters of integrity and veracity as theological matters. When life is seen this way there is no need for oath taking and swearing to ‘establish’ the truth. If this understanding is correct, Jesus is not here excluding all oaths but is

underscoring the kind of life-style which would guarantee that even our words meet the basic requirements of *die größere Gerechtigkeit* of the kingdom. This is the truth of the 'I.' And with this the Rasta agrees: 'Here me! Dere is no truth but de one truth . . . de truth of Jah Rastafari' (Marley 1993, 59).

### *Lex Talionis*

As we noted above, when the Rastafari movement got underway in Jamaica one of the early tenets had to do with 'Revenge on whites for their wickedness' (Ahkell 1999, 10). However, today the movement has taken on global proportions (Tafari 2001, 314-338) and a significant number of Rastas outside Jamaica is white (Hannah 2002, 123-151)).

In first century Palestine, there were those, like the early Rastas, who promoted not only active resistance to Rome but retaliatory strikes against all representatives of Rome. One also gets the impression that the *lex talionis*, originally given to ensure that justice is served<sup>72</sup> in volatile or potentially volatile situations, was also being abused among the covenant people.

Whatever the precise background of Matt 5:33, the radical pronouncement of the 'I' in verses 34-42 (e.g., evgw. de. le, gw u`mi/n mh.

avntisth/nai tw/| ponhrw/|\ avllv o[stij se r`api,zei  
eivj th.n dexia.n siago,na sou( stre,yon avtw/| kai.  
th.n a;llhn/ But I say to you, Do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone

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<sup>72</sup>This was to ensure that the punishment fit the crime. Accordingly, Carson's (2002, 38) 'retaliatory strike' is too strong: 'The famous riposte attributed to Gandhi—that the principle "eye for eye" means that pretty soon the whole world will be blind—is cute and memorable but frankly stupid.' On the Hindu influence on Rastafari, see Tafari (2001, 296, 314) and Mansingh and Mansingh (1985, 96-115).



strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also; NRSV) must have seemed highly impracticable. But when these verses are viewed in the light of the love ethic expounded in the final pronouncement, their relevance to the human condition becomes transparent: ‘I will pay to no man the reward of evil.’ (IQ10:18a; Vermes 1997, 113; cf. Garvey 1980, 44, 66-67 *passim*).

### Love

The fact that Bob Marley’s ‘One Love’ and ‘Exodus’ were voted anthem and album of the century by Time Magazine and the BBC, respectively, (Goldman 2006; Hannah 2002, 74-75; Seaga 2005, 17) may be significant. For a movement whose forebears were evidently hated by the white man and whose founders were *nayabingi* in orientation and proclamation, it has come a far way in embracing the ethic of love expounded by the ‘I’ in Matthew 5:43-48 (Decker 2001, 235 n. 131). There is still a question, though, as to how much love the Rasta has for those who are still a part of ‘Babylon’ (Tafari 2001, 294)—that is, those who have not yet seen the light of Rastafari: ‘We love and respect the brotherhood of mankind yet our first love is to the sons of Ham’ (Ahkell 1999, 11).

Rastas are not the only followers of the ‘I’ who struggle with loving those outside the covenant.<sup>73</sup> The Sermon on the Mount in general and, more specifically, 5: 43-48 were directly addressed to ‘disciples’ (5:1; cf.

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<sup>73</sup>*Contra* Marcus Aurelius’, ‘It is characteristic of human beings . . . to love those who abuse them’ (Schnelle 1996, 21).

VHkou, sate o [ti evrre, qh<sup>74</sup>). And the Qumran community not very far from them in time and space articulated their position clearly on the matter:

The Master shall teach the saints . . . that they may seek God with a whole heart and soul . . . that they may love all that he has chosen and *hate* [my emphasis] all that he has rejected. . . . They shall separate from the congregation of men of injustice and shall unite. (Vermes 1997, 98, 103; cf. Gutierrez 1973, 273-285).

From Meier's (2001, 529) perspective, the sense of alienation conveyed by the *Rule of the Community* as well as its 'fierce opposition' to outsiders are to be understood against the background of the socio-political milieu in which members of the community experienced persecution and ostracism from the priesthood in Jerusalem. Subsequently, the community's worldview became 'starkly dualistic . . . in terms of two armed camps engaging in an eschatological struggle for the soul of the individual and the future of the world.' Although most Rastas eschew asceticism, Meier's description of the Qumran community in terms of its stance against 'priesthood' and the like sounds quite similar to that of Rastafari.

It is within this context that Jesus declares: evgw. de. le, gw u`mi/n\ avgapa/te tou.j evcrou.j u`mw/n kai. proseu, cesqe u`pe.r tw/n diwko, ntw n u`ma/j (But I say to you [*unu*]: love your enemies, even pray for your persecutors; vv. 44-48). It is this injunction more than any other, it would appear, that has had the greatest influence on the early disciples, particularly the 'son of thunder' (and/ his community; 1 John 4:7-8) and the one who later became the apostle to the

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<sup>74</sup> The use of this verb 'in the series of sayings seems to suggest that these are human sayings and not the written Law of Moses' (Tow 1986, 89). This is not entirely correct.

Gentiles (1 Cor 13; see also Carson 2002; Piper 1981).<sup>75</sup> This love, some feel, ‘is the strongest force the world possesses’ (Settel 1995, 49). ‘Without love,’ declared Haile Selassie, ‘all of our human efforts in the sight of God can be useless’ (Spencer 1999, 46). But this ‘love of neighbour cannot stand on its own, however, untied to the love of God. For if love of neighbour excludes God it will either cancel itself by turning into selfishness . . . or it will destroy us’ (Volf 2005, 200).

#### The ‘I’ as Compassionate Healer (Matt 8:5-13)

With the great discourse out of the way, Matthew now presents Jesus as compassionate healer. As such Jesus meets a leper on his way down from the mount and heals him at his request (8:1-4). In the next pericope another request for healing is put to Jesus—this time from a Roman centurion. The centurion comes on behalf of his servant who is seriously ill and Jesus, practicing the kind of love he expounded in 5:43-48, immediately responds with a solemn promise: *εἶπα· ἐπιθῶν ἑραπεύσω αὐτόν* (‘I will go and make him well’ GNB; 8:7; or is it a question? ‘*Soll ich etwa kommen und ihn gesund machen?*’ *Die Bibel* 1987; cf. Turner 1965, 51, 52). In this story the emphatic love of Jesus is only matched by the equally emphatic faith of the centurion (8:9ff.). Both are marked by the independent pronoun: ‘I.’

Healing is not a subject that is often found in RastafarI literature. But when it is treated it is usually dealt with quite reductionistically in the sense that the

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<sup>75</sup> It is unlikely, then, that Luz (2007, 280) is correct that the antitheses constitute some kind of interim ethic. He is correct, however in pointing out their function in undercoring the self understanding of Jesus.

'herb' (Marijuana/Ganja) seems to be the cure for everything. For Marley (1993, 81) and Forsythe (1983) it is a national panacea. For Hannah (2002, 63), the 'Holy Herb,' as she calls it, is not just a sacrament. It is the one thing that gives the necessary spiritual insight to live. She further says:

Rastafari has arrived at the spiritual plane of consciousness by smoking the herb, and by continuing to smoke it I & I can bring I-self back to that special place where I & I can find peace, spiritual silence and insight into I & I Christ Consciousness . . . Studies have [also] shown that mothers who use ganja while pregnant produce intellectually superior children . . . (Hannah 2002, 63-64).

Hannah (2002, 65) also catalogues the use of the herb in the successful treatment of diseases like glaucoma, multiple sclerosis, cancer and even HIV/AIDS. But like in much of Christendom which is so despised in the eyes of Rastafari, there is very little place for the kind of healing described in the above pericope. In fact, the faith of the centurion that so impressed the 'I' is something against which Rastas inveigh. Rastas do not believe. They only know (McFarlane 1998, 116-119; for the rationality of faith, see Erdel 2000).

#### The 'I' as Local Commissioner (Matt 10:16)

At the beginning of Matthew's Gospel Jesus calls his disciples to become fishers of men. When the period of training shall have run its course, the disciples' responsibility will take on global proportions. In 10: 5-33 we get a glimpse of what their practicum looks like, complete with a parting word of authoritative wisdom and warning:

VIIdou. evgw. avposte, llw u`ma/j w`j pro, bata evn  
me, sw| lu, kwn\ gi, nesqe ou=n fro, nimoï w`j oi`  
o; feij kai. avke, raioi w`j ai` peristerai, ...

Pa/j ou=n o[stij o`mologh,sei evn evmoi.  
 e;mprosqen tw/n avnqrw,pwn( o`mologh,sw kavgw.  
 evn auvtw/| e;mprosqen tou/ patro,j mou tou/ evn  
 toi/j ouvranoi/j\ o[stij dV a'n avrnh,shtai, me  
 e;mprosqen tw/n avnqrw,pwn( avrnh,somai kavgw.  
 auvto.n e;mprosqen tou/ patro,j mou tou/ evn  
 toi/j ouvranoi/j (Watch this, I send you as sheep in the midst  
 of wolves; so become as prudent as serpents and harmless as doves . . .  
 Everyone, therefore, who confesses me before people, I shall  
 acknowledge before my heavenly father. And whoever will deny me  
 before humanity, I-n-I shall disown that one before my heavenly father;  
 vv. 16, 32, 33).

The 'zoomorphic' symbols employed by the 'I' in verse 16 (sheep, wolves, serpents, and doves) are seldom if ever at all used positively in the literature put out by Rastafari. What will be found in abundance are references to the lion, their symbol of power and authority. From at least one Rasta's perspective, 'we nuh come like no sheep./we are not like sheep' (Marley 1993, 72). This same Rasta, however, did not mind being called a servant of the 'I'. Said he: 'I have a duty to tell the truth as I have been told it. I will keep on doing it until I am satisfied the people have the message that Rastafari is the almighty and all we black people have redemption' (1993, 43, 44).

The first century apprenticed disciples were empowered by their Master not only to proclaim the truth and good news of the kingdom but to conduct healing 'clinics', which would include various kinds of exorcism and the raising of the dead. Eventually Jesus later joined them (11:11; 12:22-23) in their philanthropic endeavors (with an offer of rest to the hurting in verse 28:  
 Deu/te pro,j me pa,ntej oi` kopiw/ntej kai.  
 pefortisme,noi( kavgw. avnapau,sw u`ma/j /come to me all

those who are deeply depressed, and I shall refresh you [*unu*]). He had warned them to expect some negative reaction (10:22-25), which was exemplified in his own encounter with the Pharisees (12:24-26).

#### The 'I' as Comforter (Matt 11:25-30)

All the Evangelists present the Christ as one who goes around doing good. Yet increasingly he is being rejected by the religious establishment to the south, and even by fellow Galileans in the north (Matt 11:1-24). This for Jesus became a matter of prayer (Matt 11:25-27). The prayer evidently refers to those who reject Jesus ('the wise and prudent ones'), as well as to his few disciples ('babes'). It is to the latter group that verse 28 may have primary reference. It is possible that the disciples hear the echo of another 'Jesus' on this occasion, according to France (1985, 201): 'Draw near to me, you who are uneducated, lodge in the house of instruction' (Eccl 51:23; cf. 6:24-31 in the NRSV). Since in the LXX *avna, pausij* 'is used as a regular equivalent of *shabbat*' (Ellison 1979, 1134), the louder echo may have been the more comforting one for the disciples.

The passage Matthew 11:28 is well known and cherished by Rastas (Mack 1999, 56).<sup>76</sup> Interestingly, the verse was a favourite of the late Ethiopian emperor: 'All through my troubles, I have found it a cause of infinite comfort. "Come to me . . . I will give you rest,' who can resist an invitation so full of

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<sup>76</sup> Compare the *Gos. Thom.* 90: *Le, gei Ihsou/j deu/te* (Robinson *et al.* 2000, 194).

compassion'? (Hannah 2002, 98).

#### The 'I' versus Beelzebul (Matt 12:22-32)

Again Matthew presents Jesus as compassionate healer and rejected Messiah. This time a demonized man is brought to him. The man is healed and the onlookers are beside themselves. They wonder: 'Can this be David's son?' But the Pharisees have no doubt as to the source of Jesus' power, and Jesus has no doubt about what they are thinking.

He then corrects their misconception by way of a simple illustration concerning the integrity of any social unit (Matt 12:22-26). His application follows: *kai. eiv evgw. evn Beelzebou.l evkba,llw ta. daimonia( oi` ui`oi. u`mw/n evn ti,ni evkba,llousinÈ dia. tou/to auvtoi. kritai. e;sontai u`mw/nÅ eiv de. evn pneu,mati qeou/ evgw. evkba,llw ta. daimonia( a;ra e;fqasen evfV u`ma/j h` basilei,a tou/ qeou/* (And if I-n-I by Beelzebul expel demons, by whom do your sons do the same? Therefore, they will be your judge. But since by God's Spirit I cast out these demons, God's kingdom is upon you [*unu*]; vv. 27-28).

The effectiveness of Jesus' refutation of the Pharisees is underlined by the repetition of 'I' in verse 28 and the rhetorical question of the previous verse. There is also a strong possibility that Matthew wanted his audience to hear these verses as echoing Isaiah 42:1-4 (cf. vv. 18-21), since they also support Jesus' claim to be working by the Spirit. Luke's account will echo the 'finger of God' of Exodus 8: 19 (Albright and Mann 1971, 155).

#### The 'I' as Prophet (Matt 23:34-36)

Matthew 23 for the most part is a denunciation of the hypocritical behaviour of some of the scribes and Pharisees. The chapter contains seven woes that all begin with the identical formula ('woe to you'). It is the climactic 'woe' which ends with the following prediction: *Dia. tou/to ivdou. evgw. avposte, llw pro.j u`ma/j profh,taj kai. sofou.j kai. grammatei/j\ evx auvtw/n avpoktenei/te kai. staurw, sete kai. evx auvtw/n mastigw, sete evn tai/j sunagwai/j u`mw/n kai. diw,xete avpo. po,lewj eivj po, lin* (Therefore, watch this: I will send prophets, wise people and scribes to you, some of whom you [*unu*] will kill and crucify, and others *unu* will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from town to town; v. 34ff.). As a prophecy it follows naturally the thought of verses 29-33 (Hagner 1995, 674).

Though the woes against the religious system of the day express sentiments with which the Rasta can agree, not everyone shares this posture especially those today, who like Rastafari, claim to be authentic Jews. Thus Sandmel (1956, 162) understandably writes:

The conservative Christian who is determined to preserve the passage as the authentic words of Jesus needs to ponder whether he can with intellectual honesty hold fast to a usual Christian view of Jesus as a benign and kindly soul. The passage is not from Jesus; it is a partisan utterance from a period of extreme antagonism; least of all is it to be taken as a fair or accurate description either of Phariseeism or of Judaism.

Rastas are not known to be conservative Christians anywhere in the world. But what is almost certain is that they, more than any other group, would want to preserve verse 34 in particular, since it features the 'I' as authoritative prophet (cf. Luke 21:15-*evgw. ga.r dw,sw u`mi/n sto,ma kai.*



sofi,an h- | ouv dunh, sontai avntisth/nai h'  
 avnteipei/n a [pantej oi` avntikei, menoi u`mi/n).<sup>77</sup>

### C. The Gospel of Luke

#### The 'I' as Divine Promise (Luke 11:1-9)

One of the main motifs of the Lukan Gospel is that of prayer (Marshall 1978, 454). Luke alone records the disciples' observation and request for a lesson on prayer. The response of their master is generous: a prayer paradigm is given (vv. 2-4), followed by a parable which illustrates the need for boldness/persistence in prayer (vv. 5-8) and then, finally, the conditional promise(s) of verse 9: Kavgw. u`mi/n le, gw( aivtei/te<sup>78</sup> kai. doqh, setai u`mi/n( zhtei/te kai. eu`rh, sete( krou,ete kai. avnoigh, setai u`mi/n (I say to you [*unu*]: ask persistently, and it will be given, seek earnestly and discover, and knock incessantly and it shall be opened).

The kavgw, with which the line begins 'places these verses [9ff] in a consequential relationship to Jesus' story in vv. 5-8' (Green 1997, 449), and in so doing helps to strengthen the point the 'I' is making.

#### The 'I' as Fiscal Counselor (Luke 16:1-13)

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<sup>77</sup> 'I-n-I shall give a word and wisdom to *unu*, against which none of your antagonists will be able to counteract or withstand'.

<sup>78</sup> Curiously, the three injunctions spell 'A-S-K' in translation (cf. NIV; AV; and NRSV, for example). On the grammar of vv. 9-10, see Porter (1989, 350). For the divine significance of Luke's presentation of Jesus, see Hurtado (2005, 340-345; cf. also 108-117 of the same work).

In a parable which many interpreters find difficult to grasp, Jesus impresses upon his followers the important matter of proper stewardship. At the centre of Jesus' story is a first century steward who finds himself in great difficulty. By taking stock of his situation he is able to secure a better future for himself through the dubious route of unauthorized debt forgiveness. Surprisingly, he is commended by his master who had recently made his position redundant (Luke 16:1-8a). Perhaps what is more surprising is the fact that Jesus could have used such a 'shady story' to drive home his point which is summarized in verse 8b and applied in the following verses. The beginning of that application (v. 9) reads thus: *Kai. evgw. u`mi/n le,gw( e`autoi/j poihsate filouj evk tou/ mamwna/ th/j avdiki,aj( i[na o[tan evkli,ph| de,xwntai u`ma/j eivj ta.j aivwni,ouj skhna, j* (I say to you [*unu*]: make for yourselves friends of the unrighteous mammon, that whenever it should fail they will receive you [*unu*] in their long lasting dwellings). Was this to ensure that 'the fate of the disciples will not be that of rich fool' (Luke 12:21; Danker 1972, 174)? If this is correct, we might also add the nouthetic parable on the same theme (Luke 16:19-3; cf. 'Let the property [mammon] of your fellow be as dear to you as your own' *Abot* 2: 12; Evans 1997, 449).

On this the genuine Rasta can say:

If we are true brothers, money is not a separation for us . . . Money does not matter. Only music matters. . . . I lived for a time without money before I started making [it], but my work isn't aimed at becoming a star and I'm making sure my life don't [sic] go towards material vanity (Marley 1993, 68, 85, 86).

### The 'I' as Servant Leader (Luke 22:24-30)

This pericope records another (?) dispute among the disciples about the wielding of power. And, true to form, their master uses the occasion to give them a kingdom perspective on the matter. Whether the pericope is chronologically or topically placed, its location between the institution of the Eucharist and passion events, like Peter's<sup>79</sup> denial and Judas's betrayal, is pronounced. It also serves to make the words of the 'I' that more memorable: *ti, j ga.r mei, zwn( o` avnakei, menoj h' o` diakonw/nÈ ouvci. o` avnakei, menojÈ evgw. de. evn me, sw| u`mw/n eivmi w`j o` diakonw/n* (For who is greater, the person seated or the person serving? Is it not the person seated? And I am in the midst of you guys serving! Luke 22:27).

### The 'I' as the Glorified One

The last two I-statements found in the Synoptic Gospels<sup>80</sup> both have a post-Resurrection setting. The first features an appearance of the glorified Christ to the disciples as the one who overcomes 'the greatest riddle of life—*death*.'

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<sup>79</sup> If we grant that Luke uses Mark (who places the episode earlier in his narrative) at this point, then 'The perspective is Peter's . . . the perspective of Peter *qua* member of the group of disciples, rather than an "I" perspective (Only in the story of Peter's denials [the very next pericope in Luke predicts them; vv. 33] does the "we" perspective narrow to and "I" perspective, and even here Peter does not step outside his narrative role as one of Jesus' disciples.) Therefore there are no private reminiscences of Jesus.' (Bauckham 2006, 180)

<sup>80</sup> For an intriguing 'I' text pointing to the resurrection, see the *Gos. Thom.* (71), which Crossan (1996, 59) feels is the earliest independent source of the prediction, and for resurrection language as 'literal nonsense', see Spong (2007, 122).

(Bultmann 1955, 73; italics his). According to Luke, this was not the first manifestation of the risen Christ. He had, for example, previously showed himself to a couple (Mr. and Mrs. Cleopas?) on their way to Emmaus (24:1ff). They later reported the incident to the eleven (24:32-35). It was while the disciples were listening to this report that 'Jesus himself stood among them' to their consternation.

Like on a previous occasion, they thought they had seen a ghost (Prince 2007). And like on that occasion, their hearts were put at ease by an emphatic 'I' statement flanked by two others, drawing attention to his essential corporeal reality (v. 39). Although the response of the disciples may be considered ambivalent, the intention of the risen Lord was on its way toward fulfillment.

In the other post-resurrection episode (recorded by Matthew) the meeting between the Lord and his disciples is now outdoors. It is similar to the one above in the sense that the Evangelist has Jesus meeting with others first before the climatic rendezvous with the Eleven (Matt 28:1-15). In what K. Stendahl (1968, 798) calls the only genuine conclusion in the Gospels, Jesus meets them on a hill that, as far as Stendahl is concerned, has nothing but mythological significance.

What Stendahl means by this is not at all clear, but since he earlier described the occurrence as a 'glorious epiphany on a mountain in Galilee', it would appear that the authenticity of the story and its topographical notice are not in doubt from his perspective. From this topographical setting Jesus gives one of the most famous precepts in Christendom (v. 19), along with a promise

of his abiding presence:  $\text{ivdou. evgw. meqV u`mw/n eivmi}$   
 $\text{pa,saj ta.j h`me,raj e[wj th/j suntelei,aj tou/}$   
 $\text{aivw/noj}^{81}$  (Look, I shall be with you [*unu*] every day, even until the end of  
the age; v. 20). ‘If 1.23 matches 28.20, then the  $\text{evgw,}$  of the latter appears to  
correspond to the  $\text{qeo, j}$  of the former’ (Davies and Allison 1988, 217).

#### D. Summary

The Synoptic material has provided a number of interesting episodes which seem to support the contention that the Rasta’s penchant for employing ‘I’ is somehow related to the NT. We also observed that Mark, Matthew and Luke portray the first century ‘I’ as a remarkable character who walks on water, expels demons, expounds God’s will, and suffers. These Evangelists locate the ‘I’ squarely within the prophetic tradition and yet somehow sets him apart from that tradition by assigning to him a unique role as God’s ultimate anointed.

We now turn to the two most significant tracts within the Johannine corpus.

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<sup>81</sup>Compare *The Oxyrhynchus sayings of Jesus* [X]:  $\text{Le, gw evgw, eivmi met' autou/}$ . Note the plural in the canonical text.

## CHAPTER FOUR

PRONOMINAL 'I' IN THE *CORPUS JOHANNEUM*

In the previous chapter we provided an investigation into several instances of the 'I' incarnate making significant utterances that would (and in fact do) appeal to those committed to Haile Selassie—the Power of the Trinity. These utterances were all selected from the Synoptic Gospels. We now turn to the canonical 'sequel' to Mark, Matthew and Luke, the Fourth Gospel and the Apocalypse where we bring Rastafari into conversation with their dominical pronouncements.

## A. The Gospel of John

It is in John's Gospel that we come across some of the most intriguing uses of the first person pronoun under review, especially with the verb 'to be'. The first dominical 'I' statement comes in chapter 4:14, where Jesus converses with the Samaritan woman. Startled by his request for water from her, she asks about the appropriateness of his gesture. Teasingly, Jesus makes an offer of 'living water' which, apparently, further confuses the woman and prompts two further questions (vv. 11-12). To these queries Jesus gives a word of clarification by way of contrast. The water from the well would quench her thirst, but only temporally. But the water Jesus offers would meet her deepest needs (Fortna 2004, 259). A contrast is also to be seen between the Israel of old (Jacob) who gave the well, and the new Israel (Jesus), who offers the wellspring of 'living water':

VIakw, b . . . e; dwken (Jacob gave; v.12)/ evgw. dw, sw (I-n-I

shall give; v. 14). The conversation with the woman continues. It is altered slightly when she is requested to summon her husband and, in leveling with the Lord about her private life, she discovers the prophetic dimension of Jesus' ministry (vv.16-19)—although 'The natural implication of the word *prophet* is not a cultic one.' (Fortna 1970, 191). Again a shift in focus is seen when the vexed question of the true place of worship is brought up by the woman. The authoritative response of Jesus to this issue seems inconclusive to her, so she then refers the case to the final arbiter--the coming Messiah<sup>82</sup> (vv. 20-25). Then Jesus confesses: *evgw, eivmi ( o` lalw/n soi* (I am the one speaking to you [*yu*]; v.26). The identification could hardly have been stronger (Botha 1991, 153-154; cf. IQIs<sup>a</sup> 52: 6: *ynn h rbdmh yna yk*; cited in Williams 2000, 261).

With this the woman leaves her water jar and heads for the village with the good news, resulting in more Samaritans coming to see Jesus. While all this was happening, the disciples, now back from seeking food, are urging their Master to partake of their purchase. His response, at least initially, puzzles them: *evgw. brw/sin e;cw fagei/n h]n u`mei/j ouvko i;date* (I-n-I have food to eat of which you are ignorant; v.32). Here the 'I' of 'satisfaction' (cf. v. 34) is contrasted with the 'you' of bewildered ignorance.

There is yet one more occurrence of *ἐγώ* ♦♦ in this chapter, which makes it one of the most 'I-saturated' discourses in the entire NT. After

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<sup>82</sup> The Greek equivalent (v. 25) for 'Messiah' later became a *nomina sacra/divina* among Christians (Hurtado 2006, 97).

Jesus interrupts the disciples' reflection on the 'puzzle' by explaining what he really means by 'food' in the context (vv. 35-37), he then proceeds with another didactic application that reminds the disciples of their evangelistic task: *evgw. avpe, steila u`ma/j qeri, zein o] ouvci u`mei/j kekopia, kate\ a;lloi kekopia, kasin kai. u`mei/j eivj to.n ko,pon avtw/n eivselhlu, qate* (I sent you to reap that which you have not laboured; others have laboured and you have participated in their labour; v. 38).

There is almost a realized eschatological tension in *avpe, steila*—a tension achieved by the specialized 'aorist . . . [which] is used to portray a future occurrence *as if it were already done*. The aorist gives a vivid picture of the occurrence or emphasizes its certainty or imminence' (Fanning 1990, 270; italics original). Fanning also suggests that this use of the aorist may be a case of Hebraism. If he is correct, it is possibly the phenomenon called *perfectum propheticum* by some OT scholars (Kautzsch 1910, 312; cf. Walke and O'Connor 1990, 490). The authoritative prediction will find its fulfillment not only in 20: 19-21 but probably in 4:38-42 as well, where other Samaritans appear to partake of the 'living water'. The prediction at least introduces a 'theme of widespread missionary potential' (Fortna 2004, 302).

It becomes clear contextually that the 'living water' about which Jesus speaks is the gift of life eternal (v. 14; cf. 3:16). The availability of this life is part of John's evangelistic strategy (20:31; v. 38). For Rastas this life is only available in the latest manifestation of the 'I'—HIM Haile Selassie I. While all Rastas enjoy this life in the here and now, its future manifestation will be



consummated in Ethiopia, because ‘Rasta . . . must go home to Africa’ (Marley 1993, 62). This is in contrast to traditional Christian belief as understood and articulated by Marley in his famous ‘Get up, Stand up’ (1993, 56):

*Most people think great God will come from the sky  
Take away ev'ry thing, and make ev'ry body feel high  
But if you know what life is worth  
You would look for yours on earth  
And now you see the light  
You stand up for your right . . .  
We are sick and tired of your ism and skism game  
Die and go to heaven in Jesus' name  
We know when we understand  
Almighty God is a living Man.*

#### The ‘I’ as Authoritative Son (5:19-30)

The next dominical-I occurs at the end of a pericope (5:19-30) in which the authority of Jesus is highlighted. This authority is closely tied to the will of God and is expressed in a colophon:<sup>83</sup> Οὐκ ἔχω, ἑαυτοῦ ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ ποιῆσαι τίνα ἔργον, ἀλλὰ ὅσα ἴδωμι ἔργα τοῦ πατρὸς ἃ ἐγὼ ποιῶ, ἐκ τούτου λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι ὁ πατήρ ἐν ἐμοὶ καὶ ἐγὼ ἐν τῷ πατρὶ, ὁ πατήρ ἔργα μεγάλα καὶ ἄνευ ἐμοῦ ποιῶν, ἐγὼ ἔργα ταῦτα ποιῶ ἐν τῷ πατρὶ ἃ ἐγὼ οὐκ ἔχω ποιῆσαι ἑαυτοῦ ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ, ἀλλὰ ὅσα ἴδωμι ἔργα τοῦ πατρὸς ἃ ἐγὼ ποιῶ, ἐκ τούτου λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι ὁ πατήρ ἐν ἐμοὶ καὶ ἐγὼ ἐν τῷ πατρὶ. (John 5:19-30)

<sup>83</sup> B. Lindars (1972, 30) takes the opposite view that v. 30 is the opening of a new theme which turns to the end of the chapter. That the verse is transitional cannot be disputed. ‘At the same time it marks the passage from the indirect (*the Son*) to the personal (*I*) revelation of Christ’ (Westcott 1908, 195).

<sup>84</sup>What is the significance of this pronoun coming after the verb? No satisfactory answer is as yet forthcoming. It just might be stylistic in this case. If I am correct that v. 30 forms the conclusion of the paragraph, then ἐγὼ, at this point in the verse may be anaphoric. See e.g., Wallace (1996, 321, n. 11).

decision based on what I hear; hence my judgement is right because I do not seek my own will but the will of the one sending me/*I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.* ; v. 30)<sup>85</sup>

The following verse also has a dominical-I. Here *evgw*, functions in an apologetical context in which Jesus offers cogent explanation of his witness in the previous paragraph in terms of providing additional personal evidence.<sup>86</sup>

VEa.n *evgw*. *marturw/ peri. evmoutou/( h` marturi, a mou ouvke;stin avlhqh,j\ a;lloj evsti.n o` marturw/n peri. evmou/( kai. oi=da o[ti avlhqh,j evstin h` marturi, a h]n marturei/ peri. evmou/* (If I-n-I witness concerning myself, my witness is untrue; another person witnesses about me, and I know his witness is genuine/*If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true. There is another that beareth witness of me; and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true.* ; vv. 31, 32).

The *oi=da* of verse 32 is followed by *evgw*❖ of verse 34 in which Jesus qualifies his statement concerning John in the previous verse. If the *evgw* ❖ of verse 31 is strictly apologetic, the one in verse 34 takes on the colour of the evangelistic, since the purpose of the disclaimer is given in these

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<sup>85</sup>For a theory of dislocation with v. 30 forming an inclusion with v. 19, as well as acting as a discourse summary, see Brown (1966, 221).

<sup>86</sup>On the identity of this ‘other’ person (v. 32), see Beasley-Murray (1999, 77-78).

terms: avlla. tau/ta le, gw i [na u`mei/j swqh/te<sup>87</sup> But the evangelist returns to the apologetic idea in verse 36 as a comparison is made between the shining testimony of the Baptizer (v. 35) and that of Jesus which surpasses it: VEgw. de. e; cw th.n marturi, an mei, zw<sup>88</sup> tou/ VIwa, nnou\ ta. ga.r e; rga a] de, dwke, n moi o` path.r i [na teleiw, sw auvta, ( auvta. ta. e; rga a] poiw/ marturei/ peri. evmou/ o[ti o` path, r me avpe, stalken (And I-n-I have the witness that is greater than John's, for the works that the father has given me I shall complete—the same works that testify that the father sent me/*But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me;* v. 36).

The strong testimony of Jesus continues to the end of the chapter; however, his Jewish audience remains unconvinced precisely because they fail to receive the divine message (v. 38) and the life and love (vv. 40, 42) which it embraces. Yet the life changing message is to be found in the very Scriptures which are the object of their scrutiny (v. 39). The result of their futile investigation is the failure to recognize the one who has come (evgw. evlh, luqa) with the Father's authority (v. 43).

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<sup>87</sup>'I say these things in order that you [ *unu*] might be saved'; the emphatic u`mei/j finds a stark contrast in 'I' at the beginning of the verse, and mildly so in the case of 'I say'.

<sup>88</sup>mei, zwn is read by *p66*, a transcription of which can be viewed in Comfort and Barrett (2001, 406). See also A B; NA.<sup>27</sup> The sense is not appreciably affected if the nominative is adopted, but the accusative makes better sense in the context, though not as well attested.

Finally, in a solemn statement about the Jews' future judgment (Mh. dokei/te o[ti evgw. kathgorh,sw u`mw/n pro.j to.n pate,ra\ e;stin o` kathgorw/n u`mw/n Mwu?sh/j( eivj o]n u`mei/j hvlpi,kate/Do not think that I-n-I shall accuse you before the father; your accuser is Moses, on whom your hope is placed/ *Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust.*), Jesus informs them that the very Scriptures with which they failed to come to grips will be the basis of their condemnation (vv. 45-47).

The authority of the 'I' that is so patently shown in the foregoing verses is yet another point that the Rasta endorses. What s/he struggles with is assigning 'sonship' to Christ, since this smacks of ontological (and not mere functional) subordination. Like the people addressed by the 'I', the Rasta searches the Scripture as a source of life eternal (Hannah 2002, 32).

#### The 'I' as Immanent Divine (John 6:35)

We now come to the most famous utterances of Jesus in John's Gospel: the 'I am' statements (Spence 1999, 15). They are as follows:

evgw, eivmi o` a;rtoj th/j zwh/j  
(I am the bread of life; 6:35; cf. vv. 41, 48, 51)

evgw, eivmi to. fw/j tou/ ko,smou  
(I am the light of the world; 8:12)

evgw, eivmi h` qu,ra tw/n proba,twn  
(I am the gate for the flock; 10:7; cf. v. 9)

evgw eivmi o` poimh.n o` kalo,j  
(I am the good shepherd; 10:11; cf. v. 14)

evgw, eivmi h` avna,stasij kai. h` zwh,  
(I am the resurrection and life; 11:25)

evgw, eivmi h` o`do.j kai. h` avlh,qeia kai. h`  
zwh, (14:6).

(I am the way [viability], the truth [veracity], and the life [vitality])

evgw eivmi h` a;mpeløj h` avlhqinh.  
(I am the genuine vine; 15:1; cf. v.5).<sup>89</sup>

In classifying these statements, both Brown (1966, 533f) and Beasley-Murray (1999, 89) summarize Bultmann's contribution (1971, 225-226). Bultmann identifies four distinct formulae:

*Presentations formel* . . . answering the question, 'who are you?' (e.g., Gen 17:1). [Cf. Selassie's 'I am a man . . . I am mortal' (Spencer 1999, 44)].

*Qualifikations formel* . . . answering the question, 'What are you?' (e.g., Ezek. 28:2); [cf. Marley's, 'I ever was, ever is, ever will be' (1993, 47)].

*Identifikations formel*, where the speaker identifies himself with another person or thing. . . . [and where] the predicate sums up the identity of the subject. [Cf. Benji's (a white Rasta), 'I an I' (Hannah 2002, 147)].

*Rekognitions formel*, or a formula that separates the subject from others. It answers the question 'Who is the one who' with the response, 'It is I'. This is an instance in which the 'I' is really a predicate.<sup>90</sup>

In respect of Jesus, 6:35 (*I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.*) is part of the exchange between himself and the group of people that was seeking him after

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<sup>89</sup> This is the only one of the seven that directly links the disciples to the 'I' (Story 1997, 309).

<sup>90</sup> Brown (1966, 533) goes on to distinguish three grammatical types, viz. (1) an absolute use (e.g., 8:24); (2) an elliptical use, where the predicate is unexpressed (e.g., 6:20) and (3) a predicative use, as in the seven sayings above. Borg (1999, 149-150) is sure that none of these 'I am' statements goes back to Jesus. On the *Gos. Thom.* vis-à-vis John 8:58, see Brown (1962, 163).

the feeding of the five thousand. Their desire was for more bread (v. 26).

However, Jesus' desire was to raise their consciousness (vv. 27-29). Like other episodes seen earlier in the Gospel, there is a misunderstanding on the part of Jesus' audience (vv. 30, 31).

Like the Samaritan woman, they are asking for what Jesus is offering. This prompts the metaphorical response about Jesus being the life giving bread which is appropriated by faith (John 6:35), as well as an eschatological promise from Jesus to the believer: *tou/to ga,r evstin to. qe, lhma tou/ patro,j mou( i[na pa/j o` qewrw/n to.n ui`o.n kai. pisteu,wn eivj auvto.n e;ch| zwh.n aivw,nion( kai. avnasth,sw<sup>91</sup> auvto.n evgw. evn th/| evsca, th| h`me, ra |Å* (For this is the will of my father, that everyone who looks at the son and believes on him should have life eternal, and I-n-I shall raise up that one on the last day/*And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day;* v. 40). But despite the invitation<sup>92</sup> to partake of the Bread,<sup>93</sup> some consternation is still caused among the Jews (vv.

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<sup>91</sup>Here the accent is on the action; but this is supported by the emphatic, isolated nominative pronoun.

<sup>92</sup>On the mention of 'Jews' (v. 41) at this juncture, see Lindars (1972, 42).

<sup>93</sup>On the use of Bread in John's Gospel and its possible connection with Bethlehem ('Bakery'), see Ryken (1998, 118). In any case what is underlined in the discourse is the heavenly source of the bread (vv. 48, 51, all with *evgw* ❖).

41, 42). Maybe even the emphatic way in which Jesus spoke was a part of the problem, thus the repetition of *evgw*, in their initial question (v. 41).

The next revelatory I-statement appears in 8:12 (*Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."*).

*pa, lin* (again), with which it begins, looks back to 7:37-38 where Jesus is making another of his astounding offer.<sup>94</sup> There the Spirit, here, the enlightenment which comes from vital discipleship. According to Beasley-Murray (1999, 127-128), both 7:37-38 and 8:12 are set in the context of the Feast of Tabernacles. If he is correct, then the imagery of 18:12 is quite apt,<sup>95</sup> especially against the background of how the feast was celebrated in the Second Temple era in particular and the wilderness sojourn in general.

The puzzled response of the Pharisees elicits a trilogy of apologetic affirmations from the Lord, each bearing its own degree of personal emphasis (vv. 16-18). Again (*pa, lin*) Jesus addresses the group. Although the time of this particular discourse (8:21ff) is unclear, it appears that the general location remains the same. (cf. vv. 37 [‘feast’] and 8:20 [‘the temple’]).

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<sup>94</sup>There is an intervening I-statement immediately before verse 12 (*ouvde. evgw, se katakri,nw\ poreu,ou( kai. avpo. tou/ nu/n mhke,ti a`ma,rtaneÅ*), but it appears in the very doubtful *comma Johanneum*. For a defense of the authenticity of 7:53–8:11, see Hodges and Farstad (1982, 319-21) and Ngewa (2003, 146-150; cf. Rius-Camps 2007); for the textual evidence against them, see Metzger (1994, 187-189).

<sup>95</sup>This is true particularly concerning the concept of following the light (Beasley-Murray 1999, 127-8).

Once more  $\epsilon\nu\gamma\omega\upsilon$  is a part of some solemn statements. These bear the character of strong warnings couched in categorical terms. Here four important points are discussed relative to Jesus' origin (vv. 23, 26, 24), destination (vv. 21ff, 28, 35, 54), filial relationship (26f, 38, 54ff) and true identity (vv. 23-26, 38, 54f).<sup>96</sup>

'I am the door of the sheep' (10:7) will now occupy our attention. C.H. Dodd divides the chapter into two sections and sees the metaphorical statement as part of the first (vv. 1-21). But verses 1-6 are clearly parabolic and appear to be a self-contained unit. However, if we view verses 7-21 as some kind of a development of the previous section, then Dodd's (1958, 356) suggestion that one theme dominates both is justified.

As 'door' or 'gate' (as the text may be translated), Jesus presents himself once again as decisively significant (Neyrey 2007; Stauffer TDNT 2: 36) for the 'sheep' that are a part of his audience.<sup>97</sup> Closely connected to the gate metaphor is the shepherd statement of 10:11. In the first three verses, according to Brown (1966, 393-394), the way to approach the sheep is the chief concern of 'the Gate'. This is followed by three more verses (3b-5) which focus on the relation between Shepherd and sheep. 10:11 is about the quality of the Shepherd, leading Brown, and, later, Voelz (2006, 80) to render the verse 'I am the model/noble Shepherd!' This shepherd is explicitly contrasted with the

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<sup>96</sup>Barrett (1978, 340ff). On Barrett's 'flat' reading of verses 56-58, see Bloom (2005, 75).

<sup>97</sup>For a fuller interpretation of 10:7 and its repetition in 10:9, see Brown (1966, 393ff).



hired hand (vv. 12, 13), who unlike the 'I', is unwilling to make the ultimate sacrifice for his charge. So close is this relationship<sup>98</sup> between the model Shepherd and his sheep that their inter-personal knowledge is of tremendous benefit to the latter: *ginw, skw ta. evma. kai. ginw, skousi, me ta. evma*, (I recognize my own and they know me/ *I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own*; 10:14).

John's Christological focus<sup>99</sup> continues with the astounding 'I am the resurrection and the life' (11:25). The context of this saying is the account of the illness and subsequent death of Lazarus.

After being notified of his friend's sickness, Jesus turns up late on the scene only to discover that Lazarus had been buried already for four days. Both sisters of the deceased express the confidence that if Jesus had turned up earlier, things would have been different (vv. 21, 32). But Martha's confidence, it would appear, goes beyond her sister's in declaring, 'But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him' (v. 22; NRSV).

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<sup>98</sup>This is reminiscent of M. Buber's I-Thou thesis (e. g., 1970, 62) in terms of closeness. Buber writes as a philosopher who sometimes collapses the two entities: 'The basic word I-You can only be spoken with one's *whole being* [like John 10:11 etc. My emphasis]. The concentration and fusion into a whole being can never be accomplished by me, can never be accomplished without me. I require a you to become; becoming I, I say you. I and thou.' The intimacy between Shepherd ('I?') and sheep ('Thou?') is something Buber would have lauded. But he would find, I think, the mediatorial role of the shepherd (10:11) disconcerting.

<sup>99</sup>This, according to Fortna (1970, 228-234), occupies a place of prominence, especially in John's 'source'. This is revealed in various ways: the major Christological titles (e.g., Son of God etc) and, of course, some of the 'I am' sayings (cf. Fortna 1970, 238-239).

Has Martha the raising of her brother in mind? . . . While Jesus' reply (v.23) might suggest this possibility, the conversation outside the tomb (v. 39) would rather lead to the conclusion that the raising of Lazarus, who is already beginning to decay, exceeds Martha's expectation (Schackenburg 1990, 329).

But before that event, a profound truth must be etched on the heart of the grieving Martha: Jesus is the resurrection<sup>100</sup> and the life<sup>101</sup> (v. 25a). The hope of seeing her brother alive again was not only anchored in an orthodox Jewish belief, but in the one whom the writer earlier gave the closest possible connection with *zwh* ❖ (1:4a). Although the words of verse 25 interpret the miracle which is about to take place, it is very doubtful that Martha would understand them in that light. But after the shroud of grief and unbelief is lifted a text like Psalm 30: 11-12 must have become quite applicable in the situation.

What follows in verses 25b-26 is an exposition of *evgw, eivmi*, (I am) with *avna, stasij* (resurrection) and *zwh, (life)* receiving successive treatments (Barrett, 395).

The next 'I am' statement is a part of the farewell discourse(s) of John 13-17. It is occasioned by the solemn pronouncements regarding Jesus' impending departure and the questions it raises in the minds of the disciples.

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<sup>100</sup>A few important witnesses lack *kai. h` zwh, ,*; for a discussion on these, see Metzger (1994, 199).

<sup>101</sup>Both 'resurrection' and 'life' (if original) are metonyms, i.e., 'the Worker of resurrection, and Giver of resurrection Life' (Bullinger 1968, 562). For further discussion on the poetic structure and significance of v. 25ff, see Beasley-Murray (1999, 190-191). The continuation of this saying with the seventh sign is a powerful testimony to the Christological claim of Jesus.

Jesus is careful to fortify his disciples with powerful words of comfort (14:1-4),<sup>102</sup> but talk of his undisclosed destination (13:33) and doubt about how to get there (14:5) seem to be proving too much for them. Further disclosure is needed. Verse 6 is the beginning of that further revelation. In the pericope encompassing vv. 1-11, this key verse acts as a bridge between the two sections (Beasley-Murray 1999, 252). It is definitely an answer to Thomas' question about the route (οὐκ οἶσθε, j); but it is also a response to the first part of his question. The answer has to be in the affirmative once it is recognized that verses 5 and 6 stand in a sort of chiastic arrangement:

(5) A. Question of destination      (5a) B. Question of direction (5b)

(6) B'. Clarification re direction    (6a) A'. Clarification re destination (6b)

If our understanding of the verse is correct, John<sup>103</sup> wants the reader to know that the real 'destination' of Jesus is the Father (hinted at in 14:2) and the exclusive 'road'<sup>104</sup> to him is the Son. But how do we understand the other two elements in the predicate? In other words what relation does 'road' bear to 'truth' and 'life'? And what is the significance of the definite articles preceding these terms?

To take up the second question first, the articles attached to 'life' and 'truth' may merely be standard Greek usage with abstract nouns (Moule 1959,

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<sup>102</sup> On the relationship of chapter 14 to the next three chapters, see Fortna (2004, 290, n. 120).

<sup>103</sup> This is assuming of course that he artistically redacted the conversation at this point to suit his theological purpose.

<sup>104</sup> Cf. Acts 16:17: 'a way of salvation'; Bruce (1951, 316).

112),<sup>105</sup> whereas the first one is anaphoric, looking back to ‘the way’ of verse 4 (cf. v. 5). In regard to the first question, it has been suggested that ‘truth’ and ‘life’ stand in a causal relationship to ‘way’ (Blum 1983, 322; Keener 2003, 939-943). But this is not at all certain.

Maybe we are on safer ground to focus attention not so much on the syntax but on the writer’s theological intention, as Tenney (1981, 144) has done. This includes seeing in Jesus’ response as an emphatic affirmation of what constitutes the ultimate basis for a meaningful philosophy of life.

The final ‘I am’ saying forms the introduction to an allegory (Reumann 1968, 486).<sup>106</sup> Beasley-Murray (1999, 271) observes that this saying is the only one with a double predicate. It may be significant as well that the last two ‘I am’ statements also differ from the preceding ones by having additional terms in their predicates. It is difficult not to see here some kind of climax in these revelatory affirmations. What should be more obvious is that the saying of 15:1 (*I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser*) is designed to have special significance for the disciples, since they are vitally linked to their master and his father (15:5-*I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing*). It serves to strengthen Jesus’ commitment to them even though he is leaving.

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<sup>105</sup>They may also combine with εἰς τὴν ὁδὸν to lend emphasis to the statement. Other emphatic uses of εἰς τὴν ὁδὸν appear in verses 3, 4; the former is joined to εἰς τὴν ὁδὸν, as in v. 6, but in reverse order.

<sup>106</sup> To him both the ‘I-am’ and ‘I-came’ formulae make Christological claims; cf. Mark 1:38; 2:17; Matt 10:34; Luke 19:10; John 10:36; 16:28. For an illuminating study of the passage, see David Wenham (1989, 199).

But their commitment to Jesus is equally important. This is highlighted by the imperative,<sup>107</sup> (‘abide’) in verse 4, and the encouraging  $\kappa\alpha\upsilon\gamma\omega\ .\ \epsilon\upsilon\nu\ \upsilon\grave{\alpha}\mu\iota/n$  (I am with you [*unu*]/ *I in you*) shows that the ‘abiding’ is mutual. The chief beneficiaries of such abiding is the disciples themselves, because by so doing, the production of quality ‘fruit’ (not to mention quantity) is guaranteed, precisely on account of who Jesus is--the genuine vine/yard<sup>108</sup> (15:5; Caragounis 2004, 247-261).

The privilege of the abiding disciples extends to effective prayer as well (v. 7). But even this serves the purpose of fruit bearing to the glory of God (v.8). Verses 9 and 10 seek to explain further the nature of the relationship between Jesus and the disciples by introducing the key factor of love. The strength of Jesus’ love for his own is brought into clearer focus not so much by the verb<sup>109</sup> but by the juxtaposition of the pronouns  $\kappa\alpha\upsilon\gamma\omega\ ,\ (\text{I-n-I also})$  and  $\upsilon\grave{\alpha}\mu\alpha/j$  (*unu*), and the comparative with which verse 9 begins.<sup>110</sup> Based on the love of Jesus, the disciples are challenged to love one another to the point where they are willing to lay down their lives for each other (vv. 12, 13). All this is

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<sup>107</sup>The responsibility of the disciples is a recurring theme in this discourse; vv. 6-10.

<sup>108</sup>Cf. this ‘parable’ with the one found in Isaiah 5.

<sup>109</sup> $\text{Α}\upsilon\gamma\alpha\pi\omicron\ ,\ \omega\ ,$  a Johannine favourite. Notice the cognate noun in the same verse.

<sup>110</sup>The construction of v. 10 is equally compelling, with the strong emphasis on Jesus’ obedience to his father ( $\epsilon\upsilon\gamma\omega\ .\ \tau\alpha\ .j\ \epsilon\upsilon\nu\tau\omicron\lambda\alpha\ .j\ \tau\omicron\upsilon/\ \text{patro},\ j\ \mu\omicron\upsilon\ \tau\epsilon\theta\eta,\ \rho\eta\kappa\alpha$ ).

possible, declares Jesus, *eva.n poi h/te a]*<sup>111</sup> *evgw. evnte, llomai u`mi/n* (If you do the things that I command/ *if you do whatever I command you*; v.14).

The theme of fruit-bearing<sup>112</sup> is resumed in verse 16 with another emphatic affirmation, this time concerning Jesus' purposeful election of his disciples. The disciples are chosen (among other things) to bear fruit and this, no doubt, would find expression in their loving commitment to one another, a commitment which is also grounded in a dominical mandate (v. 17). Love for the disciples is of utmost priority because the environment in which they find themselves is expected to be hostile. It was from this same environment ('the world') they were chosen (v.19; *evgw. evxelexa, mhn u`ma/j*/I have selected you [*unu*]/ *I chose you*), and their vulnerability in such an environment should be constantly borne in mind (vv. 19, 20; *mnhmoneu, ete tou/ lo, gou ou-* *evgw. ei=pon u`mi/n*/Bear in mind the message that I spoke to you/ *Remember the word that I said to you*).<sup>113</sup>

But the world's hostility should be no excuse for them not to carry out their responsibility of testifying about Jesus, because Jesus himself will provide assistance in the person of the Paraclete (v. 26: *o]n evgw. pe, myw u`mi/n para. tou/ patro, j to. pneu/ma th/j*

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<sup>111</sup> The singular reading is preferred by Lindars (1972, 491).

<sup>112</sup>The fruit bearing may very well be love itself or definitely connected to it, because of the occurrences of that term (and its cognate) in the discourse (e.g., vv. 9, 10, 12, 17; cf. Gal. 5:22a).

<sup>113</sup>The thought in 16:4, 33 is similar.

avlhqei, aj/The Spirit of truth whom I shall send you from the father/*whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father*). It is for this reason, despite their sorrow, (vv. 4b-6), that Jesus has to depart: avllV evgw. th.n avlh,qeian le,gw u`mi/n( sumfe,rei u`mi/n i[na evgw. avpe,lqwÅ eva.n ga.r mh. avpe,lqw( o` para,klhtoj ouvkv evleu,setai pro.j u`ma/j\ eva.n de. poreuqw/( pe,myw auvto.n pro.j u`ma/j (But I-n-I tell you the truth, it is for your benefit that I-n-I depart; for if I do not go away, the Paraklete will not come, but if I go I will send him for you/ *Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you ; 16:7*).

Because of the coming of the Spirit, the Father's love for them (v. 27), as well as the mediatorial work of Jesus, the disciples are given the strong assurance of access to God in prayer (vv. 26, 27). An equally strong assurance is given in a promise by Jesus at the end of the farewell discourse. The basis of this promise is the abiding<sup>114</sup> victory (evgw. neni, khka to.n ko, smon/ I-n-I have conquered the system) of Jesus over the system ('the world') antagonistic to his cause (*I have overcome the world; v.33*).<sup>115</sup> From

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<sup>114</sup>This is the sense of the perfect tense in context (Fanning 1990, 298).

<sup>115</sup>Says Lindars (1972, 514): 'The past tense is appropriate because Jesus has already won the spiritual victory in principle. It also expresses certitude with regard to the future.'

another perspective, the world is ‘the object of his mission (12:47)’ (Fortna 2004, 264).

At the conclusion of the farewell discourse, we have the so called High Priestly<sup>116</sup> Prayer in which Jesus prays for himself and his disciples. The prayer contains no less than a dozen occurrences of the emphatic pronoun with only the first directly related to Jesus himself (v.4).<sup>117</sup> Here Jesus utters a stunning affirmation. It is no less stunning when it is considered that it is uttered before the passion and the resurrection.<sup>118</sup> Bearing in mind that the ‘entire Last Discourses and the prayer have been written from the Evangelist’s position of the post-Pentecostal period,’ one does not have to conclude that the aoristic affirmation (evgw, se evdo, xasa/ I-n-I honoured *you*/ *I have glorified You*; another instance where pronouns are juxtaposed for special emphasis) was written from that stand point. The verb, even with its proleptic flavouring, does not remove the cross from its purview (Blum 1983, 331).

In verse 4, Jesus is testifying of his own accomplished work. The next time he uses the emphatic pronoun is to bring into focus his great love for his disciples through intercession, in contrast to and against the background of their hostile environment. Accordingly we read: VEgw. peri. autw/n evrwtw/( ouv peri. tou/ ko,smou evrwtw/ avlla. peri.

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<sup>116</sup> Beasley-Murray, (1999, 293) entitles it the ‘Prayer of Consecration’.

<sup>117</sup> Since the balance, more or less, is connected to the disciples, one wonders if there is any significance to this.

<sup>118</sup> Later in this Gospel, we will hear Jesus crying ‘finished’ from the cross (19:30)--another pre-resurrection statement of significance (Beasley-Murray 1999, 297).



w-n de, dwka, j moi (I make petition on their behalf, not for the system but for those you gave to me/ *I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me*; v.9; cf. 15:9). The intensity of Jesus' concern here is unmistakable.<sup>119</sup> Of course, this concern is not something that was suddenly developed in the 'hour' (v. 1). It began with the election of the disciples and continued right throughout their training (v.12: evgw . evth, roun auvtou . j / I have been keeping them all along/ *I kept them*).<sup>120</sup> Now that Jesus is leaving, his prayer for the disciples' protection is taken up with Messianic vigour (v.11: kavgw . pro . j se . e ; rcomai Āpa , ter a [gie ( th , rhson auvtou . j evn tw / | ovno , mati , sou / I am coming to you, holy father; keep them by your name/ *I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name*). It therefore means that the disciples' future is well secured, not just in the prophetic word (v. 14; note evgw ❖) but in the priestly prayer.<sup>121</sup> There is coming a day when Jesus will return for his disciples to take them out of their hostile environment (14:1-3). But this is not within the scope and main concern of the prayer. Here the focus is on protection and consecration for mission (vv. 15-18).

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<sup>119</sup> See e.g., the 'Imperative of Entreaty' (v. 11; Dana and Mantey 1955, 1976).

<sup>120</sup> Note the appropriate use of the imperfect to highlight this.

<sup>121</sup> 'As priest in loneliness, He served for the redemption of the *whole* world and without their co-operation He offered the reconciling sacrifice for *all*: as priest on high He serves only His chosen.' (Sauer 1964, 50; author's emphasis).

This mission is in some way a continuation of the one initiated by the heavenly father (kaqw.j evme. avpe,steilaj eivj to.n ko,smon( kavgw. avpe,steila auvtou.j eivj to.n ko,smon/As you sent me in the world, so I sent them there/

*As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world;* v. 18).

For this awesome responsibility (and being the only vital link between the father and the disciples), Jesus sets himself apart completely (evgw. a`gia, zw evmauto,n/ I consecrate myself/I sanctify Myself; v. 19b), thus ensuring the eventual success of the disciples' mission into the world (v. 20).

The mission also necessitates a certain degree of separation on the part of the disciples if they are to be effective, so their 'otherness' must be recognized (evk tou/ ko,smou ouvkv eivsi.n kaqw.j evgw. ouvkv eivmi. evk tou/ ko,smou-I do not belong to the system, and neither do they/*They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world;* v.16; cf. 19b). In the final analysis, once the authority of the Master is truly comprehended (v.18), an unprecedented unity<sup>122</sup> between heaven and earth will be established (vv. 21-23). Nothing short of God's glory can accomplish this (v.22).

As Jesus concludes his prayer, he expresses a deep desire to be re-united with his own: Pa,ter( o] de,dwka,j moi( qe,lw i[na o[pou eivmi. evgw. kavkei/nou w=sin metV evmou/ (Father, I wish

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<sup>122</sup> 'The emphasis laid upon the theme [of unity] by its repetition and by the terms used, indicates its importance. It is the only explicit petition within the prayer on behalf of the church in its historical existence' (Beasley-Murray 1999, 301); this emphasis is buttressed as well by the pronouns in vv. 21, 22, 23.

that where I-n-I live that those whom you gave may be with me/*Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me;* v. 24). But, as we have seen before, this is not the main thrust of the prayer. Jesus wants his followers<sup>123</sup> to stay in the world to continue and fulfill his mission. After that, it will be their privilege to gaze at his glory (v. 24).

We pass over now to the final set of pre-Easter I-statements in the Fourth Gospel. Chapter 18:11 records the arrest of Jesus, and it is within this setting that we have the first couple of statements. Jesus had withdrawn to a favourite spot across the Kidron valley, and it was there that the betrayer exposed him to the authorities. Surprisingly, Jesus takes the initiative with the question: ‘Whom do you seek?’ (v. 4), to which they respond, ‘Jesus of Nazareth.’ Jesus’ rejoinder, *evgw, eivmi* (*I am*; v. 5), which he repeats in verse 7 in an almost verbatim exchange, may be considered enigmatic for two reasons.

First, it stands as an absolute statement, one which cries out for explanation. Bruce feels that the statement should be understood on two levels: (1) as a natural response to the inquirer, that is, ‘Here I am’; and (2) as

a word of power, the equivalent of the God of Israel’s self-identifying affirmation, “I am he.” On the lips of Jesus it has already had something approaching this force in the gospel of John (cf. 8:24, 28); and that it has this force here is plain from the retreat and prostration of those addressed (Bruce 1983, 341; cf. Ngewa 2003, 330; Williams 2000, 287-296; *pace* Fortna 1970, 115).

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<sup>123</sup> These are they whose relationship to the Father is unquestionable (v.26).

This brings us to a second reason why the statement may be considered enigmatic: the reaction of the soldiers to Jesus' affirmation. While we may be inclined to accept Bruce's proposal concerning the meaning of *evgw*, *eivmi* ❖ in this context, is his understanding of the soldiers' prostration vis-à-vis Jesus' affirmation also plausible? There are those who posit some kind of a psychological effect of Jesus' personality that may have caused the reaction; but this understanding is thought to be too fanciful.<sup>124</sup> Perhaps we are justified, along with Bruce, to accept the episode at face value.

Jesus is now in front of the high priest and the first line of investigation, according the Fourth Evangelist, concerns his disciples and his teaching (v.19). Interestingly, he appears to ignore the reference to the disciples and focuses instead on his 'teaching': *evgw. parrhsi, a| lela, lhka tw/ | ko, smw| ( evgw. pa, ntote evdi, daxe evn sunagwgh/ | kai. evn tw/ | i`erw/ |* (I have spoken freely in the system, [and] I taught in every synagogue as well as the temple/*I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple ; v. 20a*). He did say something about disciples of sorts, but the reference, no doubt, is to a larger group: *ti, me evrwta/ | jÈ evrw, thson tou. j avkhkoo, taj ti, evla, lhasa auvtoi/ j\ i; de ou-toi oi; dasin a| ei=pon evgw, (Why do *yu* interrogate me? Question those to whom I spoke; they are certain of what I communicated/ *Why do you ask Me? Ask those who have**

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<sup>124</sup> This is mentioned in Beasley-Murray (1999, 322). The second 'I-am' statement is closely linked to the theme of protection in the previous section (John 17:12). Verse 19 seems to vindicate such a posture on Jesus' part.

*heard Me what I said to them. Indeed they know what I said; v. 21).* These are the people who heard Jesus speaking boldly, openly, and frequently (v. 20).

From the house of Caiaphas, Jesus is led to the place of Pilate. Pilate is reluctant to judge in this matter but becomes curious about the royal claims of Jesus (vv.33-34). Jesus is also reluctant, at least so it appears. His reluctance, however, is of a different sort. How does he explain to a pagan magistrate the real nature of his kingship, when his own people (including his disciples) have such gross misconceptions about it?

Jesus makes an attempt nevertheless (vv. 35-36), to which Pilate hastens to add, ‘so you are indeed a king?’  $\Theta\nu\pi\epsilon\kappa\rho\iota, \text{q}\eta\ \omicron\` \text{VIhsou}/j\ \backslash\ \text{su.}$   
 $le,geij\ \omicron[ti\ \text{basileu},j\ \text{eivmi}\ \text{Å}\ \text{evgw.}\ \text{eivj}\ \text{tou/to}$   
 $gege,nnh\text{mai}\ \text{kai.}\ \text{eivj}\ \text{tou/to}\ \text{evlh,luqa}\ \text{eivj}\ \text{to.n}$   
 $ko,smon(\ i[na\ \text{marturh,sw}\ \text{th/|}\ \text{avlhqei,a|}\ \backslash\ ^{125}$  (Jesus responded: *so yu seh* [JT; ‘you say’], [and] for this reason I-n-I was born, and I came into the system to bear witness to the truth/ *Jesus answered, "You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth;* v.37). That the ‘you say’ in Jesus’ response is intended to affirm his royal character is supported by the explanation beginning with  $evgw\ \text{❖}\ \text{☞}$ <sup>126</sup> This does not

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<sup>125</sup>A and a wealth of later manuscripts add  $evgw\ \text{❖}$ , but this may be secondary (cf. Hodges and Farstad 1982, 559).

<sup>126</sup> Cf. ‘you say’ and ‘I am’ in Matt 26:64 and Mark 14:62, respectively, and the evidence from Strack and Billerbeck cited in Beasley-Murray (1999, 317).

convince Pilate, but his use of the emphatic pronoun in verse 38 (and 19:6) to declare the innocence of Jesus is noteworthy.

#### The 'I' as Exalted Lord

The final dominical statement with an emphatic pronoun in the Fourth Gospel is found in a post-resurrection setting. One 'Sunday' evening when the fearful and dejected disciples are indoors, Jesus himself makes an unexpected appearance. He first seeks to calm their troubled spirits with 'Peace', and then proceeds to give evidence of his essential corporeality and identity. This appears to have a positive effect on them (20:19-20). With their change of mood, strengthened by another 'peace unto you' the disciples receive another version of the so-called Great Commission, or something akin to it (Ngewa 2003, 371): *kaqw.j avpe, stalke, n me o` path, r( kavgw. pe, mpw u`ma/j/ As the Father has sent Me, I also send you* (v. 21). The mention of the father underlines how privileged the disciples are to have received a commission in connection with heaven. It is no wonder that the task given to them--to declare sins forgiven – is integrally related to the goings-on of the heavenly court (vv. 22, 23).

A similar construction appears in the prayer we looked at above (17:18). There the Father is second person, here he is third. The other occurrences of the post-resurrection dominical 'I'<sup>127</sup> appear in the books of Acts and Revelation. We now turn to the latter.

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<sup>127</sup>According to Hurtado (2005, 370), this Dominical 'I' often 'functions to indicate vividly [Jesus'] transcendent significance', especially in light of the fact that 'I am' without predication is a virtually nonsensical phrase.

## B. The Apocalypse

After having investigated the exalted ‘I’ in John’s Gospel, we will now examine the Apocalypse,<sup>128</sup> where it may next appear in a meaningful way. And the first emphatic statement there is placed on the lips of the Exalted in the introductory section in which the ‘servant, John’ (1:1) comes face to face with his Sovereign Master. John falls at the feet of the risen Christ, but receives the assurance that he need not be afraid. ‘The contrast is certainly quite emphatic; the Lord of the world, to whom power over everything is given, is the same One who devotes himself to his servant with compassionate love: the hand that holds the stars gives the sign of blessing’ (Roloff 1993, 37). A part of that assurance is the fact that Christ is ‘the first and the last’ (v.17: *evgw, eivmi o` prw/toj kai. o` e;scatoj/I-n-I*—the first and the last),<sup>129</sup> as well as the one who controls the keys of death and Hades (v.18; Stuckenbruck 1995, 220). On this basis Christ, through John, was to write to the seven churches of Asia Minor.<sup>130</sup> Earlier in the same section it is Father who is similarly described (v.8).

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<sup>128</sup>It is this book more than any other that has convinced the Rasta that Selassie is Christ (e.g., Mack 1999, 154; on the visit of the emperor to Jamaica in 1966; Birthwright 2005, 169).

<sup>129</sup>Although there is no absolute use of *evgw, eivmi*, in this book (so Osborne 2002, 94-95), one can still find a few echoes of the Fourth Gospel. One of them is that of divine predication (Aune 1997, 100).

<sup>130</sup>The ‘explicitly “high” view of Jesus is further developed in Revelation 2-3, where prophetic oracles are delivered in his name to the seven Asian churches. It is utterly remarkable . . . that these oracles all represent the words of the glorified Jesus, for in the biblical tradition that

### The 'I' and Ephesus (2:1ff)

In the first letter to the church of Ephesus John plays the role of an amanuensis for the Lord of the Church--a role that will be repeated at least six times in similar fashion. In the letter itself Jesus is first described as the one in control of the seven 'stars', previously identified as messengers<sup>131</sup> of the churches. He is also the one patrolling the churches in a protective as well as examining role. The heart of the letter is a report of such examination. This is for the benefit of the congregation to improve the quality of its witness in the city.

In the report they are commended for a few things, including their endurance, but they fall woefully short of the virtue that should have been the hallmark of their relationship with the Lord (vv. 4-5; cf. Ephesians 6:24). Almost as an after thought they receive another word of commendation to which is attached an emphatic note of encouragement: *avlla. tou/to e;ceij( o[ti misei/j ta. e;rga tw/n Nikolai?tw/n a] kavgw. misw/* (But this you [yu] have [in your favour]: you hate the deeds of the Nikolaitians that I also abhor/*But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate*; v.6). This piece of encouragement was no doubt designed to spur repentance and ameliorate the threat registered in verse 5.

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the author obviously reveres the only legitimate source of prophetic inspiration is the one God (e.g., Deut. 13:1-5)' (Hurtado 2005, 591; cf. pp. 592, 594).

<sup>131</sup>Whether these are human or spirit messengers (or both), it is difficult to tell.



## The 'I' and Thyatira (2:18-28)

The emphatic pronoun is not used in the letters to Smyrna and Pergamum, but it reappears in the following piece of correspondence. Writing to the messianic community in Thyatira, we see the same structural pattern established in the first letter and which characterizes the rest.<sup>132</sup> G. K. Beale (1999, 225) identifies seven sections to each letter; 1) command to write; 2) self-description; 3) commendation; 4) accusation; 5) exhortation to repent; 6) injunction 'to discern the truth', and 7) promise. His insightful observation concerning the different communities is worth citing:

The seven churches fall into three groups. The first and last are in danger of losing their very identity as a Christian church. . . . The churches addressed in the three central letters have to varying degrees some that have remained faithful. . . . The second and sixth letters are written to churches which have proved themselves faithful and loyal to Christ's "name". . . . In this light, the condition of the churches is presented in the literary form of a chiasm. . . . The significance of this is that the Christian church *as a whole* [italics original] is perceived as being in a poor condition, since not only are the healthy churches in a minority but the literary pattern points to this emphasis because the churches in the worst condition form the literary boundaries of the letters and the churches with serious problems form the very core of the presentation (227).

In the section of accusation the church is rebuked for harboring a false prophetess, who is a cause of immoral practices in the church. She is given time to repent by the merciful Christ but she refuses. Therefore, her judgment becomes inevitable. It will include her adulterous companions as well as her children, concerning all of whom the Lord declares: kai . ta . te ,kna  
 auvth/j avpoktenw/ evn qana,tw|Å kai . gnw,sontai  
 pa/sai ai` evkklhsi,ai o[ti evgw, eivmi o` evraunw/n

<sup>132</sup>The identification of this group is disputed; see Walvoord (1966, 58).

nefrou.j kai. kardi,aj( kai. dw,sw u`mi/n e`ka,stw|  
 kata. ta. e;rga u`mw/nÅ <sup>133</sup> (And I will execute her children; then  
 all the congregations will come to realize that I search the deepest recesses of  
 the heart, and I shall give to each of you according to your deeds/*I will kill her  
 children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who  
 searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to  
 your works*; v. 23).

But to the overcomer in Thyatira there is a special promise which is  
 undergirded by the Father's gift of stellar authority to her/him, mediated  
 through the Son: dw,sw auvtw/| evxousi,an evpi. tw/n  
 evqnw/n kai. poimanei/ auvtou.j evn r`a,bdw| sidhra/|  
 w`j ta. skeu,h ta. keramika. suntri,betai( w`j  
 kavgw. ei;lhfa para. tou/ patro,j mou( kai. dw,sw  
 auvtw/| to.n avste,ra to.n prwi?no,n (I shall give him  
 authority over the nations and he shall shepherd them with an iron rod; as  
 ceramic pieces, he will shatter them. As I-n-I have received from my father, so  
 I will give to that person the morning star/*To him I will give power over the  
 nations -- 'He shall rule them with a rod of iron; They shall be dashed to*

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<sup>133</sup>At the centre of this middle letter we find this unique phrase, 'and shall know all the churches'; '[It] is conspicuous as the only thing said in the letters about all "churches" other than the conclusion of each letter' (Beale 1999, 227). For the significance of evgw, evimi within this statement, see Thomas (1992, 223).

A few manuscripts belonging to the so called Textus Receptus have evgw, in the previous verse. Although the external evidence for its omission is strong, it is difficult to explain this on internal grounds. Hodges and Farstad (1982, 731) outline the evidence.

*pieces like the potter's vessels' -- as I also have received from My Father; and I will give him the morning star; vv. 26b-28).*

#### The 'I' and Philadelphia (3:7-13)

The next occurrence of the emphatic pronoun appears in a context of strong assurance in which the holy and true One, who possesses the Davidic 'key' affirms his special love (евгw<sup>134</sup> . hvga, phsa, se/I love you [yu]) for a community that had remained committed to his cause (3:9). Because of the emphatic way in which this is expressed one is forced to ask about the nature of this love. Is it unconditional or conditional? Is the weight of the emphasis on the pronoun and or the popular noun?

In an insightful and thought provoking study on the nature of God's love which bears some relevance to the foregoing question, Carson (1999, 7-10) points out that the Bible speaks about the love of God in at least five different ways: (1) The peculiar love of the Father for the Son (John 3:35); (2) God's providential love over all (Matt 10:24); (3) The salvific love of John 3:16; (4) The divine selective/elective love (Deut 7:7-8 cf. Eph 5:25); and (5) God's provisional love toward his own (Jude 21; John 15:9).

To go back to the first question, it would appear that the love affirmed in Revelation 2:9 falls under the last category. No one can doubt that the risen Lord loved all seven churches, so why is the Philadelphian church singled out for special mention? Obviously, because of their loyal obedience in the face of

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<sup>134</sup>Omitted by Hodges and Farstad (1982, 773).

trial.<sup>135</sup> This prompts a promise(v.10): ο[ti evth,rhsaj to.n lo,gon th/j u`pomoh/j mou( kavgw, se thrh,sw evk th/j w[raj tou/ peirasmou/ th/j mellou,shj e;rcesqai evpi. th/j oivkoume,nhj o[lhj peira,sai tou.j katoikou/ntaj evpi. th/j gh/j (Because *you* keep my message of endurance, I-I will also keep you [*you*] from the time of trial/*Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial*)<sup>135</sup> ‘The use of kavgw . . . strengthens the connection between the Philadelphians’ “keeping” and Christ’s “keeping” here’ (Osborne 2002, 192 n. 19).

#### The ‘I’ and Laodicea (3:14-22)

By all accounts, the worst of the seven churches in chapters 2-3 is the last one addressed. The letter to the Laodiceans, interestingly, is juxtaposed to that of the Philadelphians in which there is not one word of censure. There is to be found in the Laodicean correspondence not one word of commendation. The contrast is stark.

This notwithstanding, what both letters have in common is a strong assurance of the love of Christ. So in verse 19 of Chapter 3, we read evgw. ο[souj eva.n filw/ evle,gcw kai. paideu,w (whom I love, I rebuke and discipline/ *As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten*), before the

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<sup>135</sup> Cf. Eph. 6:24, whose promise is that of conditional grace! It would appear that the Ephesian congregants did not consistently claim this promise, thus the complaint of Rev. 2:4. Of course, there is a sense in which the love of 3:9 is both conditional and unconditional, but the context seems to accent the conditional aspect.

firm injunction to repent. No diminished form of love should be read in the verb *file, w*, ‘because sometimes it has the force of [*avgapa, w*]’ (Johnson 1981, 459). The invitation of the following verse seems to suggest this. The commitment of Christ to this church is of such that he will not abandon its members, despite their serious failure to be his faithful witness in a threatening environment.

#### The ‘I’ as Alpha and Omega (22:13)

The next dominical statement with the emphatic pronoun is found in the final chapter of the Apocalypse. In fact, it is the first of three in the closing chapter. We will now look at them in turn.

In 22:13-- a verse coming closely on the heels of a personal announcement of the second Advent and judgment (Pache 1972, 236)--the risen Christ affirms his unique and ‘sovereign’ (Hoffmann 2005, 75) status by emphatically declaring (*evgw*❖① that he is *to. a;lfa kai. to. w=( o` prw/toj kai. o` e;scatoj( h` avrch. kai. to. te,loj* (the Alpha and the Ω [Omega], the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End). These, along with the *Dreizeitenformel* of chapter 1: 4-8, 17-18 (Hoffmann 2005, 222), are divine appellations which echo certain OT passages such as Isaiah 41:4; 44:6 (Beale 1999, 1055) and 48:12.<sup>136</sup> Here, as in 1:17 and 2:8, they are applied to the risen exalted Saviour (cf. Rev. 1:18; and the prologue of the *Gos. Thom.* Brown 1962, 158-159). But in 1:8 and 21:6 the usage is more in keeping with the Isaiah passages.

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<sup>136</sup>Beale (1999, 1055); for the literary device employed here, see Watson (1986, 321-324).

The use of the poetic device (*inclusio*)<sup>137</sup> at the beginning and end of the book in connection with Christ is significant. It supports the contention that the Apocalypse in a special sense is really about him (see Appendix A).<sup>138</sup> It also serves to highlight his sovereign control of history (cf. 1:6).

The thought of verse 16, like that of verse 13, also parallels that of the first chapter (1:1-2; Caird 1966, 16). It once again stresses the Source of the apocalyptic visions, who is none other than Jesus Himself (VEgw . VIhsou/j/I am Jesus), the one who died in weakness and rose in triumph (Johns 2003).

The visions (tau/ta?) constitute a testimony to a particular group<sup>139</sup> that is not specifically identified at this point, but it is somehow related to the first century churches. What is not left in doubt is the identity of the sender: evgw, eivmi h` r`i,za kai. to. ge,noj Dau,i,d( o` avsth.r o` lampro.j o` prwi?no,j (I-n-I am the root and race of David, the bright morning star/I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star; v. 16. Cf. 1:16-20; Hoffmann 2005, 243).

Before we look at these predications, it may be helpful to take a closer look at the stated recipients of the testimony according to this verse, that is, the

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<sup>137</sup>Here we understand all the titles of 22:13 as synonyms.

<sup>138</sup>Construing the genitive of 1:1 as objective, the point is even more pronounced (contra Aune 1997, 12; Osborne 2002, 52).

<sup>139</sup>This via ‘my messenger’; cf. 1:20; 2:1 etc, and especially Malachi 3:1 (LXX).

‘you,’ and by extension ‘the churches’ connected to it. Beale lists the following:

1. ‘You’ is to be understood as the member of the seven churches.
2. A reference to a particular group within a local church (cf. 2:23-24 and 2:24).
3. A reference to church authorities.

Rastas, as was pointed out earlier, hold the book of Revelation in high esteem. The book, along with the post-resurrection sections of the Gospels, presents a glorified and immortal Christ who is coming back one day.

Rastas affirm the second coming of Christ, but unlike the majority of Christendom, they believe that this Second Advent has already taken place with the birth of the twentieth century Haile Selassie, who in their estimation is still alive and well. It is not clear whether or not they believe in the resurrection as outlined, say, in the Apostle’s Creed. A few appear to have this belief. For example, Moodie (1999, 23) declares that ‘Jesus was ready to conquer death . . .’ when he committed his spirit to his Father (Luke 23:46). Later Moodie (1999, 33; cf. Mack 1999, 52) writes, ‘Haile Selassie I conquered death and therefore has strength and power over death. . . . Jesus of Nazareth had to return to earth to open the book of the seven seals (Revelation 5: 2).’

But if Jesus/Selassie has conquered death, what do we make of the report of Selassie’s passing in 1978? Marley (1993, 59) speaks for the majority in declaring, ‘Jah live! Ya cyaan (can’t) kill God/*Jah is alive! You cannot kill*

*God.*<sup>140</sup> From the perspective of the Rasta one thing seems certain, ‘The Revelation of Rastafari truly unlocks the secrets of the Book of Revelations [sic] and solves the mysteries contained therein’ (Hannah 2002, 46), and Jah, Ras Tafari, is alive and well.

### C. Summary

The overall impression received from the foregoing survey is that the Evangelists for the most part recorded those episodes in which Jesus employed I-sayings in a positive way, with traces of weakness language. This kind of language is in keeping with one of the motifs of the Apocalypse (Blount 2004, 185-301) in which we see an implicit call for passive resistance based on the work of the paradigmatic Lamb (cf. Hoffman 2005; Hurtado 2004).<sup>141</sup> The Lamb,<sup>142</sup> ironically, is both vulnerable (weak?)<sup>143</sup> and victorious (war-like). This means that the writer of Revelation, ‘a book of . . . violence and

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<sup>140</sup>Yet he wrote earlier, ‘[T]hey crucified Christ, just because he wasn’t a rastaman’ (Marley 1993, 53).

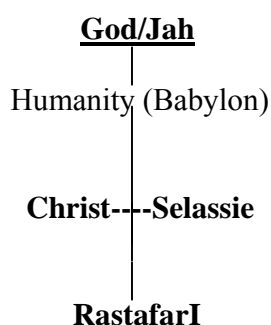
<sup>141</sup>References to Christ in the Apocalypse as *avrni*, on . . . emphasize the vulnerability of the Lamb to Slaughter’ (Johns 2003, 38; cf. Rossing 2004, 137; also Fiorenza 1998, 93-97 for ‘lamb’ in the 4<sup>th</sup> Gospel and Revelation).

<sup>142</sup>Cf. *evgw. de. w`j avrni, on a ;kakon avgo, menon tou/ qu, esqai* (Jer. 11: 19; Rahlfs 1979, 675).

<sup>143</sup>Johns (2003, 204 *pace* Hoffman 2005, 105-168) believes that Christ is represented as Lamb in Revelation in order to demonstrate ‘the vulnerability that inevitably accompanies faithful witness. . . [but] such vulnerability is no weakness’. Another possibility is that it is indeed ‘weakness’ found along the lines of 2 Cor 12:10.



inflammatory imagery' (Nicolson 2003, 154), has focused more on the second (v. 6) of the two zoomorphic symbols, especially in chapter 5, whereas Rastas highlight the first (v. 5). My thesis that the 'I' of RastafarI is squarely grounded in the dominical 'I' receives strong support from noting the parallels. The following diagram may also elucidate the foregoing observations:



In the *Weltanschauung* of RastafarI, only the entities in bold utter the authoritative 'I'.

But what about the prominence of this pronoun<sup>144</sup> in Romans? What role does it play? This is the question that we will begin to address below as we take a look at Paul, 'the most self-conscious of all writers of the New Testament' (Lofthouse 1952, 241). We will see as well that this letter writer is not afraid to employ *evgw*, to bolster his language of weakness (Schmoller 1982, 69-70),<sup>145</sup> which also serves paradigmatically at times.

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<sup>144</sup> In particular, we will examine 'the usually emphatic' *evgw*, (Abbot-Smith 1937, 128).

<sup>145</sup> Cf. The Testament of Judah (19:4b): 'I learned of my own weakness after supposing myself to be invincible' (Charlesworth 1983, 800), and Abraham's confession: *VEgw. de, eivmi gh/ kai. spodo, j* (Gen 18:27; 1 Clement 17:2 in Holmes 1999, 48). The MT has: *`rp, ae (w" rp" i [ ' ykiEnOa ' w>* where the assonance of impotence is loud and clear. Cf. Bauer (2000, 142-143).

CHAPTER FIVE

PRONOMINAL 'I' IN ROMANS CHAPTER 7

A. Introduction

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### Romans: Audience and Purpose

The details of the founding of the Roman Church are shrouded in mystery. However, because the congregation seems to have been predominantly Gentile in composition, the apostle Paul maintained a healthy pastoral interest in it (Guthrie 1970, 393-96).

In fact, Stowers (1994, 31; also Das 2007, 1; contra Tellbe 2001, 162) does not subscribe to the idea that the church was mostly Gentile in composition. 'Rather, the letter characterizes its readers unambiguously as *gentile Christians*' (his italics). Evidence for this can be seen in 1:5 where Paul 'represents himself as the bearer of the apostolic office among all gentile nations, to which the Christians in Rome also belong'. Other texts that should be read along the same lines, according to Stowers, include, 1:13; 9:3ff; 10: 1f; 11:13, 23, 28; and 15:15ff.

But there are other portions that seem to point in the direction of a Jewish presence within the church as well, for example, chapter 13 (So Sanday and Headlam, 1902, xxxiii) and especially chapters 14 and 15. In this light, Stowers' position may be considered a bit extreme. So in AD 57 the apostle dispatches his epistle to the Christians in Rome- probably the most important letter he has ever penned, judging from its impact throughout the history of the Christian era (Robinson 1979, viii).<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> Why did Paul write this epistle? 'The answer will draw on the framing sections, 1:8-15 and 15:14-33, where Paul gives his most direct indications, and how the intervening bulk of the letter may be connected with these indications' (Engberg-Pedersen, 2000, 181). We concur.

Paul had wanted on a number of occasions to visit Rome both for purposes of evangelization (1:13) and edification (1:11). But his precise purpose of writing is still debated today. Guthrie has canvassed a number of proposals with respect to this question.

The Tübingen School posited that the letter to the Romans was basically a polemic against Jewish Christianity. This view has little to commend it among New Testament scholars, according to Guthrie (1970, 398). A traditional view maintains that the apostle used the occasion, after over twenty years of ministry, to set forth a treatise of his theological position (Westermann, 1969, 79). Guthrie finds this view unsatisfactory for the following reasons: (1) there are at least two doctrines that are conspicuous by their absence--ecclesiology and eschatology. Guthrie (190, 398) adds the doctrine of cosmic reconciliation, and rightly observes that chapters 9-11 are inexplicable if Paul were merely stating his understanding of Christian doctrines. Kümmel (1966, 221) gives a summary critique of the traditional proposal when he writes, 'The old view that Romans is a systematic doctrinal presentation of Christian beliefs . . . is untenable, for important elements of Paul's teaching, such as Christology and eschatology do not receive full attention.'

The other purposes listed by Guthrie (1970, 398-400) are the following: 1) Paul wrote to conciliate Jewish and Gentile factions, 2) the apostle wrote to provide a fitting summary of his missionary experience up to that point, and 3) he wrote to meet the immediate needs of the Christians at Rome. While all of

these proposals seem to have some element of truth, none has commanded the respect of New Testament exegetes today.

After a detailed survey of the history of the question regarding purpose, Jewett (2007, 3; cf. Chae 1995, 116-137) reports that ‘A consensus crystallized in the activities of the Pauline Theology Seminars of the Society of Biblical Literature . . . that Romans should be viewed as a situational letter . . . .’ In this regard, he posits that the letter is an attempt by Paul to persuade ‘house and tenement churches to support the Spanish mission.’

This aspect of Jewett’s proposal was anticipated some years ago by Russell (1988, 174-184), who evaluated the theses of Barrett, Cranfield, Käsemann and Murray. Russell pointed out that all four commentators reject the traditional proposal, while demonstrating a logical consistency in the way they correlate chapters 9-11 with the rest of the book. Although Russell feels that western scholarship, represented by the four exegetes mentioned above, is coherent in its purpose statement of Romans, he nevertheless questions its accuracy on contextual grounds. The reason for this is ‘That [a] purpose statement built solely on “justification by faith” may be suspect because of western cultural biases. The epistle [then] should be evaluated from a perspective more resembling Paul’s viewpoint.’

In a . . . letter confronting their Jewish/Gentile relationships, Paul challenged the Roman churches to participate fully in God’s plan of justifying people by faith, of giving them new life in the Spirit, and of mercifully placing them in his redemptive plan.

Two of the strengths of Russell’s proposal are 1) it includes the important theme of justification by faith, without awkwardly subsuming chapters 9-11

under the same rubric; and 2) it provides a more coherent framework that does justice to the Jew/Gentile tension intimated in the book in general and chapters 1-3, 9-11, 14-15 in particular (Jewett 2007; Longenecker 2007). It also, of course, seeks to explicate the opening and closing chapters (note their missionary flavour) with the rest of the epistle.

#### Romans as Story<sup>147</sup>

Recently it is becoming increasingly clear that though Paul's letters are occasional pieces they are not devoid of theological content. This theological content, however minimal it may be, carries with it a strong narrative feature, which serves as the basis or very foundation of the theological framework. As a result, Paul's letters are not to be read as 'only independent snippets of "truth" or isolated gems of logic' but as 'discursive exercises that explicate a narrative about God's saving involvement in the world' (B. Longenecker 2002, 4). If this observation is correct, then one should expect to find in Paul's longest discursive exercise evidence of a narrative substratum holding together its theologically shaped composition within its epistolary superstructure. Both J.M.G. Barclay and N. T. Wright have recently set themselves the task of laying bare Paul's narrative strategy in his letter to the Romans.

Wright's proposal in this regard is that chapters 3-8 contain the basic story line of Israel's redemption from Egypt. This narrative substructure, drawn from the Exodus, also holds the key to our understanding of how the two

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<sup>147c</sup> Letters have stories, and it is from stories that we construct the narrative worlds of both letters and their stories' (Petersen 1985, 43).

allegedly disparate ‘juristic’ (1-4) and ‘participationist’ (5-8) sections of the letter cohere. Wright begins his exploration of the ‘New Exodus’ motif in Romans by suggesting that Paul’s exposition of baptism has in mind the Red Sea crossing—a connection Paul makes in 1 Cor 10:2. The connection in Romans is seen particularly in 6:17-18, where the metaphor of slavery and its radical reversal thereof (New Exodus liberation) is invoked.

Wright then poses the question, ‘what effect does this reading of chapter 6 have on 6-8 as a whole?’ His own answer follows immediately:

If 6 tells the story of the Exodus, or at least the crossing of the Red Sea, the next thing we should expect is the arrival at Sinai and the giving of the Torah. This, of course, is exactly the topic of Romans 7:1-8:11 (Wright 1999, 24).

The narrative sequence, therefore, moves from ‘Egyptian’ slavery to sin (that was exacerbated by the law) by way of the ‘Red Sea event of baptism’ to a new leading through the ‘wilderness’ (Rom 8:12-17). The new journey will eventually see the eschatological people of God entering into their inheritance.

J.M.G. Barclay (2002, 147-156), recognizing that Paul may be viewed as a storyteller in his own right, explores ‘the theological uses to which Paul puts his first-person narrative’ (2002, 147 n. 34). Barclay makes the observation that Romans offers ‘a striking “I” text in 7:7-25 which begins with some quasinarative elements (7:7-13).’ However, he expresses serious doubts concerning the pericope’s autobiographical value ‘except in the most attenuated sense’ (147). What Paul’s rhetorical ‘I’ does is to dramatize the discourse of the ‘paradoxical relationship of law and sin’ by probing its personal dimensions.

Barclay is more interested in 1:7-15 and 15:14-33 as revealers of Paul's personal story. Moreover, Paul also 'presents himself as an example of the "remnant saved by grace" (11:1-6)' and finds even in his apostleship to the Gentiles, some positive role in Israel's future (11:13-16). Thus Paul's story is presented in Romans as *entangled* with the story of the church and the story of Israel. Foundational to all of this, in Barclay's view, is the molding of Paul's story in the form of a 'christomorphic historiography'.

I believe that the desire to find narrative features in the Pauline corpus is essentially correct, and both Barclay's and Wright's contributions have the potential of advancing our understanding of Romans through their respective proposals. It now remains for others to develop that which they have sketched in their brief essays, and to further refine their overall thesis through the correction of details here and there.

One suggestion, though, that I think is a bit far fetched is Wright's linking of the Red Sea crossing with baptism in Romans 6. Paul undoubtedly makes a similar connection in 1 Cor 10:2, as Wright pointed out, but in Romans 6 the writer is probably drawing upon traditional material. Maybe a better connection between the books of Exodus and Romans is the phrase 'signs and wonders' (Rom 15: 18-19a; cf. Ex. 7:3), which sets 'the miraculous demonstrations of the power of the Spirit in the preaching of the gospel and the founding of the Christian communities in the context of the Exodus tradition' (Grieb 2002, 138).



Barclay's proposal is not fundamentally different from Wright's in its insistence to draw inter-textual links with the OT. He is correct in drawing our attention to how Paul positions himself implicitly in the stories he tells, or preferable (so Barclay), how the testimonies he gives press home his point.<sup>148</sup>

More important than Paul's self-presentations in Romans is his manifest desire to root his understanding of the gospel in Scripture (Hays 1989, 34). This is done in several ways: as explicit 'authoritative warrants', and as indirect markers of thematic and theological concerns which provide significant clues to his lines of argumentation (Hays 1989, 34-35). In this regards Hays finds within Paul's programmatic statement in Rom 1:16-17 several Septuagintal echoes. For example, Hays observes that the Pauline declaration 'I am not ashamed' has been badly handled by expositors, on account of their failure to identify its intertextual links with certain lament Psalms, such as 43:10 and 24:2, as well as Isa 50:7-8 (cf. Eissfeldt 1965, 115). I would add to Hays's list of 'shame' texts Genesis 2:24, where we find the first man standing in God's presence unashamed. Paul's point, then, is this: it is the gospel that powerfully removes the shame of humankind, allowing it once again to stand in the divine presence with confidence.

Elsewhere Paul refers to the work of the gospel in people's lives as a new creation (2 Cor 5:17). Both the old creation (Gen 2:24) and the new stand unashamed as a result of divine mercy. Interestingly, both 'shame' texts seem quite out of place in their respective context. As we have seen above, Wright

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<sup>148</sup>Barclay seems unaware of Wright's 'Exodus.'

traces Paul's central section (3-8) in Romans to the pentateuchal account of the Exodus. If my proposal is on target, the Pauline allusions to the Pentateuch go beyond that.<sup>149</sup> We also see possible echoes of Gen 3 in Romans 7; for example, the first appearance of *evgw*❖ in the LXX is a picture of wretchedness and weakness. There is no hint in the passage that the character Cain is aware of any wickedness or wretchedness, but it does seem that the narrator wants his auditors to see Cain as such. There is then an echo of Cain in Romans 7 (cf. Wright 1993, 226-230).<sup>150</sup>

A comparison of Gen 3-4 and Romans 1-3 is highly suggestive. Both Genesis chapters 3 and 4 appear to be couched in the form of a courtroom drama with their incisive questions (3:9, 11, 13; 4:9-10; Sailhamer 1992, 106). In Romans 1-3 as well, one senses a certain kind of forensic setting that depicts nothing but guilt, shame and weakness (cf. Rom 5:6; Black 1984) on the part of the defenseless defendants (Rom1:20c). What is interesting is that only the alienated experience forensic embarrassment. Those who are found in God's will stand unashamed (Gen 2:25; cf. Rom 1:1, 16; 5:1; 8:1).<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>149</sup>Stowers (1994, 159ff.) is adamant that nothing of the sort is found in Rom 1-3.

<sup>150</sup> Cf. also 'I' on the lips of Cain, presented as the first user of the 'I' of weakness (*ouv ginw, skw mh. fu, lax tou/ avdelfou/ mou, eivmi evgw, ;* Gen 4:9; cf. this with his Mother's exuberant language at his birth, 'now I, a woman, have in turn produced a man'. 'Man' is the only occurrence of *vya i* to refer 'to a newborn babe' (Lieber 2004, 24).

<sup>151</sup>The 'shame' words in the LXX and the NT passages belong to the same semantic domain. See Hays (1989) for another echo in Rom 1:16.

Hays (1989, 39) has already shown that what was for Isaiah (50:7-8) a hope of future vindication was for Paul a present realization. ‘Thus, Isaiah’s future rebounds through Paul’s voice into a new temporal framework defined by God’s already efficacious act of eschatological deliverance in Christ’ (Hays 1989, 39).

If then Gen2:25 is admitted as one of the faint but compelling echoes of the LXX in Paul, we have yet another testimony of how the law and the prophets prefigure the gospel, for the good news Paul proclaims, at the very least, restores wo/man to paradise where s/he stands in God’s presence with confidence (Rom. 5:1-2). For Paul, this astounding reversal of fortunes should never qualify as the world’s best-kept secret.

Accordingly in Romans, ‘I am not ashamed’, becomes the ground of ‘I am a debtor’ (v.14; here *eivmi* ❖ is emphatic), which is later embellished by Isaiah’s *po,dej euvaggelizome,nou avkoh.n eivrh,nhj* (The feet of one heralding a peaceful report--52:7 LXX; cf. Rom 10:15), and given careful thought in 15:22.

Earlier reference was made to the forensic flavouring of Rom 1-3. This is in agreement with Hays’ proposal. However, for him these crucial chapters are a recapitalization of the narrative structure of their ‘textual grand- parent,’ 2 Samuel 11-12 (Hays 1989, 49).

In fact, the route to 2 Samuel is an indirect one via a penitential piece (Psalm 50: 3-6 LXX), with its manifest language of weakness:

*evle,hso,n me o` qeo,j kata. to. me,ga e;leo,j sou  
kai. kata. to. plh/goj tw/n oivktirmw/n sou  
evxa,leiyon to. avno,mhma, mou evpi. plei/on  
plu/no,n me avpo. th/j avnomi,aj mou kai. avpo.  
th/j a`marti,aj mou kaqa,riso,n me o[ti th.n  
avnomi,an mou evgw. ginw,skw kai. h` a`marti,a mou  
evnw,pio,n mou, evstin dia. panto,j soi. mo,nw|*

h[marton kai. to. ponhro.n evnw,pio,n sou  
 evpoi,hsa o[pwj a'n dikaiwqh/|j evn toi/j lo,goij  
 sou kai. nikh,sh|j evn tw/| kri,nesqai, se. (*Have  
 mercy upon me, O God, According to Your lovingkindness; According to  
 the multitude of Your tender mercies, Blot out my transgressions. Wash me  
 thoroughly from my iniquity, And cleanse me from my sin. For I  
 acknowledge my transgressions, And my sin is always before me. Against  
 You, You only, have I sinned, And done this evil in Your sight --That You  
 may be found just when You speak, And blameless when You judge.*)

Undoubtedly, as slender as this connection is, it provides a stronger case for a Septuagintal echo than Gen 3-4. What Hays, however, would concede, I believe, is that some echoes in Paul in particular, and the NT more generally, are louder than others.

One section of Romans that could be likened to the so-called silent years between Malachi and Matthew, as far as direct quotations are concerned, is 5:1-8:39. This is in contrast to 1:16-4:25; 9:1-11:36 and the paraenetic sections of 12:1-15:13. In these passages we have 'extensive use of Scripture in Paul's argumentation' (R. Longenecker 1999, xviii). But the very presence and plethora (over half of the explicit foundation is the Pauline Corpus) of these citations underscore in no uncertain terms how much the writer of Romans was immersed in his sacred literature and how its essential story and worldview shaped his literary activity, and (if we are to take Acts seriously) his pastoral and missionary itinerary. It is not surprising, then, that one can trace in Paul's letters an almost equal amount of OT allusions whose echo (the overall story line) or echoes (sub-plots) cry out for attention.<sup>152</sup> For example, very few would doubt that Paul has in mind Gen 3 in Romans 5 (cf. Enoch

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<sup>152</sup>Of course, there is always the lurking danger of 'auditory illusions.'

14:22). And we will hear other sounds in chapters 7 and 15 that contribute to the portrait of Paul as a skilful storyteller, who utilized the literary and rhetorical conventions of his day to make his case for ‘His-story’.

Perhaps a prime example of Paul’s narrative sophistry is the way in which he handles Hab 2:4b as the bedrock on which his introductory thematic statement is erected. This prompts Watts (1999, 18) to suggest that one can analyze the distribution of language of 1:6-17 (already coloured by the Habakkuk text) throughout the major sections of 1:1-3:20, 3:21-5:21, 6:1-8:39, 9:1-11:36 and 12:1-15:1. In these portions forming the backbone of the epistle, one also finds key terms such as ‘salvation’, ‘power’, ‘gospel’, ‘believe’, ‘righteousness’, ‘Jew’, ‘Greek’, ‘life’ and their cognates (Watts 1999, 18 n.74), tying them closely to the introductory paragraph. So pervasive is the influence of Habakkuk on Romans, according to Watt (1999, 24), that he also finds a plausible explanation for the unique presence of a doxology at 16:25-27, which, in his view, echoes Hab 3:2-17.

Although Watts does not mention 15:14ff as one of the passages influenced by Habakkuk, it can be argued, I believe, that this missionary paragraph is linked to Rom 1, forming an epistolary frame along with it. And within this context some see a clear prophetic consciousness reflected in Paul’s language. Evans (1999, 115-118), for example, uses 1 Cor 14:37 (‘If any thinks, he is a prophet’) as his point of departure to discuss propheticism in Romans (cf. Baaij 1993). Evan’s case is mainly built on Paul’s citation of Isaiah 52:7 and its probable allusion to Isaiah 61:1. Crucial to Evan’s proposal

is the key word *εὐαγγελίῃ*, *zesqai* (evangelize) that appears in the two Isaiah verses. Evans also points out the recognition of recent research that the concept of *ἀποστείλλω* ('send', and its OT equivalent) is quite close.

When one adds to this the observation that 'the very nature of Paul's conversion invites comparison with the prophet (cf. Isa1: 1, 6:1-13; Jer 1:5; Ezek 1:1; 8:4; Obadiah 1; Nah1: 1; Hab. 2:2)', and that visionary/revelatory communication (cf. 1 Cor 15:8; Gal 1:15-16; 1 Cor 12: 4-7) with the above references (Evans 1999, 118) is common to both the prophetic and apostolic traditions, the case for seeing a nexus between the two traditions appears stronger.

Add to this the fact that the only quotation in 15:14-33, with its strong missionary thrust, is Isaiah 52:15 (cf. Isa 52:5, 7 and in Rom 11:15), the prophetic echo in Romans becomes even more distinct.

Although our main focus is verses 14-25, we will first consider verses 1-13 contextually. Our purpose is to investigate the relation of 'I' to the 'law'. Later we will explore the function of Paul's 'I' in chapter 15, before comparing the Pauline usage with that of Rastafari.

### Literary and Theological Context

There is a sense in which chapters 6, 7 and 8 go together,<sup>153</sup> since the author's discourse on 'law,' a crucial term in this section, begins to take centre

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<sup>153</sup>6-8 is the gospel for saints, following the gospel for sinners in 3-5. This structural reading renders Dickson's (2005) thesis a false disjunction.

stage in chapter 6. In the first four chapters the topic of justification is high on the agenda. There the apostle worked out the relation between that issue and ‘law.’ Another important aspect of righteousness, sanctification, is the burden of 6, 7 and 8. If justification is righteousness imputed, sanctification is the process whereby the believer increasingly experiences and grows into that righteousness (McGrath 1998). At the heart of chapters 6-8 is how this righteousness relates to *no, mo j* (law).

Paul’s use of ‘law’ has been the centre of controversy over the last twenty years or so. E. P. Sanders (1985), for example, posited contradictions in Paul’s view of the law. Earlier Sanders (1977, 518-524) expressed the view that Paul was indeed coherent in his expression concerning the concepts of *no, mo j*. Sanders thinks that Romans 1:18-29; 5:12-21 and 7:7-25 are internally inconsistent and contradictory. Martin (1989, 39), however, disputes this claim, by pointing out that what is considered a contradiction in Paul (and the rest of the NT) may turn out to be something else on closer examination.

To better appreciate the usage of *no, mo j* in Romans it may be useful to see how it was employed in previous epistles. The term may be found thirty three times in Galatians. The Galatian believers were under siege from nomistic interests who were responsible for ‘disturbing’ (1:7), ‘bewitching’ (3:1) and ‘unsettling’ (5:12) them.

All of this was in an attempt to get the Galatian Christians to bow to the Mosaic Law. In response, Paul points to the freedom (5:1) and law (*no, mo j*) of Christ (6:2) that should govern their lives. But what is this

νόμου χριστοῦ (law of Christ) to which the apostle alludes? In the context of the entire letter it has to be something different from the Mosaic Law against which he appears to skillfully inveigh.

But though we can say what it is not with some measure of certainty, its positive identification is not to be found in this epistle. When we come to 1 Corinthians we do not fare much better. But it becomes much clearer that the ‘law of Christ’ is not the same thing as the Mosaic Law. I have in mind particularly chapter 9:19-21 that distinguishes ‘those under the law’ (v. 20), that is, the Jews, from the apostle himself who is ‘not under the law.’ So where does that leave the apostle? If he is not under the Mosaic Law in any real sense (though he finds himself under it conveniently, ‘that he might gain those under the law’), is he now lawless or antinomian? Not so! says the apostle Paul; he is not lawless, but ἐννομος χριστοῦ/ (Literally, ‘enlawed to Christ’; v.21).

Out of this discourse, then, in which we learn something of Paul’s philosophy of mission, we also gain some knowledge of his ethical posturing. From the foregoing we learn that Paul’s framework in terms of a moral code was not essentially Mosaic but Messianic in orientation.<sup>154</sup> But the question arises, Should ἐννομος χριστοῦ/ be treated as virtually synonymous with the phrase νόμος τοῦ χριστοῦ (the law of Christ) we come across in Galatians? The former phrase is a NT *hapax* and the term

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<sup>154</sup>That is, it was more marked by discontinuity with the OT law than continuity.



εἰς νόμους is not well attested outside the Greek Bible either. It seems therefore safe to treat the two phrases as synonymous, with εἰς νόμους Χριστοῦ possibly being a Pauline coinage.

Romans 2 adds another interesting dimension to the Pauline concept of ‘law’. Whereas 1 Corinthians manifests nomistic distinctions in terms of Mosaic and Messianic codifications, Romans 2:13-14 seems to reveal the presence of another ‘law’—one that is universal in scope. This law evidently predates both the foregoing varieties (contra Jewett 2007).<sup>155</sup> Apart from these significant theological uses, νόμος also appears to carry the following senses in Romans: (1) principle (3:24); (2) precept; and (3) all or part of the Tanak (3:31). What is in dispute is whether or not it is used to designate Roman law, law in general, (Bultmann TDNT, 259-60), or Mosaic law (Fitzmyer 1993, 456) in Romans 7:1.

The immediate context does seem to favour the Mosaic Law, since part of the language of verse three, which continues Paul’s illustrative argument, is Hebrew (Black 1989, 93). The point of the illustration is that the Roman Christians had ‘died’ to the law. This is made plain in verse 4, though from Paul’s ‘what appears to be awkwardly constructed analogy’ (Yorke 1991, 66), we expect to see a corresponding ‘husband’ dying instead of a ‘bride’.

Despite the difficulty that some (e.g., Black 1989, 93) have seen in the illustration and its subsequent application, what seems clear is that Paul

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<sup>155</sup>This universal variety may be dubbed ‘mesographic’ (Palmer 2003, 88), i.e., written inside (Rom 2:14; cf. Epictetus 1926, 312: *δυνα, μαι παραβ/ναι τω/ν εντολω/ν*).

believed that a radical shift has taken place: believers are no longer under the Mosaic code, thanks to the ‘body of Christ’ (v. 4) through which they were put to death (εἰς θάνατον, ἵνα—*a divine passive?*). A new marriage is now contracted.

The results of all this are far reaching--believers are now able to become ‘faithful and fruitful’ to the glory of God (v. 4b; Yorke 1991, 67). What a stark contrast to the negative sentiments of 6:21<sup>156</sup> and 7:5. Verse 6 reiterates the point of verse 4: Christians are severed from the law.

Having written so ‘harshly’ about the law, the apostle now seeks to demonstrate that there is nothing wrong per se with the law. The real problem lies elsewhere: with the failure of ‘I’ to submit to God and the expression of his will within the law. The law played an important role in the experience of ‘I’ in revealing sin, though the law itself is in no way sinful. The age old question is whether or not Paul is strictly referring to himself. The consensus before the twentieth century was that ‘I’, whether expressed by εἰς ἑαυτόν or not, should be taken at face value. A sampling of older authorities demonstrates the point (Baaij 1993, 21-46; Bray 1998).

To illustrate the beneficial nature of the law the ‘I’ testifies:

ἀλλὰ θὰ μαρτυρήσω ὑμῖν ἐκ τῆς νόμου δια-  
 νόμου, ἵνα ἴδῃτε ὅτι ἐπισημαίνεται ἡ ἁμαρτία ἐν τῇ νόμῳ.  
 ὅτι ἡ νόμος ἐπέδειξέν μοι τὴν ἁμαρτίαν (But I did not come to  
 recognize sin except through the law; for example, the matter of lust would

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<sup>156</sup>Neither here nor in 7:4 is the nature of the fruit bearing specified.

have been difficult to grasp but for the prohibition that says, Yu must not covet/lust; v.7b). What does the ‘I’ mean by ‘sin’ at this point? And why was this particular prohibition singled out? The context definitely favours defining sin as an infraction of divine command, since the prohibition of Exod 20:17/Deut 5:21 is cited. This quotation also supports the idea that the Mosaic Law is really in view (cf. Chrysostom 1862, col. 502).

The answer to the question as to why the tenth commandment was singled out is somewhat bound up with the quest to identify the ‘I’ in this chapter, so both problems will be looked at together. B.L. Martin (1989, 76-77; see also 1981, 39-47) has posited that the immediate context (8b-10) points to the first man, Adam, as the referent of the ‘I’, since Paul’s argument is that ‘law’ is the stimulant and instrument of desire leading to sin and death. One also observes that the passage seems to depict a sort of historical sequence with the use of the aorist tense with past tense significance (vv.7-13), in contrast to the consistent use of the present in the following verses.

In addition, the explicit reference to Adam in the wider context of chapter 5 may suggest that Paul is indeed alluding to the prototypical man under, and confronted by, law. Romans 7:13 should then be understood in the light of its parallels to the story of the fall of Adam in Genesis 3. This would explain why *evpiquemh, seij* (you shall not lust) is used in verse 7 as a possible echo of Genesis, 2:17 (cf. Genesis 3:6 LXX).

But as far as Busch (2004, 13) is concerned the ‘clearest allusion to the Genesis narrative appears in [Rom] 7:11, where Paul writes . . . “sin deceived

me” . . . clearly echoing Eve’s “confession” of Gen 3:13 . . . “the serpent deceived me”. Earlier in the chapter Paul also talks about the ‘fruit’ of death (v. 5), as he begins discussion of the law. Busch (2004, 13) then explains the Pauline ‘I’ in this context as the ‘common Graeco-Roman rhetorical device of *prosopopoiia* . . . (speech-in-character) . . . [i.e., Paul] speaking as Eve in the primeval transgression.’<sup>157</sup> Keck (2005, 180) also finds echoes of Genesis 3 in Romans 7, where the ‘Adamic self (not simply Adam himself)’ is reflected in light of the revelation of the Last Adam.

D. Moo (1986, 128-130),<sup>158</sup> on the other hand, has recently defended a position put forward earlier by Stauffer (1964, 343-362) that both the ‘I’ and the command in verse 7 have close links with Israel. While Moo does not deny that there are reminiscences of Adam in the pericope, he insists that this is only secondary. Moo points out that *επιθυμει, ω* (desire) and its cognates do not appear anywhere in the first three chapters of Genesis.

Coupled with the fact that they occur in reference to the wilderness sojourn in Psalm 106:14 all seem to give credence to Moo’s position. The clear reference to Ex. 20:17 should remove all doubt. In a later work Moo (1996, 431) writes, ‘a . . . factor favouring reference to Israel as a whole is the similarity between the sequence of vv.9-10a and Paul’s persistent teaching about how the giving of the Mosaic Law made the situation of Israel worse, not

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<sup>157</sup> Busch (2004, 15) is also convinced that Paul invariably attributes the primeval deception to Eve and never to Adam (cf. 2 Cor 11: 1-21).

<sup>158</sup> Two British scholars (Cotterell and Turner 1989, 81) have come out in support of Moo’s thesis. Also Turner (1996, 129).

better. The Law, Paul has affirmed, “brings wrath” (4:15), turns sin into transgression (5:14; cf. Gal. 3:19), and “increases the trespass” (5:28).

Other interpreters believe that limiting the ‘I’ in this way is unnecessary. Fitzmyer is representative of those who see the passage as having a more universal scope. Closely tied to the Adamic view is the novel reading of Wright (1991, 227-229) who sees echoes of Cain in Romans 7. Wright believes that the Adamic reference is correct, but it does not fully explain the passage. He therefore seeks to demonstrate that seeing Cain in the whole scenario gives depth to the analysis of 7:7-25, and to rule out this allusive reference for an exclusive Adamic one is, in Wright’s opinion, a false disjunction. But how does Cain really fit here?

First, Cain is viewed as ‘the archetypal possessor’ of the evil impulse. This is seen by some as part of Paul’s background in Roman 7. Second, Cain is counseled to do good while he can, lest he be overcome by sin. ‘In Roman 7:18, Paul summarizes the description of 7:13-20 as follows: When I want to do what is right, evil lies close at hand to me.’ Third, Cain is viewed in some circles as a spiritual schizophrenic (blw b1), a description closely paralleling 7:13-25. Fourth, Cain is presented as being ignorant (Gen 4:9: o` de . ei=pen ouv ginw, skw/and he said, ‘I do not know’). This is echoed in Romans 7:15a (o] ga.r katerga, zomai ouv ginw, skw\what I am doing I really don’t know). ‘The result of the whole episode,’ Wright further observes,

is that Cain is cursed, and laments his plight . . . (Gen 4:14) . . . even so, Romans 7 ends in the well-known lament:  
 [Talai, pwroj evgw. a;nqrwpoj \ ti, j me  
 r`u, setai evk tou/ sw, matoj tou/ qana, tou  
 tou, touÈ (v. 24)]. ‘All these considerations suggest to me that we are right to see the same kind of allusion to Cain in Romans 7:13-25 as to Adam in 7:7-12, and with the same kind of intent.

Despite this conviction, Wright sees the ‘Cain connection’ as only tangential to his understanding of Romans 7,<sup>159</sup> which is summarized in the following analysis:<sup>160</sup>

7:1-6: two marriages

7:7-12: the Law is not sin but its arrival, in Sinai as in Eden, was sin’s opportunity to kill its recipients

7:13-20: the Law was not the ultimate cause of ‘my’ death: it was sin working through the Law and in ‘me,’ unwilling though ‘I’ was, and thus swelling to its size.

7:21-25: the results in terms of Torah; Torah bifurcates –and so do ‘I’

8:1ff: in Christ and Spirit, the life that the Torah could not give (Wright 1991, 218-219).

Recognizing the rhetorical character of the passage, Fitzmyer (1993, 464) believes that the ‘I’ is a literary device used ‘to dramatize in a personal way the experience common to all unregenerate human beings faced with law and relying on their own resources to meet its obligations.’ Here the apostle is

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<sup>159</sup>Anticipating the criticism that the Cain-connection is an exegetical *tour de force* (‘how submerged does a reference have to be before it drowns altogether?’), Wright (1991, 226) delineates three criteria of assessment: 1) verbal echoes which would be meaningful to hearer and reader alike; 2) thematic echoes; and 3) ‘*the greater coherence* that results in the text under scrutiny when the “echo” is allowed to be heard in this way.’ (Italics his).

<sup>160</sup>Only the main headings are given. His detailed outline spreads over three pages (217-219) and covers 7:1-8:11.

viewing humanity through Jewish eyes, trying to achieve right standing before God by observing the Mosaic Law. Black (1973, 94) also believes that it is ‘clear [Paul] intends us to understand them [i.e., vv. 7-25] as a description of a typical human experience; it is for everyone he is speaking in this famous passage.’<sup>161</sup>

Perhaps the most attractive way to understand the ‘I’ in Rom 7 is to believe that Paul was speaking autobiographically. This understanding has a long history and is defended today, with different levels of sophistication, by scholars such as Banks (1978) and Gundry (1980, 232). Gundry argues that the best way to understand the presence of the tenth commandment in the passage and the ‘I’ is to see some reference to Paul’s own *bar mitzvah*. Paul, he believes, slipped into the ‘I’ style ‘*precisely because becoming bar mitzvah applied to him but not to most of his readers, who were Gentiles*’ (his italics).<sup>162</sup> He further points out that *επιγυμνω*, *w* in Paul’s vocabulary quite often connotes sexual lust (cf. ‘*venditus in servitutem concupiscentiae*’; Zerwick 1984, 347). He cites Rom 1:24 and I Thess 4:5 as examples. ‘Any sensitive *bar mitzvah*,’ Gundry theorizes, ‘would be worried by the tenth commandment, especially because he is catapulted into adulthood to keep the law at the very time his sexual urges become so active he is unable to avoid defiling sexual emissions (cf. Lev 15).’ But what about the fact that the *bar*

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<sup>161</sup> The ‘I’, according to him, is unredeemed.

<sup>162</sup> Because, in his view, the passage refers to a ‘timeless age to which all men belong’ Barth (1959, 75) considers the passage as a description of a situation ‘from which we have been called away in faith.’

*mitzvah* was not ceremonialized until medieval times? Anticipating this criticism, Gundry points out that the legal shift from boyhood to adulthood has early attestation and so the objection is not fatal to his thesis.

The final proposal we will look at, before returning to verse 7, is that of Seifrid (1992, 313-322). After surveying the various options proffered since Kümmel's (1929, 1974) groundbreaking work, Seifrid suggests that Paul is deliberately portraying himself according to a particular pattern reflected in Jewish penitential prayers, 'from the limited perspective of his intrinsic soteriological resources' (333). Two significant features of the passage are said to substantiate this claim: first, the shift from first person plural to singular. When this is done elsewhere in Paul, according to Seifrid, a paradigmatic element associated with the apostle's desire to explain or exhibit his theology is usually present (e.g., Rom 8:38; 14:14; 1 Cor 8:13, 13:11; Gal 2:18, 21; Phil 3:4-14).

The second feature is the change of tenses (from augmented to non-augmented). Drawing upon the work of Stanley Porter (1989) on Greek aspect, Seifrid concludes that the augmented tense was used for narrating (a remote) event whereas the present was employed to describe a condition present at the time of writing. Therefore, Paul does not demarcate 7:14-25 as belonging solely to his present, contrary to what those who read the text as belonging to Paul's Christian experience suppose. But he does indicate that the condition of *evgw*, extends into his present, contrary to what those who



read the passage as a depiction of Paul's past argue. 'The change to the present tense in 7:14-25 signals a change of description' (333).

This change, according to Seifrid, establishes continuity between the apostle's past and present, both having a striking similarity to the collective experience expressed in the Qumran *Hodayoth*.

They [i.e., the confessions] share with Rom 7:14-25 a concentration on the condition of the individual not found elsewhere. And it is possible for such confessions to appear outside the context of prayer, like Paul's statements in Rom 7:14-25.

An important parallel that interpreters have missed is that the penitential prayers represent the guilt of a group from a limited perspective, 'while acknowledging that a broader framework exists.' Perhaps the strongest link with Romans 7 is the rehearsal of past transgressions and the 'description of the resultant state<sup>163</sup> of the penitent in imperfective aspect and present time.' (Seifrid 322). A major difference between the two corpora, Seifrid points out, is that Paul's language is explicitly argumentative. This should not be surprising, given the disparate literary genres.

This fact by itself raises questions about how much the penitential discourses have really influenced Paul, especially at the time of writing

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<sup>163</sup>He cites 1QH 1:21-27, 3:19-29; 1QH 11:9, 10. Interestingly Vermes (1997, 244) expresses the view that the two fundamental themes of 1QH etc. are 'salvation' and 'knowledge'. One also sees these motifs in Rom 7 in terms of the Pauline expressions of self-knowledge (e.g., vv. 7, 18) and the salvation of the *ego* (vv. 24, 25). Another possible influence may be that of Plato (1994, xxxvi passim) 'who thought he detected three main sources of motivation in people. . . . The desire to satisfy one's instincts . . . the desire . . . for preservation of one's sense of "I"; and there is the desire for understanding and truth.' Lesses (1987) has an interesting exploration of these Platonic 'desires'.

Romans. If the founder of the Qumran community, the so-called Teacher of Righteousness, is responsible for the *Hodayoth*, then the ‘I’ statements found therein may be attributed to him. Some feel, however, that it

is more probable that the “I” reflects the personal experiences of [him] in some hymns but in the other passages it represents the collective consciousness of the Qumran community . . . The language is heavily influenced by Biblical Hebrew (Charlesworth 1986, 413).

As to which of these positions best explains the passage will be determined only after we have closely examined verses 8-25. In the meantime some of the other details of verse 7 will occupy our attention.

The verse begins with two rhetorical questions which continue the diatribe style<sup>164</sup> seen earlier in the epistle (e.g., Rom 6:1) and which are employed in later portions (9:19; 11:19). Their function is to focus the reader’s attention on the point of importance being discussed, namely, the real nature of the law. To the second question the apostle gives a strong and categorical ‘NO’!!<sup>165</sup> The collocation of ‘law’ and ‘sin’ in the question is itself scandalous, but Paul’s quick response negates any outrage that a nomistically informed Christian in Rome (whether ethnically Jew or Gentile) may have had. On the contrary, declares Paul, the ‘law’ (Torah) was very much instrumental in his spiritual

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<sup>164</sup>As a literary device it is characterized among other things by 1) stereotyped address (e.g., Rom 2:1); rhetorical objections (11:19); catechetical exchanges (Rom 6:1); personified abstractions (Rom 10:6-8); parataxis (Rom 2:21-22; 13:7); parallelism (Rom 12:4-15); vice lists (Rom 1:24-31); imperatives (Rom 12:14-15) and exclamation (7:7; 9:14); Soulen (1981, 55).

<sup>165</sup>Mh. *ge, noito* (𐤅𐤁𐤍𐤐) This appears in 3:4; 6:2,15. It can be rendered ‘No way!’ in English, and in JT, ‘yu mad?’ [‘Are you crazy’]; cf ‘*Das kann noch sein!*’ (DGNDB).

education,<sup>166</sup> with reference to sin. Is the Apostle Paul's reference to 'sin' in this context a concrete act or that which underlies it? The citing of the tenth commandment seems to tilt the balance in favour of a specific act. Dunn opts for the view that here 'sin' is presented as 'a personified power.' The succeeding verses, he says, use the term in this way. The way 'sin' is used in the previous two chapters seems to favour Dunn's conclusion, but even he (1988, 378) has to admit a degree of ambiguity of the term in verse 7.

In any case, Paul's knowledge of 'sin' came by way of the final injunction in the Decalogue. The knowledge, Dunn<sup>167</sup> believes, has to be experiential in the context, bearing testimony to the tyrannical nature of sin. It also provides some rationale for the provocative declaration of verse 5. The specific sin that the tenth commandment prohibits and that which the 'I' became acutely aware is *επιθυμία*, a (lust). Here in verse 7b the apostle uses a synonym of *γινωσκω* (know) employed in the first part of the verse. The juxtaposition of the two terms strongly suggests, in my view, nothing more than a stylistic shift. But what is the significance of the tenses? Dunn (1988, 378), taking the pluperfect *ἤλθην* as an 'inceptive' imperfect, offers the following translation: 'I would not *have come* (my emphasis) to that

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<sup>166</sup>ε; γνῶναι. Something approaching 'experiential knowledge,' according to Dunn.

<sup>167</sup>Cf. Cranfield (1975, 348) and Fanning (1990, 308-309). Fanning points out that *ἤλθην* occurs only here in the NT epistles. But it occurs in the Gospels and Acts (John 31,33; 11:42; Acts 23:5). The clause *εἰς μὴ ὁ νόμος ἐλέγεν* is positively identified as a second-class condition in Blass 1961, 182, but with some reserve by Boyer (1982, 86).

experience of covetousness which I still have.’<sup>168</sup> However, Porter (1989, 286 n. 27) judges this understanding of  $h; |dein$  as a ‘miscontrual’ of the verb’s aspectual features within its context, without himself adding much to the sense of the verse. He may be correct, though, in pointing out that ‘the two verbs . . . are not synonymous here or the parallelism would break down’ (286).

In verse 8 Paul now explains how the ‘I’ came to learn about the sinister nature of sin.  $h` a`marti, a$ , he says, took the opportunity  $dia. th/j evntolh/j$  ‘and produced all kinds of wrong desires’<sup>169</sup> (REB) in ‘him’. Here ‘sin’ is personified. A different imagery is used from the ones in the previous chapter in which sin is presented as monarch (v. 12)<sup>170</sup> and slave master (v. 16).  $evpiqumi, a$ , that which ‘sin’ produces, appears many times in the Pauline literature. The word group covers a semantic range that includes desire for food (Luke 15:16), or as the context of Romans 7:7 denotes, for something illicit (cf. Matt 5:28; Mark 4:14; Rom 1:24; 6:12; Eph 2:3; 1 John 2:16; 1 Pet 2:11; Titus 2:12 etc).<sup>171</sup>

Of course there are numerous examples of what we might call ‘negative desire’ in the Hebrew Bible as well as in the inter-testamental literature. The

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<sup>168</sup>Dunn also rightly points out that the anarthrous  $no, mou$  (7b) is insignificant. On the following page (379), Dunn demonstrates that both occurrences of ‘law’ in vv. 1, 7 have the same referent, i.e., to Torah.

<sup>169</sup> $Evpiqumi, a$  is not qualified but the REB’s rendition appears correct at this point.

<sup>170</sup>Also in 5:21; cf. Palmer (2001, 61).

<sup>171</sup>Buschel TDNT 3:167-72.

passage 2 Esdras (3:20-22), for example, traces this kind of desire to the first ‘I’:

Yet you did not take away their evil heart from them, so that your law might produce fruit in them. For the first Adam, burdened with an evil heart, transgressed and was overcome, as were also all who were descended from him. Thus the disease became permanent; the law was in the hearts of the people along with the evil root; but what was good departed, and the evil remained (NRSV).<sup>172</sup>

What this passage shares with Romans 7 is a concern about Torah and man’s inability, on account of wrong desire, to follow it. Despite the parallels and the mention of the first man, one should not merely assume the Adamic postulate mentioned above.

Now judging from the military language, it would appear sin is playing the role of a soldier seizing someone or taking an enemy captive (Ryken 1998, 736). Whatever the precise understanding Paul intended to convey, what seems clear is that a ‘vicious’ triangle is now in place involving the law, sin, and the ‘I’. If for a moment we treat the last mentioned as neutral, we have a scenario where the law is good (v.12) but powerless to energize the ‘I’, and on the other hand, sin is powerful, antinomian and manipulative. The result of sin’s maneuvering is the outworking of all manner of covetousness (NRSV).

Two terms are used to underscore sin’s maneuver and manipulation of the ‘I’: *avformh*, and *kat erga, zomai*. The former is employed approximately six times in the NT, all of which is to be found in the Pauline

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<sup>172</sup> Cf. this to Pascal’s (1958, 98), ‘Man’s nature is not always to advance; it has its advances and retreats.’

corpus.<sup>173</sup> Previous references include Gal 5:13, where Christian liberty is both affirmed and qualified ('do not use your freedom as an occasion [avformh, ❖] for the flesh'),<sup>174</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:12, where Paul is once again giving the church an *opportunity* ('cause'; NRSV) to express some pride in its founder, and chapter 11:12 (*bis*) of the same book. This last reference, in my view, features a Pauline pun ('But I will continue to do what I do, to cut off the pretext (avformh❖) of those wishing such (avformh, )') In Romans 7:8, sin, as it were, uses the tenth commandment<sup>175</sup> as a pretext to wreak havoc with the 'I'.

The second term (*katerga, zomai*) that highlights the evil intent and machinations of 'guerilla *hamartia*' is the one rendered 'wrought' by the NRSV. In Greek it is a compound word appearing approximately 24 times in the NT, and is variously employed by Paul. In fact, apart from the apostle to the Gentiles, only James (1:3) and Peter (4:3) employ the term. Paul uses the verb to denote various productions of virtues and vices, for example, in 1:27; 2:9, the latter, and in 5:3 and 7:18, the former. What is produced here? The subject of *katerga, zomai*<sup>176</sup> is the personified inward perversity—'sin,' found in chapter 7 no less than six times, the first of which is in verse 8. It

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<sup>173</sup>Assuming here 1 Tim 5:14 is genuinely Pauline.

<sup>174</sup> The thought is that believers are free from the Mosaic Law. It is the Messianic law (Gal 6:2) that provides the qualification.

<sup>175</sup>envtolh❖; here a synonym of no, moj 🙏

<sup>176</sup>G. Bertram (1965 3:634f) provides a useful summary of the term.

therefore should come as no surprise that its object is *pa/san evpiqumi, an*, precisely that which is proscribed by the Decalogue.

On *pa/san evpiqumi, an* (every kind of desire), Fitzmyer (1993, 467) may be correct, that ‘all sorts of possibilities of doing evil’ is the meaning intended by Paul, but this seems too broad. In other words, though ‘lusts’ lead to other sins, in a cause and effect connection, the emphasis falls on the former and not the latter, thus narrowing the purview of evil’s expression in the context.

Several Bible students have related this verse to the rabbinic belief of the time of a bipolar force within humanity, one aspect of which is evil oriented and the other good. In this fundamental understanding of the human condition there is only one panacea: obedience to Torah (Edwards 1992, 188). Paul will later appear to contradict this notion (e.g., 8:2; cf. 7:6) by replacing Torah (v. 12a) with Spirit (8: 14). Edwards’ (1992, 187) illustration is apt:

Until now the law has been depicted rather like a watch dog which keeps trespassers out of private property. But that is only the half of it. The same law can become a hound dog nipping at the heels of a trespasser and chasing him further *into* forbidden territory.

Edwards also raises the question of the psychological significance of the verse in light of the tendency to gravitate toward that which is forbidden-- the so-called ‘reverse psychology’ syndrome.<sup>177</sup> He then downplays the idea by

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<sup>177</sup> The homonymic ‘*sindrome*’ easily suggests itself.

rightly pointing out that the pericope itself is obviously theological and not psychological. Cranfield (1975, 350) summarily dismissed this idea as well.<sup>178</sup>

That the passage is highly theological is beyond dispute. But if psychology is essentially about the study of human behaviour, should it come as a surprise that the two disciplines, rightly interpreted and applied, might in fact shed some light on these verses? For instance, in Edwards' example above, one may wonder: why would a person want to trespass on the forbidden territory in the first place? The observation of behavioural patterns across cultures may suggest some kind of a dynamic (psychological/sociological) that is not at variance with any established canonical or theological norm, if one can speak like this in a postmodern context.<sup>179</sup>

The final clause in verse 8 is debated. In what sense is/was<sup>180</sup> sin dead without law? At this point the various proposals for the identity of the 'I' jostle for attention. For Dunn (1988, 383), the sentence clearly alludes to the period prior to the issuing of the first ever commandment recorded in Genesis 2.<sup>181</sup>

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<sup>178</sup> 'We shall not do justice to Paul's thought here, if we settle for a merely psychological explanation . . . .' Looking at the text from both perspectives (i.e., from psychology and theology), should not be seen as a *mere* explanation, provided the task is carried out with care. For attempts in this direction, see Beck (2002) and Theissen (1987).

<sup>179</sup> A strength of the postmodern agenda is its openness to look at texts through various spectacles.

<sup>180</sup>  $\epsilon\nu\sigma\tau\iota\nu/h=n$  should be supplied.

<sup>181</sup> Dunn (1988, 383); the allusion is also recognized by Gundry (1980, 231).



Moo (1996, 437), however, expresses doubt that the Genesis narrative in question allows sufficient time for such a development. What Paul had in mind, according to Moo, is the pre-Sinaitic period of Israel's existence. When the sequence of clauses is correlated with the time after the Exodus, Moo does appear to have a point. In addition the 'chiastic pattern' (Moo 1996, 437) below also seems to buttress his case, when viewed in the light of the giving of the law:

'Apart from law'	'When the commandment came'
'sin is <i>dead</i> ' (v.8c)	'sin sprang to <i>life</i> again' (v.9b)
'I was <i>alive</i> ' (v.9a)	'I <i>died</i> ' (v.10a)

Moo (1996, 437) then cautiously concludes, 'while what is narrated in vv. 7-8a may, therefore, have been experienced by Paul personally, what is narrated in these clauses was experienced by him only through his involvement with the history of his people.' Although verse 8c appears incongruous with the autobiographical view, Moo's concession to that position demonstrates once again the difficulty of the passage, and, possibly, his own unease with the Israel view.

However, the declaration 'sin is dead apart from the law' best fits a pre-Sinaitic scenario, if only because the tenth commandment is quoted. In this sense νεκρά, (dead) will mean something like 'lacking in power', lacking in power, that is, to carry out its evil intention against and through the human personality, whether corporately or individually construed.

For the first time in the pericope Paul explicitly mentions *evgw*, as the battleground of sin (v.9). What is difficult to miss is the strong allusion to the Adamic experience in Eden (Witherington 2004, 184). According to Edwards (1995, 188), ‘Adam’s fate anticipates the human race to follow . . . and the entire human race . . . is implicated in Adam’s fall.’ This may fit verse 9a comfortably<sup>182</sup> (*evgw. de. e; zwn cwri. j no, mou pote, /at one time I was alive without the law*).

But while Adam in the account of Genesis was once without law, how does this relate to his descendants? The reference can possibly be to the experience of Israel, as we have seen above, but that is certainly not the ‘entire human race,’ unless of course we take the ‘Israel’ position (Moo’s suggestion) in some representative way. However one resolves this difficulty (i.e., whether or not the ‘I’ alludes to Adam or Israel, etc) the growing consensus that *ἐγώ* is used in some typical fashion appears more and more attractive.

For this awareness most give credit to Kümmel (1974), who is the first in modern times to seriously challenge the autobiographical view. Kümmel’s contribution to the debate allowed interpreters to explore other possibilities of understanding verse 9 especially, which Theissen labels ‘non-biographical’. However, Kümmel, it would appear, swung the pendulum too far in the opposite direction in failing to see *any* reference at all to Paul in the chapter. Responding to this Theissen (1987, 201) declares, ‘anyone who denies to Paul the *ego* in Romans 7 has to bear the burden of proof for this claim. What

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<sup>182</sup> Notwithstanding Moo’s disavowal.

suggests itself most readily is to think of an “I” that combines *personal* and *typical traits*.’ (My emphasis)<sup>183</sup>

But Kümmel (1974a, 214) seems to have softened his position from the hard line fictive ‘I’ to the more nuanced posture taken by Theissen, for in another place he writes (commenting on Gal 2:19-20): ‘Here it is said of the Christians—the “I” does not describe *Paul alone* [my emphasis]—that they are crucified with Christ and are thereby dead to the law.’ One can see why 7:9 is seen as fictive, but cannot the other personal references be both typical and experiential at once? Granting the difficulty of interpreting verse 9 as autobiographical, we still need to ask if the ‘either/or’ approach to the passage in general and verse 9 in particular is not bankrupt. Only a fresh and complete assessment of the Pauline ‘I’ can, I believe, satisfactorily answer such a question. Our tentative conclusion at this juncture, then, is that the ‘I’ of verse 9a is both typical and personal--not just fictive, but inclusive.

But to what extent? Wright (1991, 226-230) has already mentioned Cain as a candidate for inclusion. That suggestion may find support in the language of 9b, particularly *avne, zhsen*, since ‘The image suggests that sin is like a beast of prey poised to leap upon its victim’ (Schreiner 1998, 367). Schreiner does not mention Cain at this point, but his reading of *avne, zhsen* as

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<sup>183</sup> Theissen further observes that were it not for ‘the [alleged?] contradiction to Philippians 3 . . . and . . . Rom 7:9, probably no one would ever have come up with the idea of considering the “I” fictive’ or ‘representational’ (cf. Russell 1994, 511-527). Kümmel (1974, 121) ‘responds,’ ‘*Und zwar findet sich dieser Gebrauch Röm. 3, 5. 7; 1. Kor. 6, 12, 15, 10, 29f., 11, 31f., 13, 1-3. 11f., 14, 11. 14. 15; [und] Gal. 2, 18.*’

‘sprang to life’ is definitely reminiscent of Genesis 4:6ff where ‘sin’ like ‘a beast of prey’ (Gesenius 1949, 755), ‘a lion crouching at the door—lethal’ (Waltke 2001, 103), or demon (Walton 2001, 264), is ready to overpower Cain (cf. Rom 6:14).

Käsemann (1980, 192) seems to speak for everyone who wrestles with the passage when he says that much insight may be lost ‘if the general “I” style of confessional speech is allowed to remain so formal that a vague reference to every man is seen’. But he appears to have taken himself too seriously by unnecessarily restricting the ‘I’ to Adam.<sup>184</sup>

I believe it is better, like Dunn (1988, 381), to see Adam in the ‘I’ but only in an allusive sense. However, Käsemann may be correct, I think, in inveighing against the ‘I’ = every man position.<sup>185</sup> The only plausible options, then, would be those which attempt to correlate the events (?) implied in *evgw. de. e; zwn cwri. j no, mou pote, ( evlqou, shj de. th/ j evntolh/ j h` a`marti, a avne, zhsen( evgw. de. avpe, qanon* (and I was once alive apart from the law, but with the coming of the law sin sprang to life and I died; vv.9-10a), with some historical

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<sup>184</sup> Says he (1980, 196): ‘We do not have an autobiographical reminiscence [here]. . . . In the full sense only Adam lived before the commandment was given. Only for him was the coming of the divine will in the commandment an occasion for sin as he yielded covetously to sin and therefore “died”. . . . There is nothing in the passage which does not fit Adam, and everything fits Adam alone.’ But since the *evntolh*, is positively identified as part of the Decalogue, how can ‘everything’ fit Adam alone?

<sup>185</sup> This was articulated this way by Armstrong (1983, 49): ‘When Paul uses the pronoun “I” in this instance, he is not referring to himself personally . . . but . . . unredeemed mankind.’

reference in which *no, moj/evntolh*, (law/command) figures prominently.<sup>186</sup>

But if the ‘I’ in the passage is typical, with possible allusions to Adam and/or Israel, in what sense is it personal? To the many interpreters before Kümmel (1929) this question would have been quite strange. But it is the ‘strangeness’ of verse 9, among other things, that caused Kümmel to doubt any authorial self-reference. The difficulty is felt by all.

We now explore some suggestions as to how verse 9 may fit Paul’s profile. Alford (1861, 380) identifies the period when Paul was ‘alive without the law’ as ‘*all that time, be it mere childhood or much more, before the law began its work within him--before the deeper energies of his moral nature were aroused*’ (his italics). Denny’s (1912, 640) position is this: ‘There is not really a period in life to which one can look back as the happy time when he had no conscience.’

Bruce (1985, 139) and his former student, Gundry (1980, 228-245), speculate that Paul is referring to his ‘ante-pubertical’ years, especially those prior to his *bar mitzvah*.<sup>187</sup> Though Murray (1968, 250) refuses to identify a period with any pinpoint accuracy, he nevertheless shares his own brand of speculation:

[Paul] is speaking of the unperturbed, self-complacent, self-righteous life which he once lived before the turbulent motions and conviction of

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<sup>186</sup>Stott (1994, 203) speaks of four distinct stages.

<sup>187</sup> Bruce believes that 7:14-25 refers to Paul’s post-conversion experience; for Das (2007, 232), the section (including 7-13) deals with the experience of a God-fearing Gentile.

sin, described in the two preceding verses, overtook him . . . the coming of the commandment is *undoubtedly* the coming home to his consciousness and the registration in consciousness by which sin took occasion to work in him.<sup>188</sup>

This quotation not only seeks to explain verse 9a, but 9b as well

(evlqou, shj de. th/j evtolh/j h` a`marti, a

avne, zhse/but with the coming of the commandment sin sprang to life).

The compound avnaza, w (sprang to life/rise) seems to support Murray's argument once we do not exclude Paul from the purview of possibilities. But how does one account for the fact that elsewhere avna, stasij (rising) is a synonym of avnaza, w (rise; Louw and Nida 1988, 2:262)? Could the verse somehow be a reference to another 'stage' in the writer's experience? If so, what is this stage? To ask these questions is, perhaps, to assume too much concerning the force of the prefix avna-. If it has any significance at all, it perhaps conveys the perfective idea of 'springs to life' (Bauer *et al.*, 53; Cranfield 1975, 351-352) or 'begins operation' (Louw and Nida 1988, 2:511).<sup>189</sup>

Like Murray, Harrison (1976, 80) argues that the thought of verse 9 must be taken in a relative sense, since there was no period in Paul's pre-conversion life that was 'unrelated to the law,' (having being a Pharisee's son [Acts 23:6] and a Pharisee himself [Acts 26:5]). So what does he mean by 'once I was alive apart from law' (NIV)? According to Harrison (1976, 80),




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<sup>188</sup>Emphasis mine. How Murray arrives at such certainty is beyond me.

<sup>189</sup>It is located here under a special semantic domain. Either domain may be supportive of Murray's historical reconstruction, though, in the opinion of some, such autobiographical reconstruction is implausible and unnecessary.

He seems to mean . . . that there was a time he was living in a state of blissful indifference to the intensely searching demands that the law made on the inner man. He was careless and self-deceived as to his own righteousness. This state is reflected in Philippians 3:6 where he speaks of his pre-conversion days when he was “faultless” with respect to legalistic righteousness.

In this reckoning, *evgw. de. avpe, qanon* (and I died; v.10a) is to be understood subjectively in the sense of a coming to an end of Paul’s intellectual struggle, particularly with reference to Jesus of Nazareth and the Messianic claims his followers made about him. The dying, then, was more like ‘the sentence of death’ (so Harrison) representing the ‘hopelessness and despair’ which is to be contrasted with the almost smug complacency that characterized the young Pharisee (Harrison 1976, 80).<sup>190</sup>

This is yet another attempt at making sense of an abbreviated account of a crucial stage (or possible stages) in Paul’s life, a stage that also serves to dramatize<sup>191</sup> that which is typical of humanity (Adam/Israel/Every man?) when faced with the true character of the law’s demands. To press to find a definitive answer to the question of what exactly is the writer’s experience behind his deliberately terse language is to ignore his overall purpose (the ‘forest’) to concentrate, so to speak, on a forbidden tree. Whatever we make of verse 9-10a, the contrastive *evgw,*    *evgw* ❖ (I . . .

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<sup>190</sup> Witmer (1983, 446) also locates ‘I was alive’ during Paul’s youth (his childhood even) and the coming of the commandment at the stage where the full impact of God’s law was felt resulting in ‘the dawning of the significance of the commandment (“Do not covet”) on Paul’s mind and heart before his conversion.’

<sup>191</sup> *The New Oxford Annotated Bible* (1994, 216).

I) is of some significance in that it serves to highlight even further a popular biblical merism (life/death).<sup>192</sup>

Verse 10b seems to complicate matters even more by its mention of *h' evntolh*, that is in one sense associated with 'life' and in another, 'death'. What is this commandment? And in what sense(s) is it related to these diametrically opposite experiences?

Questions like these have engaged the minds of some of the best interpreters for nearly two millennia, and like many other items in the passage, no altogether satisfactory answers have been given. There is, however, some agreement that Paul is alluding to Leviticus 18:5.<sup>193</sup> He will quote the verse in 10:5. It also appears in an earlier epistle, (Gal 3:12), which has a lot in common with Romans. According to Theissen (1987, 209), verse 10 is possibly referring to, 'the nomist expectation that the law can confer life.'

But what might this mean? Life in the sense of salvation, or longevity of life with a qualitative dimension? Moo (1993, 311; 1996, 439) defends the former view. To him the law was intended to give eternal life once it was obeyed perfectly. Here he might want us to distinguish between purpose and result. The fact that no one has ever met this theoretical possibility should not let us lose sight of the fact that the original purpose of Lev 18:5 is salvific in its fullest sense.

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<sup>192</sup> E.g., 6: 23; 8:13. Cf. the Deuteronomy's (chapt. 28) blessings and curses.

<sup>193</sup> So, representatively, the apparatus of Aland *et al.* (1994, 546).



Moo's position is difficult to disprove, precisely because authorial intention is not always easy to determine with any confidence.<sup>194</sup> But there is nothing in either the context of Leviticus or Romans 7:10 that demands such an understanding. It is better, in my view, to limit the meaning of 'life' to something other than salvation, since Paul's strenuous argument elsewhere is that righteousness, and the saving act of God of which it is a part, is *cwr i . j no , mou* (apart from law; 3:21a). And if the gospel that Paul expounds and defends in this epistle is to be found in the Hebrew Bible (3:21b), then one could not expect any commandment to be given for eternal life.<sup>195</sup> This kind of life is *always* a divine gift (6:23).<sup>196</sup>

In essential disagreement with this perspective is Feinberg (1969, 110) who writes: 'The promise of life which accompanied the law ("If a man do, he shall live by them") was genuine, but there was no enablement provided to keep the law (Rom 8:3).' But even with this qualification, Feinberg still goes on to declare, 'obedience would have brought life physically and *spiritually*, temporally and *eternally*.'

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<sup>194</sup> Notwithstanding Hirsch (1967, especially 164-244).

<sup>195</sup> Note the attributive article in *h` eivj zwh, n* 'the one (meant) for life' (Robertson and Davis 1977, 200); Robertson (1934, 539) plausibly suggests that *moi* (v. 10a) should be taken as a dative of disadvantage.

<sup>196</sup> See also the apostle's illustration of this truth in chapter 4 of the epistle. But if *zwh* ♡, according to Turner (1980, 487), is invariably salvation in the NT, then my understanding of 7:10 is definitely wrongheaded. However, *zwh* , can mean ordinary life (Acts 17:5; Phil. 1:20; Moulton 1977, 43).

However, as was pointed out above, 'life' in verse 10 should not be given its pregnant sense. I think an examination of its antonym supports this interpretation. In this regard, Black's study (1984, 418-419) is quite useful. After having surveyed the Jewish and Hellenistic thought world with reference to 'death', Black comes up with the following schema:

Death as Completion

- a. Part of the natural order
- b. The payment of an account owed to God or payment made through atoning sacrifice (principally Semitic)
- c. Release from suffering
- d. An occasion for hope or witness (Semitic) or heroism and glory (Hellenic)
- e. The incentive for ethical behaviour and the fulfillment of a righteous life

Death as Depletion

- f. A terrible thing to be feared
- g. The loss of the richness of life
- h. An intrusion into the creator's design . . . .
- i. A tyrannous, cosmological power
- j. Something associated with sin: either<sup>197</sup> derived from, or finishing transgression.

The above 'conceptual laws,' suggests Black, provides a useful framework within which to come to grips with *qa, natōj* (death) and its cognates in

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<sup>197</sup>The above schema, according to Black, can also be expressed biologically, mythologically, and metaphorically.

chapter 7. In verse 10, I believe that Paul is viewing ‘death as depletion’ in the specific sense of loss of the ‘richness of life’ (g.).<sup>198</sup>

Therefore, what Paul is saying in verse 10b is that the commandment (or better, his failure to live up to it) resulted in a miserable existence. This is possibly what Paul means by ‘death’ in this context. The opposite thought, then, has to do with the kind of life which is akin to that mentioned in John 10:10b, without, of course, the overtones of the eschatological dimension.<sup>199</sup>

Verse 11 continues to reveal the destructive effect sin had in the life of Paul. Again the parallel between Genesis 3 and the author’s experience is drawn out. This is confirmed by the construction *evxhpa, thse, n me* (it deceived me), which first appears in Genesis 3:13 (LXX).<sup>200</sup>

In an earlier epistle, this compound verb is also used (2 Cor 11:3), and in a later one it appears in a passive form: *hvpath, qh* (was deceived; I Tim 2:14). The term does appear, then, to be a crucial one for Paul. Like Adam and Eve<sup>201</sup> in the Genesis narrative, the apostle was both deceived and slain by

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<sup>198</sup> This applies to both the verb *ape, qanon* (10a) and the noun *qa, natoj* (10b). Black’s *ii.c* appears to contradict his earlier: ‘For the ancient Israelites death was not viewed as an absurd, inimical intruder but was accepted as a constituent of an orderly, supervised creation’ (414). He does, however, point out that in ‘no historical stage or community of ancient Judaism was there a single, uniform definition of death or attitude towards it’ (416).

<sup>199</sup> *zwh*, in this sense can hardly be so divided. But if that were possible, it is the ‘already’ dimension (minus spirit?) to which the ‘commandment unto life’ pointed.

<sup>200</sup> Actually the LXX lacks the prefix.

<sup>201</sup> While Paul’s ‘deception’ was similar to that of Eve (cf. 2 Cor 11:3), it does not follow that Paul’s ‘I’ includes Eve, as Dunn (1988a, 385) suggests.

sin. Again the concept of death in this verse should be understood in terms of ‘depletion’ as above.

In contrast to the demonic-like character of sin (Black 1973, 98), described especially in verses 8 and 11, the law is holy. If sin has taken on diabolical qualities in this passage, then the law is divine. We must never forget that Paul’s primary purpose here is the vindication of the law. So far he has said some things about νόμος (law) that appear to place it in a bad light. For example, in 5:20 law ‘increases’ sin, in 7:4 it is that to which the Roman believers died, and, as a result, were freed (7:6; cf. 6:14). Statements like these beg for clarification and in 7:7 Paul set about this task. In calling the law holy in verse 12 is clearly the climax of his apologia.

But in what sense is the law holy? So far Paul has used this adjective in relation to the OT writings (1:2), the believers at Rome (1:7) and with the divine Spirit (5:5). Within the aforementioned Scriptures (1:2), particularly in the book of Isaiah, ‘holy’ is a term that applies to God in his special relationship to his people (e.g., Isa 6:1ff). This is its benchmark employment. All other uses take their cue from this. The law, then, is holy because it is the expression of the holy divine will (cf. 2:18). It is righteous and good and spiritual for the same reason (cf. v.14; 3:26).<sup>202</sup>

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He is, however, right in stressing the paradoxical role of the law in this connection. Elsewhere ‘the “I” is an existential self-identification with Adam . . . humankind (cf. 2 *Baruch* 54. 19)’ (Dunn 1998, 99).

<sup>202</sup> In this instance εὐνόμος is used. It is clearly a synonym of νόμος, though some, like Moo (1996, 440), suggest that its antecedent is the specific commandment cited in v.7.

Again we draw attention to the strange triangle Paul is discussing in this passage: the law that is holy, sin which is not, and the ‘I’ which, as we shall see, is pulled in both directions. But if the law is holy, righteous and good and was not responsible for Paul’s moral failure, what is it then that is responsible for his ‘death’? And is not there a certain relation between law and death in Paul (e.g., ‘The soul who sins shall die’)? Paul’s own question is much sharper and to the point: ‘Did that which is wholesome (αἰσχροῦ, j) become in my experience the basis on which quality life was forfeited? (v.13).<sup>203</sup> Paul’s stereotypical ‘outburst’ is even stronger: ‘No way!’ Following this, Paul cogently explains that the real culprit is ‘sin’, the utterly unwholesome member of the aforementioned triad. It is sin that wrought death in him, and in so doing demonstrated<sup>204</sup> its true colours, in a manner of speaking. Brunner’s (1959, 61) summary is apt:

That [the bringing of death] is not the fault of the law itself, but of its connection with sin. And in this way, too, the Law fulfils a divine mission: it makes sin manifest, it makes it break out, it brings it to terrible maturity and thus makes the cure possible. For it creates the knowledge of sin; without the knowledge of sin there is also no justifying faith. In that the Law is able to do just this in its deadly effect, it shows once again that in origin it is God’s law and therefore holy, just and good.

This now sets the stage for our reading of the next major pericope.

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<sup>203</sup>This is my periphrastic rendition.

<sup>204</sup>Ἐαί, nw—‘bring to light’ in the sense of ‘making something fully known . . . clear’ to the cognitive domain, (Louw and Nida 1988, 2: 339, n.9).

## B. Chapter 7 Analysed (14-25)

The apostle will add one final adjective to his eulogy and apology of the law: *pneumatiko, j* (spiritual). This appears in verse 14,<sup>205</sup> the verse in which Paul switches to the present tense. P. Althaus (1996; cited in Käsemann 1980, 198) views the previous adjectives used in verse 12 as part of Paul's rhetorical strategy. This observation, I believe, is correct. I also think that *pneumatiko, j* should be added to this pleonastic presentation, but it was skillfully delayed to set up the new contrast between the law, the object of Paul's defense, and the 'I', the captive of sin.<sup>206</sup>

The identity of the 'I' is once again called into question, precisely because of the strong statement of verse 14b regarding its status in relation to sin. We have already accepted the position of people like Theissen that *evgw*, in some way refers to Paul, despite its rhetorical and allusive function in the passage. But does the passage refer to the unregenerate or regenerate Paul? The question is regarded as crucial, not only to an understanding of Paul's anthropology, but his perspective of the nature of spiritual formation (Martin 1981). In addition, answering the question may provide meaningful insight into Paul's perception of the addressees, as well as his own perception of self

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<sup>205</sup> Moo (1996, 452), following Morris (1988), does not take the verse as the beginning of a new section, but as part of vv. 14-25, since, like v.7, it contains a question.

<sup>206</sup> 'The antithesis is formulated with *evgw*. ("I") in the emphatic position, contrasting with the "we" ' (Jewett 2007, 461).

(Vorster 1990, 107).<sup>207</sup> According to Moo (1996, 446-447), those favouring the regenerate position more or less argue that:

1. *evgw*, must refer to Paul himself, and the shift from the past tenses of vv. 7-13 to the present tenses of vv. 14-15 can be explained only if Paul is describing in these latter verses his present experience as a Christian.
2. Only the regenerate truly “delight in God’s law” (v.22), seeks to obey it (vv. 15-20), and “serve” it (v.25); the unregenerate do not “seek after God” (3:11), and cannot “submit to the law of God” (8:7).
3. Whereas the mind of people outside Christ is universally presented by Paul as opposed to God and his will (cf. Rom. 1:28; Eph. 4:17; Col. 2:28; I Tim. 6:5; 2 Tim. 3:8; Tit. 2:15), the mind of *evgw*, “serves the law of God” (vv. 22, 25).
4. *evgw*, must be a Christian because only a Christian possesses the “inner person” (cf. Paul’s only other two uses of the phrase in 2 Cor 4:16; Eph. 3:16).
5. The passage concludes, after Paul’s mention of the deliverance wrought by God in Christ, with a reiteration of the divided state of the *evgw* ❖ (vv. 24-25).
6. This shows that the division and struggle of the *evgw* ❖ that Paul depicts in these verses is that of the person already saved by God in Christ.

Moo in fact argues for the contrary position and his detailed exposition of verses 14-25 seeks to put that position on a firm exegetical footing. But before he does so, he also provides the ‘most important reasons’ why he and others embrace the view that the verses under scrutiny depict an unregenerate person. The reasons are as follows:

1. The strong connection of *evgw*, with “the flesh” (vv. 14, 18, and 25) suggests that Paul is elaborating on the unregenerate condition mentioned in 7:5: being “in the flesh.”

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<sup>207</sup>For Vorster such insight can best be had through application of certain ‘conversational’ and rhetorical tools to the letter.

2. *evgw*, throughout this passage struggles “on his/her own” (cf. “I myself” in v.25), without the aid of the Holy Spirit.
3. *evgw*, is “under the power of sin” (v. 14b), a state from which every believer is released (6:2, 6, 11, 18-22).
4. As the unsuccessful struggle of vv. 15-20 shows, *evgw*❖ is a “prisoner of the law of sin” (v.23). Yet Rom. 8:2 proclaims that believers have been set free from this same “law of sin and death.”
5. While Paul makes clear that believers will continue to struggle with sin (cf. e.g., 6; 12-13; 13:12-14; Gal 5:17), what is depicted in 7:14-25 is not just a struggle with sin but a defeat by sin. This is a more negative view of the Christian life than can be accommodated within Paul’s theology.
6. The *evgw*, in these verses struggles with the need to obey the Mosaic Law; yet Paul has already proclaimed the release of the believer from the dictates of the law (6:17; 7-4-6).<sup>208</sup>

This last point in particular has led some to take a mediating position. Stott (1994, 208-209), for example, draws attention to the fact that mention of the Spirit is virtually absent from the chapter, with only one reference in verse 6. This leads Stott to approach the chapter from the perspective of *Heilsgeschichte* (‘salvation history’), enabling him to posit that Paul’s use of the ‘I’ is likely the depiction of an Old Testament believer. A representative of such a believer could be any Israelite living under the law up until the time of Jesus’ death. This would take in a John the Baptist, for instance, or any of the disciples.<sup>209</sup>

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<sup>208</sup>This is the view of Manson (1962, 946) and, more recently, Schreiner (1998, 385), who presents the following structure in defense: [A] Life under the Law: Unregenerate . . . (7:5); [B] Life in the Spirit: Regenerate . . . (7:6); [A'] Life under the Law . . . (7:7-25); [B'] Life in the Spirit . . . (8:1-17). Stuhlmacher (1994, 116) has a similar scheme.

<sup>209</sup>This is really a variant of the ‘regenerate’ position. Stott also cites a variant of the opposite view, which states that the ‘I’ in question is a person



A third way to understand the 'I' in these verses is to posit that Paul has in mind human beings in general (Christian or not). This is how Kümmel (1974a, 178) and others understand the entire chapter. Verse 14, for instance, is key to Kümmel's understanding of the universal character of sin.<sup>210</sup>

The difficulty of identifying the 'I' in this passage has elicited the following confession from a grammarian (Wallace 1996, 532 n. 52):

I have struggled with this text for many years (in more ways than one!), and have held to three different views. My *present* [his italics] view is that the apostle is speaking as universal man and is describing the experience of anyone who attempts to please God by submitting the flesh to the law. By application, this could be true of an unbeliever or a believer.

But what about the shift from past to present tenses? Wallace suggests (in keeping with his 'present' understanding) that the tenses in 14-25 are gnomic.

Harrison (1976, 84-85) defends a similar position. Paul, according to him, deliberately writes in such a way as to 'demonstrate what would indeed be the situation if one is faced with the demands of the law and the power of sin in his life were to attempt to solve his problem independently of Christ and the enablement of the Spirit.' Harrison sees in the book of Ecclesiastes an apt parallel to his position, in that 'the writer knows God . . . but purposely and

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under the Spirit's conviction who struggles to keep the law in his/her own strength.

<sup>210</sup>Kümmel (1974a, 181) is so certain that the 'I' represents every man that his problem with the passage lies elsewhere. Thus he probes, 'obviously it can be asked . . . how Paul can speak of man's responsibility before God when man yet as flesh is sold under sin and cannot go further than the cry ' of 7:24?

deliberately views life from the standpoint of the natural man in order to expose it as vanity, empty of lasting value.’ In Ecclesiastes 3:17-4:8, we read:

I said in my heart God will judge the righteous and the wicked. . . . I said in my heart with regard to the sons of men that God is testing them to show them that they are but beast. . . . Again I saw all the oppressions that are practiced under the sun. . . . And I thought the dead who are already dead more fortunate than the living who are still alive. . . . Then I saw that all toil and all skill in work come from a man’s envy of his neighbour. . . . Again, I saw vanity under the sun: a person who has no one, either son or brother, yet there is no end to all his toil, and his eyes are never satisfied with riches, so that he never asks, “For whom am I toiling and depriving myself pleasure?” (RSV).<sup>211</sup>

Dodd (1999, 226), on the other hand, expresses the view that the quasi-generic identification of the letter itself goes a far way in explicating Paul’s ‘I’ in chapter 7, particularly verses 14-25. As early as 3:6-7, according to Dodd, one discovers a ‘revealing clue’ to the apostle’s rhetoric. Immediately after *mh. ge, noito* (may it never be!), a diatribal ejaculatory phrase, we have the conjunction of a stylistic ‘I’ piece. A similar combination is to found in Gal 2:17-18.

This raises the possibility that both these texts owe their origin to the dialogical/diatribal form of argumentation, which is usually characterized by short statements, conversational tone, personification and rhetorical interrogatives, et cetera. Both Galatians 2:18 and Romans 3:7 are responses to rhetorical questions. Assuming that ‘Paul creates a composite character whom

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<sup>211</sup> *yna* stands behind each occurrence of ‘I’. Harrison’s linking of the two passages prejudices the interpretation of the older one.

he labels [εὐγὼ],<sup>212</sup> the aspectual shift in 7:14 becomes a crucial clue for Dodd (1999, 226) that we have in this pericope an adaptation of the diatribe begun in 7:7. Another important element of the diatribal style found in the passage is the personification of the abstract, so that Fitzmyer (1993, 465) could write: ‘In this passage Paul once again personifies sin and the law and treats them as actors on the stage of human history’. All this enables Paul to express theologically the ‘impersonal’ struggle among the law, sin and ‘I’, with the ‘I’ as a virtual third literary character (Dodd 1999, 229). Nevertheless, these three ‘protagonists’ in Paul’s script do not only serve as ‘rhetorical devices since they have literal referents’ as well. The law can refer concretely to the tenth commandment, sin, the experience of a Jewish and/or Christian believer and the ‘I,’ according to Dodd (1999, 230), ‘a composite of various elements which defy a single identification.’<sup>213</sup>

For Dodd (1999, 230-231), this composite ‘I’ functions in two ways: (1) as part of Paul’s defense strategy of the law (7:7-13; cf. Adeyemi 2006a; and especially Adeyemi 2007, 55-57), and (2) as ‘a showcase for the liberating power of Christ’. These two sections are clearly marked by the tenses, along with the stylistic indicator, ‘For we know that.’

As we examine verse 14 more closely, what becomes readily apparent is the stark contrast between the law and ‘I’ with the ‘spirituality’ of the former

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<sup>212</sup> ‘While this “I” does not refer straightforwardly to Paul, it incorporates his experience’ (Dodd, 1999, 226).

<sup>213</sup> This composite ‘I’ incorporates elements of the Adam story, as well as the Jewish/Christian experience.

dwarfing the latter in its ‘carnality’. The truth concerning the law was evidently common knowledge among writer and addressees.<sup>214</sup> But the carnal character of the ‘I’ was, it appears, a revelation. It is the ‘I’ in this light that is the main stumbling block of the ‘regenerate’ view.

The problem is compounded by the perfect tense participle *πεπρραμε, νοι* (sold) and its complement (cf. 1 Kings 21: 25; Schlatter 1995, 164). Unless Paul is contradicting himself, says Achtemeier (1985, 121) ‘still a slave of sin’ cannot be a meaningful reference to him, especially in light of 6:6, 7, 11, 17, 18, 22 and 7:6. Here Achtemeier agrees with Räisänen<sup>215</sup> (1986, 109: ‘it is hardly necessary to argue once more . . . that the famous . . . Rom 7:14-25 is not intended by Paul as a description of the Christian.’) and Wright (2002, 551-555). But as we have seen above, a few interpreters are returning to the view of Luther (1972, 328-329; cf. Martin 1989, 84) that 7:14b contains the words of a believer, ‘for it is characteristic of a spiritual and wise man to know that he is carnal and displeasing to himself.’

But what is the nature of the ‘carnality’ predicated of the ‘I’? An exploration of this question may shed some light on the identification of the ‘I’ as well. Answering the question concerning the carnality of the ‘I’ means in

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<sup>214</sup>*οι ; δαμεν*; this reading of both the NA and UBS texts is virtually certain, though *οι νδα με, ν*, the reading of 33, appears to fit the context better. The adopted reading provides another interesting ‘we’/‘I’ contrast.

<sup>215</sup>He believes that Paul’s statement about the law (v.14) ‘stands indeed in an irreconcilable contradiction’ (45) to his assessment elsewhere, notably in 2 Cor 3.

part determining the semantic value of *σα, rkinoj* (flesh) within the sentence.

The problem is slightly compounded by the fact that the majority of manuscripts have *sarkiko, j* (fleshly?) instead of its above synonym. However, the external evidence and other factors seem overwhelmingly in favour of *σα, rkinoj*. But if we were to adopt the inferior reading, would it make any material difference to the meaning in context? In a brief examination of the two terms M.C. Parsons (1988, 151-152) points out that older grammarians preferred the meaning ‘made of flesh’ for *σα, rkinoj*. *sarkiko, j* on the other hand, bore the sense ‘Characteristic of, or determined by.’ While there are some lexicographers who would prefer to maintain this (e.g., Trench 1880, 270), Parsons says that the trend nowadays is towards seeing the words as interchangeable terms within the Pauline corpus.<sup>216</sup> This is also how Thiselton (2000, 288) treats the terms in the context of I Cor 3:1. He translates *σα, rkinoj* as ‘people moved entirely by human drives.’ So what Paul is asserting concerning ‘I’ is its antithetical character to the law, because ‘*La loi est dite pneumatiko, j par opposition à la nature de l’ homme*’ (Langrange 1950, 175). The succeeding verses will elaborate on the thought of verse 14b further.

In verses 15-25 the reader senses a measure of the confusion predicated of the ‘I’ throughout. For example, verse 15 is almost certainly the confession of

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<sup>216</sup> The burden of Parson’s article is to dispute the claim of BAGD that the aforementioned distinctions are not observed in the manuscript tradition, a claim, he believes, that is contradicted by a study of F and G.

one who becomes disoriented by virtue of the intense and continual inward struggle. Thus ‘I do not approve/understand [ouv ginw, skw]<sup>217</sup> what I am doing [o, ` katerga, zomai]’. Again we come across another pair of verbs that pose a challenge to the interpreter as to the precise semantic value, if ever such was intended. katerga, zomai, the first of the two, has already appeared in the chapter with the sense of ‘produce’ (v. 8). Does it have the same meaning in verse 15?

This is tentatively suggested by Moo (1996, 455), while Dunn (1988a, 389), with the same tentativeness, says it ‘probably has the vaguer sense “do”, rather than the more specific “produce create.”’

Paul continues, ‘for not that I will, this I do [pra, ssw]; but what I hate, this I practice [poiw/].’ Here we are confronted with two other verbs denoting the action of ‘I’ in the face of the struggle with sin, ‘do’ and ‘practice’ (Darby 1929). If katerga, zomai is vague, then its synonyms, pra, ssw and poiw/, are perhaps even more so, within the context of the verse. There may be some subtle stylistic distinctions that are intended, but so far efforts to recover them have largely been unsuccessful (Louw and Nida 1988, 2: 512 n. 2).

Although Moo (1996, 455) recognizes this fact, he nevertheless translates poie, w as ‘do,’ pra, ssw as ‘practise,’ and katerga, zomai as ‘produce.’ Citing other scholars, he points out that katerga, zomai is

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<sup>217</sup> Burdick (1974, 161; cf. Silva 1980, 184-207) concludes that the meaning of ginw, skw is inconclusive here.

sometimes understood to lay stress on the outcome of an action as against the more ‘colorless’ *poie, w*. When it comes on to *pra, ssw* and *poie, w*, it is thought that the former underlines the ‘habitual nature of what is done.’

Moo (1996, 455 n. 40) further points out that in passages like 1 Thess 4: 10-11; 1 Cor 5:2-3; Phil 2: 22, 13; and Rom 1: 27-28, 32; 2:3; 13:4, it is virtually impossible to distinguish their senses, because of the considerable overlap among them. Perhaps it is best to take the three terms ‘in an all-embracing sense to cover all action of the “I”,’ as Dunn<sup>218</sup> (1988, 389) suggests.

It is precisely at this point that Black (1973, 99), Dunn (1988, 389), Fitzmyer (1993, 474) and Moo (1996, 457 n. 46) introduce a few important parallels, namely, those from Ovid and Epictetus. The relevant lines from Ovid read, ‘[S]ome strange power holds me down against my will. Desire persuades me one way, reason another. I see the better and approve it, but I follow the worst’ (LCL 1916, 343; cited by Theissen 1987, 217), and that from Epictetus are translated, ‘Every error involves a contradiction. For since he who is in error does not wish to err, but to be right, it is clear that he is not doing [*οὐκ ποιεῖ*/] what he wishes [*ἔχει*, *λεῖ*].’ (LCL 1928, 423).

But none of the above quotations constitutes a genuine parallel as far as Huggins (1992, 153-161) is concerned. Why is this so? Because they all raise the issue of tension in man ‘from a markedly *anthropocentric* perspective. . . .

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<sup>218</sup> He is also struck by the unusual antithesis of *mise, w* and *ἔχει, λω* within the verse. The latter verb, according to O’ Brien (1991, 287), denotes a ‘resolve or purposeful determination.’

Paul, in contrast, addresses the entire problem from a markedly *theocentric* [his italics] and covenantal perspective'. This perspective is closely tied to the conviction that the divine will expressed in the law denotes strict obedience on the part of the 'I' it addresses (Huggins 1992, 160). Huggins' main contribution, in my opinion, is his careful examination of the various contexts in which the parallels have appeared. This enables him to make a sharper comparison than would otherwise have been possible. Following this he concludes that the above parallels are virtually meaningless in understanding Paul in Romans 7.

That may be so. However, I believe there is a sense in which one could still accept the lines from Ovid as parallels to 7:15, without compromising the meaning of the canonical text. For instance, one could accept the correspondence in form though not in function, notwithstanding the criticism that such acceptance would be lacking in significance where the hermeneutical process is concerned. What the parallels reveal is the fundamental human struggle against the backdrop of some agreed upon standard. In the case of the 'I' in Romans, the unyielding standard is the Torah. The difference, then, is not of kind but degree.

Understood in this way we can somewhat agree with Huggins, while at the same time register our disagreement with his false disjunction. It appears then that Ovid and all those who have uttered a semblance of what is expressed in Romans 7:15, would, if given the chance, say like Paul: ο] ga.r katerga,zomai ouv ginw,skw\ ouv ga.r ο] qe,lw tou/to pra,ssw( avllv ο] misw/ tou/to poiw/ (For I do not know what



I am doing; what I mean is this: what I desire I do not practise, but what I detest I do; cf. Black 1973, 100). Huggins, I believe, has correctly observed that the parallels do not reflect the depth of moral conflict expressed in the verse. However, I think he overstated his case by trivializing the conflicts of the non-canonical writers in not recognizing theirs to have any theological orientation and significance. This, in my view, tacitly denies them an important component of their humanity – the *imago divinitas*. In fact, without this vital link they would have no moral struggle, and there would be no verbal expressions of such struggle, however superficial. That is why I think it is important to extrapolate from Romans 2 the presence of a universal ‘Mesographic law,’<sup>219</sup> against which background the aforementioned parallels and others can be properly gauged.

If I am correct, it should follow that a better approach to evaluating parallels would be to determine their proximity to this or that proposition. Another service that Huggins has rendered in this regard is to demonstrate how far the respective extra-canonical parallels are from the biblical ones; so wide is the gap between them that one *cannot* meaningfully speak of parallels. Others have been content only to speak of points of contact, leaving it up to the reader to draw his/her conclusion as to the degree to which a desired parallel is illuminated. Perhaps another contribution of Huggins is his boldness in joining the chorus of ‘watchmen’ who seek to warn of the dangers of what Sandmel

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<sup>219</sup>What Lewis and Demarest (1996, 1: 95) call ‘the implanted law.’ Cf. Segal (2003, 166), who mentions the ‘seven commandments which the rabbis assumed were given to all humanity before Moses.’

(1962) dubbed ‘Parallelomania’ (cf. Sanders 1977, 42-44; Boring *et al.*, 1995, 16-17). Perhaps bolder still is Boring, who, fully cognizant of the pitfalls of ‘parallelomania’ and the impressionistic value of citations *qua* citations (i.e. without the benefit of their respective contexts and individual *Sitz im Leben*), still provides a highly suggestive assembly of non-Jewish pieces like the following: ‘[T]he eyes love the enjoyment that can be seen outside [of wives] . . . men too are always lusting after what they are not permitted to see. [Euripides] . . . We are rebels against restriction—in love with the illicit (Ovid)’.

We have already noted some of the differences that caused Huggins to reject these parallels out of hand. Before we move on, a couple more must be mentioned.

Dunn (1988, 1: 389) further points out that Epictetus’ (LCL 1928, 422) ο[ γε, lei ουv ποιει/ kai. ο[ mh. γε, lei ποιει/ (he is not doing what he wishes, and what he does not want that he does), while having formal correspondence with Romans, differs in the resolution of the problem. For example, Epictetus (1928, 423) says:

Now every rational soul is by nature offended by contradiction . . . . He, then, who can show to each man the contradiction which causes him to err . . . is strong in argument. . . . For as soon as anyone shows a man this, he will of his own abandon what he is doing.

What is lacking here, according to Dunn (1988, 1: 389), is the ‘sharpness of the existential frustration which comes to increasingly anguished expression as the passage continues.’

As we shall see later, there is at least one common thread running through all these extra-canonical Jewish and Hellenistic parallels: what may be called the common clay of humanity and its weakness in the face of the divine demand. This is accented in a much greater way in the rest of the pericope (vv. 17-18).

Moving on to verse 17a it appears that Paul has lost his focus with the phrase *nuni. de. ouvke, ti evgw. katerga, zomai auvto* ❖(But now it is no longer I doing it) in making an excuse for the poor performance of the 'I'. But this is not the case. What the apostle is doing is to identify precisely the centre of weakness from which springs the I's miserable failure.<sup>220</sup> Instead of evading responsibility, Paul hastily informs that *h` oivkou/sa evn evmoi. a`marti, a* (the sin inside of me; v.17b) is the source of the problem, thus the further clarification and confession in verse 18a, 'I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature'<sup>221</sup> (NIV). This appears to be at the very heart of the problem. If we recall and adapt the bold language of 5:21a of sin's despotic career (Palmer 2001, 61), then the 'sin living in me' (v. 17a; NIV) depicts a place in which and from

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<sup>220</sup> 'Now the split that is portrayed in vss. 15-20 should also be made clear: the object of "willing" is "life" . . . the result of "doing" is "death"' (Bultmann 1960, 183).

<sup>221</sup> *sa, rx*. This term is often used as the epitome of 'weakness, the distinctive mark of the mortal, [which] arises only according to nature' (Philo LCL, 5: 237; cf. Davis 1994, 3). The NIV (and others like it) is 'translated incorrectly', according to Grieb (2002, 75). Following Keck (1999, 66-75), she prefers, 'For I know that *the good* does not dwell within me'; the 'good' being a possible reference to the law (7:12). Either translation supports Paul's weakness language at this point.

which the tyrannical monarch engages and crushes everything that opposes him.<sup>222</sup> Paul had previously identified ‘sin’ as the real culprit as he sought to exonerate the law. What appears new here is his locating sin within the ‘I’ (cf. ‘The evil impulse is at first like a passer-by, then a lodger, and finally like the master of the house’ [Beier 1968, 6]).

The Apostle then summarizes the point he just made<sup>223</sup> by observing an operative principle that was no doubt applicable, at least, to his original auditors: ‘I discover, therefore, this principle that in my resolve to do good, evil is at hand’ (v.21). I have rendered *νόμος* in this verse as ‘principle’ instead of ‘law’ (i.e. the Mosaic code) as Dunn has argued. Crucial for Dunn is the thought that the main burden of 7:7-25 is the defense of the Torah, which, according to him, is synthesized in verse 21. Support for this is seen in the correspondence between two critical verses: 10 and 21. What is expressed in verse 10, according to Dunn (1988, 392), is ‘the frustrated goal of the law.’ Verse 21 goes a step further in adding the relative impotence of the ‘I’. ‘But in both cases what is in view is the harsh discovery through personal experience of how the law, which should be for life and should promote the good, actually helps bring about the opposite’ (Dunn 1988, 392).

Dunn (1988, 392-393) goes on to make the astounding claim that all occurrences of *νόμος* in the previous sections refer only to the Torah.

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<sup>222</sup> ‘*Sin* appears as a demonic person and exercises a rule of terror over humanity’ (Laato 2004, 359; cf. Burrowes 2006, 314; Jewett 2007, 467).

<sup>223</sup> Following Moo (1996, 460), we see verses 19 and 20 as recapitulation of 15b and 16b/17b respectively.

He even goes as far as to argue that in chapter 8:2 the meaning of ‘law’ is related to the Torah in both instances. There he draws attention to the strong link between the Torah, the Spirit and life established in chapters 7. For example, 7:14 (the law and the Spirit) and 7:10 (the law and life). Against this background, Dunn (1988, 416) understands the phrase  $\omicron\grave{\nu}\ \nu\omicron, \mu\omicron\jmath\ \tau\omicron\upsilon/\ \rho\grave{\nu}\epsilon\upsilon, \mu\alpha\tau\omicron\jmath\ \tau\eta/\jmath\ \zeta\omega\eta/\jmath$  (the principle of the Spirit of life) as ‘little more than a compact summary of earlier verses’.

Perhaps Dunn should be commended for his consistent line of interpretation in regard to ‘law’ in the book of Romans. However, I feel that what he has managed to do is to sacrifice Pauline subtlety for his own neatness and consistency. Admittedly, chapters 5-8 have a difficult set of ‘law’ occurrences in an already challenging epistle. But I believe that Dunn’s reductionistic understanding of ‘law’ in these chapters obscures rather than sheds light on them. Dunn (1988, 393) does admit, however, that if Paul meant something like ‘principle’ or ‘pattern’ it would be difficult for him to find a suitable term apart from  $\nu\omicron, \mu\omicron\jmath$ .

A better approach, we believe, is taken by Katoppo (1991, 420-426), who surveys the way  $\nu\omicron, \mu\omicron\jmath$  is used throughout the book. The following is a summary of his investigation.

The first two occurrences of  $\nu\omicron, \mu\omicron\jmath$  in Romans (2:12, 13a) are definite references to the Mosaic Law, according to Katoppo.<sup>224</sup> The third at 2:13b is a

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<sup>224</sup>Also 2:25; 3:20; chapters 4-5; 6:14-15; 7:4 (?); 9:31 (?); 10: 4; 13:10 (Katoppo 1991, 423-426).

possible reference to the divine will in a general sense (Katoppo 1991, 422-423). ‘Of the four occurrences of *nomos* in [v. 14], the first and fourth refer to the Law of Moses, and the second occurrence refers to God’s will. . . . The third occurrence refers to a general set of rules’ (Katoppo 1991, 423). *το. ε;ργον του/ νο,μου* (work of the law) in Romans 2:15 is taken as a collective singular by Katoppo. He points out that the phrase could be rendered ‘the effect of the law’ (‘what the Law commands’, GNB; Katoppo 1991, 423), but says nothing about its referent. I believe that the following phrase, *γραπτο.ν evn tai/j kardi,aij αυτw/ν* (written in their hearts) ( points to what may be termed the ‘mesographic law’.<sup>225</sup> Romans 2:26, 27, says Katoppo (1991, 423) is a reference to God’s will, but in 3:19 we have the first occurrence of *νο, μοj* to designate Scripture (also 3: 31). However, in 3:27; 7:21 and 8:2 ‘principle’ or ‘power’ seems to be the best translation (Katoppo 1991, 424-25; also Adeyemi 2006, 440; *contra* Das 2001, 228-233).

The point of citing the above is to show that Dunn’s suggestions that ‘law’ in Romans must invariably be taken as a reference to the Mosaic code is questionable. So although Katoppo’s study is not exhaustive, it at least opens the way to explore other possibilities of meaning that may shed light on the dilemma of the ‘I’ that is partly the focus of our investigation.

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<sup>225</sup>Borrowed from *meso*, -*gra/foj*, ‘drawn [or written] in the middle [heart?]’ (Liddell and Scott 1997, 500); cf. Kasali (2006, 1363).

Verse 22 introduces a contrast that concerns the ambivalence of the ‘I’ toward the two ‘laws’ in opposition to each other. On the one hand the ‘I’ agrees with the expression of God’s will, here referred to as the *νόμος τοῦ θεοῦ*. This could be a reference to the Mosaic code or the precepts and principles of the Messianic covenant orally transmitted among early Christian believers. But on the other hand the ‘I’ is aware of a more sinister law (*ἕτερος νόμος*--another law; v. 23), which Calvin ([1539], 171) calls *une loi tyrannique de Satan*.<sup>226</sup> What is this? Before addressing this question, something ought to be said about the ‘inner man’ that is at the heart of the ‘I’’s full approval with God’s will (v. 22).

Betz (2000, 315-341) traces the concept of this, what he calls ‘inner human being’, in Paul’s earlier letters and makes the following observations. Because these earlier letters demonstrate very little interest in anthropological dualities, the absence of *ἐσωτερικόν* (inner being) is understandable. Not that Paul showed no interest in anthropology during this period of his ministry, for we have, for example, in I Thessalonians 5:23 a terse description of total humanity.

Unlike I Thessalonians, Galatians appears to be the first letter of Paul to show some appearance of ‘problems for the anthropological concepts’, though *ἐσωτερικόν* is also absent. Here we find a dualism not between the ‘inner’ and the ‘outer’ man but between the ‘flesh’ and the ‘spirit’ (cf. 5:17,

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<sup>226</sup>As a result, ‘S. Paul dit que sa chair le tient captif / [Saint Paul ] says he is held captive by the flesh’ (Calvin [1539], 171; 1960, 153).

19). Important for Betz's investigation is the co-crucifixion of Christ along with the 'I', mentioned in 2:20. This being the case, the co-crucifixion of the believers is presumably the ground from which the antagonism between 'flesh' and 'spirit' is instigated.

Betz then moves to Philippians. 'As far as this anthropology is concerned, this letter is close to I Thessalonians and Galatians.' Human beings in Philippians are constituted of body (1:20; 3:21) 'and/or flesh' (1:22, 24; 3:3, 4), and 'soul' (1:27; 2:30). The mention of these entities, according to Betz, does not provide any precise definition of humanity.

It is in the Corinthians correspondence that a 'new level of intense reflection about anthropological problems is reached,' beginning with the first letter. I Corinthians brings together both protology and eschatology to sharpen the focus of essential humanity in 11:7, 15:22, 45-46, 49, and theologically modified by Paul's Christological vision (e.g., Rom 5:12-21). Betz also raises the crucial question as to whether verses like 2:13, 15; 3:1; and 14:37 betray 'a radically dualistic anthropology or merely a conceptual inconsistency.' No direct response is forthcoming from Betz, but the general tenor of his article is away from the notion of any dualism in Paul.

It is in 2 Corinthians 4: 16, Betz observes, that the anthropological phrase, *εἰς τὸ σῶμα καὶ ἐν τῷ σάρκα* (along with its antonym), first makes its appearance. There it is clearly identified with the facet of Christian humanity that is under spiritual reconstruction. Betz (2000, 337) then concludes his discussion of



ε;σω α;νqρωpoj by posing a question about its relation to the ‘I’, which, to him, is a symbol of the human self:

Is the εvgw❖ divided?<sup>227</sup> Paul’s answer is that it is the same εvgw❖, but there are two important aspects to it. . . . [O]ne aspect . . . rejoices being associated with the law of God. This aspect is identical with the ε;σω α;νqρωpoj . . . [T]he other aspect of the εvgw, . . . could be called the ε;xw α;νqρωpoj, but Paul does not use this term in Rom 7. . . . Therefore, the self-experience of the εvgw❖ is that of one and the same α;νqρωpoj, including the antagonisms and frustrations.

We may now return to the question posed earlier concerning the identification of the ε [tero]j no, mo]j (other law), first mentioned in verse 23. Is it some antagonistic principle working in conjunction with indwelling sin, sin itself, or the Mosaic Law in its ‘sinister role’ of sin’s pawn? For Schreiner (1998, 377), the ‘other law’ ‘is used to denote the alliance of sin with the law so that the “I” does not obey the Mosaic Law’.

However, I think it is better, with Haacker (2004, 68) and others<sup>229</sup> to see it as a ‘governing principle’ or ‘power’. This is in keeping with the analysis of no, mo]j as outlined above. This sinister ‘law’ operates in and through the ‘organs’ (me, lesin mou) of the ‘I’. The operation is militaristic (avntistrateuo, menon tw/ | no, mw| tou/ noo, j/fighting

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<sup>227</sup>C. H. Dodd (1932, 114) speaks of ‘a very intense experience of divided personality’, but Betz’s treatment is much better nuanced. For a competent handling of the question from the standpoint of psychology, see Beck (2002, 119-120).

For Bultmann (1969, 162-163), the nou/j is to be equated with the ε;σω α;νqρωpoj ☞

<sup>229</sup>For example, Vine 1948, 108; Moo 1996, 464; Kroll 2002, 117; Osborne 2004, 187.

against the law of my mind) and inimical to personal freedom (aivcmałwti, zonta, me/taking me captive), resulting in the kind of frustration vividly expressed in verse 24.

The employment of εvgw❖ in verse 24 is the most dramatic in the NT and possibly in the entire Greek Bible. There is also very little to compare with it elsewhere.<sup>230</sup> It is difficult not to agree with Dunn (1988, 410; contra Chang 2007) that here (v. 24) ‘certainly Paul speaks for himself and not merely as a spokesperson for humanity at large.’ This is, perhaps, a strong reason why the debate over the identification of the ‘I’ has returned with a vengeance. Is this Paul the believer in verse 24, or is it the pre-Christian Saul? Or is εvgw, at this point a highly dramatized picture expressive of humanity in general?

Kümmel (1974, 171, 181, 185, 140, 230, 253), despite some equivocation, maintains this last position, while Moo (1996, 465) remains the champion of the pre-Christian position. On the agonizing cry of verse 24 Moo writes:

Certainly the Christian who is sensitive to his or her failure to meet God’s demands experiences a sense of frustration and misery at that failure (cf. 8: 23); but Paul’s language here is stronger than would be appropriate for that sense of failure.

Moo was responding in part to Cranfield’s (1985, 158) strong statement to the effect that

the more the Christian is set free from legalistic ways of thinking about God’s law and so sees more clearly the full splendor of the

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<sup>230</sup>Cf. ti, ga.r evimi❖; talai, pwrion avqrwpa, rion, and ta, laj evgw, (Epictetus LCL, 1: 26, 32); and the more recent statement from Rahner (cited in Moltmann 2006, 192): ‘Ich bin von vornherein in diese Grässlichkeit [‘wretchedness’?] hineinzementiert’, in parallel with 7: 14 and 7: 24.

perfection towards which he is being summoned, the more conscious he becomes of his own continuing sinfulness, his stubborn all-pervasive egotism.

But ‘What interest could Paul possibly have in telling us at this point in the argument how tough he finds life as a *Christian*?’ (Campbell 2004, 206).

As the pre-/Christian debate rages on, what is virtually certain is that Paul includes himself in the crucial concluding verses of the chapter (Robinson 1979, 91). Thus *talai, pwroj evgw. a;nqrwpoj* (I am a wretched person!/*Miser ego homo* [Augustine 2002, 132]) is the apostle’s cry of frustration, even if it is at the same time the cry of everyman. The phrase is emphatic both in its structure and semantic expression, and is painfully descriptive of the human condition of suffering and weakness in the extreme, in a culture at that where ‘infirmity and weakness . . . are inconsistent with a virtuous character’ (Philo *Viture* 1: 167). The following interrogative clause (*ti, j me r`u, setai evk tou/ sw, matoj tou/ qana, tou tou, tou*È/Who shall deliver me from this body of death?) is equally emphatic; it complements the idea in the first part of the verse.

But what is this ‘body of death’<sup>231</sup> from which Paul earnestly desires freedom? And what is the nature of this freedom? Although answering these questions does not seem as difficult as those surrounding the identity of the ‘I’ in the chapter, the difficulty must not be underestimated. One response to

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<sup>231</sup> Or ‘body of this death. . . . It was . . . only after his conversion that Paul was able to discern his body as a body of death, imposing death on others and doomed to a divine sentence of death as punishment for murder’ (Jewett 1997, 106). For the textual issues surrounding the phrase, see Swanson (2001, 108).

these questions comes from Phillips (1969, 119-120) who posits that Paul was possibly drawing an analogy based on a first-century custom. He writes:

Certain types of criminals were executed by the Romans with special brutality. Sometimes if a man had committed a murder, he was bound hand to hand, face to face with the corpse of his victim and then thrown out into the heat of the Mediterranean sun. As the corpse decayed, it ate death into the living man and became to him, in the strictest literal sense, “a body of death.”

To Phillips the situation in verse 24 is that of the carnal Christian ‘bound to the old nature and truly a wretched man.’ While this perspective on the ‘carnal’ man finds plausibility in some circles, the custom on which the analogy is based is unattested during Paul’s time.<sup>232</sup>

What the apostle is affirming by his use of ‘body of death’<sup>233</sup> seems much broader than the frustrated experience of the ‘carnal Christian’.

The phrase is best thought of as a description of humanity in its enslavement to sin and its inevitable judgment of death. This, no doubt, includes the Christian at any stage of the journey (Gundry 1976, 36, 40).

And it is from this enslavement (and consequent ‘entombment’) that Paul laments<sup>234</sup> to gain deliverance. In regard to the nature of the freedom, Paul’s

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<sup>232</sup>Bruce (1985, 147), however, writes of ‘Virgil’s account of the Etruscan king . . . who tormented his living captives by tying them to decomposing corpses’. Cf. the 1250 BC statements of equal abhorrence: ‘What I doubly detest, I will not eat . . . I will not consume excrement, I will not approach it . . . I will not tread on it with my sandals’ (Faulker 1998, plate 24).

<sup>233</sup>John Wycliffe (1850) has ‘bodi of this synne,’ which appears to be influenced by Rom 6: 6, where he has the identical phrase with the exception of the demonstrative. This does not appear to be the reading of the Vulgate, from which Wycliffe and/or his followers translated.

answer is explained both in chapters 6 (1-14) and 8 (1-14) in particular. At this point (v. 25a) he joyfully gives thanks to God ‘through Jesus Christ our Lord’ for the prospect of full deliverance. It could hardly have come any other way. In other words, one is not surprised at the mention of the Lord Jesus Christ in close connection with the concept of liberation. So far in the epistle (and at various points) the reader is informed and reminded of the salvific significance of Jesus’ coming. Passages like 1:1-17; 3:21-25; 5:1; 6:23, readily come to mind. But the thanksgiving<sup>235</sup> (ca, rij; BAGD, 878) is not directed to Jesus but through him, as is customary (cf. 1 Cor 15:57; 2 Cor 1:20; 3:4; Rom 5:11; 16:27). Dunn (1988, 397) suggests that the preposition in *dia. VIhsou/ Cristou/ tou/ kuri,ou h`mw/n* (through our Lord Jesus Christ) may have a double thrust in underlining Jesus’ mediatorial role in prayer, as well as his agency in the enterprise of divine liberation.

Some seem to understand the desired deliverance expressed in verse 24 to be entirely futuristic. It is surprising that Dunn (1988, 397) in particular has taken this position in light of his clear understanding of chapters 6, 7 and 8 as being Paul’s centerpiece of the ‘already but not yet’ eschatological scheme. That is why, as Schriener (1998, 391) remarks, ‘it would be a mistake to conclude’ that since the apostle contemplates a future deliverance that deliverance is exclusively and entirely futuristic. Why? Because the ‘genius of

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<sup>234</sup>This lament is ‘a prayer in the form of a question,’ according to O’ Brien (1977, 217).

<sup>235</sup>ca, rij de. tw/ | gew/ | (v. 25a) is ‘the reading that seems best to account for the rise of the others’ (Metzger 1994, 445).

Paul's eschatology is that the future has invaded the present'. Equally mistaken, perhaps, is Denney's (1912, 2: 643) perspective: 'The exclamation of thanksgiving shows that the longed-for deliverance has actually been achieved.' Denney's assumption is that verses 14-25 are reminiscent of Paul's unregenerate days and verse 25a his regenerate cry.<sup>236</sup>

The cry itself may be an echo of and 'response' to the words of deliverance found in Exodus 3: 6-8 (LXX; so Edwards 1992, 194):<sup>237</sup>

And he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; and Moses turned away his face, for he was afraid to gaze at God. And the Lord said to Moses, I have surely seen the affliction of my people that is in Egypt, and I have heard their cry *caused* by their task-masters; for I know their affliction. And I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them out of that land, and to bring them into a good and wide land, into a land flowing with milk and honey, into the place of the Chananites, and the Chettites, and Amorites, and Pherezites, and Gergesites, and Evites, and Jebusites (Brenton 1851).

<sup>236</sup> 'As Tennyson, in *Morte d'Arthur*, cried, "O for a new man to arise within me and subdue the man that I am"' (Johnson 1974, 115). Cf. the mild evgw. o[loj diaponou/mai ☎ 'I am quite upset'; Moulton and Milligan 1930, 153).

<sup>237</sup> kai. ei=pen auvtw/| evgw, eivmi o` qeo.j tou/patro,j sou qeo.j Abraam kai. qeo.j Isaak kai. qeo.j Iakwb avpe,streyen de. Mwush/j to. pro,swpon auvtou/euvlabei/to ga.r katemble,yai evnw,pion tou/ qeou/ei=pen de. ku,rioj pro.j Mwush/n ivdw.n ei=don th.n ka,kwsin tou/ laou/ mou tou/ evn Aivgu,ptw| kai. th/j kraugh/j auvtw/n avkh,koa avpo. tw/n evrgodiwktw/n oi=da ga.r th.n ovdu,nhn auvtw/n kai. kate,bhn evxele,sqai auvtou.j evk ceiro.j Aivgupti,wn kai. evxagagei/n auvtou.j evk th/j gh/j evkei,nhj kai. eivsagagei/n auvtou.j eivj gh/n avgaqh.n kai. pollh,n eivj gh/n r`e,ousan ga,la kai. me,li eivj to.n to,pon tw/n Cananai,wn kai. Cettai,wn kai. Amorraai,wn kai. Ferezai,wn kai. Gergesai,wn kai. Euai,wn kai. Iebousai,wn.

More of the nature of the deliverance is delineated in 8:1-3 (a part of Paul's conclusion); but for the time being we have to contend with Paul's summary to 7:14-24 in v. 25b. It is in this summary that we encounter Paul's most emphatic 'I' locution:  $\alpha; \rho\alpha \text{ ou}=\text{n} \text{ αυ} \tau\omicron. \text{j} \text{ ε} \nu \gamma \omega. \text{ tw} / | \text{ me. n} \text{ noi} >$   $\delta\omicron\upsilon\lambda\epsilon\upsilon, \text{w} \text{ no}, \text{mw} | \text{ qeou} / \text{ th} / | \text{ de. sarki. no}, \text{mw} |$   $\alpha` \text{ marti}, \text{ aj}$  (Therefore, then, I myself serve the law of God mentally, but with the flesh the law of sin)<sup>238</sup> Moo (1996, 467) appears to find this conclusion quite troubling, since he unnecessarily restricts the referent of  $\epsilon \nu \gamma \omega$  to the writer's pre-conversion experience. For him the dividedness in verse 25b and in previous verses can only characterize the wo/man that has not yet come into contact with the liberating Christ. But as we have indicated above, such a conclusion is reductionistic, especially in light of Paul's rhetorical skill (Longenecker 2005, 88-93), soteriology, and eschatology.<sup>238</sup>

That  $\alpha \upsilon \tau\omicron. \text{j} \text{ ε} \nu \gamma \omega$ , (I myself) is emphatic can hardly be doubted. But how do we translate it? For some reason *Die Gute Nachricht Die Bibel* does not translate this phrase at all. Its English counterpart (GNB) renders the phrase 'on my own'.  $\alpha \upsilon \tau\omicron. \text{j}$  is the most frequently employed pronoun in the NT (Wallace 348-349). Its force is normally intensive, particularly when it occupies the predicate position. There is simply no hint by recent grammarians (e.g., Porter 1992, 120) that the translation 'by myself', or the like, is any improvement over the more traditional 'I myself' ('Left to myself' is REB).

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<sup>238</sup> *Mutatis Mutandis* 'The truth is that we are not yet free; we have merely achieved the freedom to be free' (Mandela 1995, 624).

The construction  $\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\ .\ \eta\ \epsilon\upsilon\gamma\omega$ , occurs five times in the NT and they are all accounted for by Paul. Three of those occurrences are in Romans (Baaij 1993, 456 n. 101), with the others in a previous epistle (Denney 1912, 2: 644). Interestingly, it is rendered ‘I myself’ in that epistle (2 Cor 10:1; 12:13) by the NRSV, as well as in Rom 9:3 and 15:14. But in 7:25 the NRSV (not following its predecessor by translating ‘I of myself’) opted not to translate  $\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\ .\ \eta$ .

The RSV’s rendering is consistent with other uses and is not necessarily out of line with the passage. In fact it seems to fit quite well, both in the wider context and in the contrastive and antithetical construction which forms the summary of verse 25b ( $\mu\epsilon\ ,\ \eta\ \dots\ \delta\epsilon\ \diamond$ ). Taken this way the writer may be saying ‘I of myself, i.e., without divine enabling, attempt to serve the divine (messianic) law, but this being the case, I end up serving the law of sin.’ This might be reading too much into the translation. But is such a paraphrase consistent with Paul’s Greek? Grammatically it does appear to stand (cf. Blass *et al.*, 1961, 67). And culturally, there are at least two interesting parallels that place Paul’s summary statement in context. The first is from a Jewish perspective:

Man, while he lives, is the slave of two masters: the slave of his Creator and the slave of his inclination. When he does the will of his Creator he angers his inclination, and when he does the will of his inclination, he angers his Creator. When he dies, he is freed, a slave free from his master [cf. Rom 6: 6, 7] (cited in Davies and Allison 1988, 1:642).

The other, from a more Hellenistic provenance (Seneca), is cited by Witherington (2004, 200): ‘It is an error to think that slavery penetrates to the



whole person. The better part is excluded: the body is subject to and at the disposition of its master; the mind, however, is its own master.<sup>239</sup>

However, the intended meaning of Romans 25b cannot be derived just from close parallels and the grammar of its terse statements. One has to bear in mind the entire semantic contribution of 7:14-24. And here one's ignorance appears to come full circle. But there is no need to despair at this point, for much has been learnt along the way.

For example, the emphatic phrase we just examined (αὐτοῦ . ἵ ἐγὼ ❖) plus the present verbs of verse 25b hardly allow one room to exclude the writer from the 'experience' described in verses 14-24, though it has to be conceded that the pericope may have a wider application as well.

Another lesson coming out of the passage is the thought that the writer may not have intended the strictures with which we have been working (is the 'I' biographical? Christian? general? fictive?). In fact it does appear that we have been ignoring a crucial element in the discourse: the writer is employing the marked personal pronoun (ἐγὼ, ) as part of his 'weakness language genre' (contra Jewett 1997, 2007). This genre, if we may call it that, is not limited to the Pauline corpus but it is quite prominent there.

In the Gospels, for example, the image of weakness is used to describe 'the general human condition' (cf., Matt 26:41b; Mark 14:38b). The 'weak' are also seen to be the special objects of divine concern and care as seen for

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<sup>239</sup>Cf. also Epictetus' 'For where one say "I" [ ἐγὼ, ] and "mine," to that side must the creature perforce incline . . . I am [εἰμι ἐγὼ, ] where my moral purpose is.' (LCL 1: 389).

instance in the Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55) and Zechariah's prophecy (Luke 1:68-79). Also we see:

Throng of the weak gather around Jesus. . . . The blind, the deaf, the sick, the leprosy, the demon possessed, all present us with concrete images of weakness. And although the Beatitudes do not mention the weak per se, the poor in spirit, the mourners, the meek and the persecuted all share in a weakness that qualifies them for the blessing of the Kingdom of God (Ryken 1998, 933-934).<sup>240</sup>

In the Pauline literature the image sometimes reflects the crippling effect of sin even on the Christian community (1 Cor 11:30; cf. 2 Tim. 3:6) and in a bold literary move Paul attributes 'weakness' even to God (1 Cor 1:25). But 'what the world regards as weakness is for Paul a *subversive symbol* of divine power, an encrypted image of God's triumph,' (Ryken 1998, 934. Cf. Socrates' 'I am in infinite poverty for the service of God'; cited in Davies and Allison 1988, 1:644). All this is against a Graeco-Roman world in which weakness is invariably associated with shame instead of triumph.

In some of Paul's letters the theme of weakness is also evident.<sup>241</sup> For example, in the first three verses of 1 Corinthians 13, Paul's 'I', though on the surface appears 'powerful'

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<sup>240</sup>The article goes on to say that what the 'Gospels embedded in narrative Paul formulates in life and letters. Perhaps no biblical writer uses the imagery of weakness more effectively than Paul.' He felt 'happy and secure because of the complete adequacy of God's grace in Christ to meet and make good his own inadequacy' (Xavier 1983, 294).

<sup>241</sup> And, of course, Paul glories in his own 'weakness' because, says he: ο[ταν γα.ρ αvsqenw/( to,te dunato,j eivmi (2 Cor 12:10). There was indeed some method to his madness, for even from the standpoint of psychology it may be said that 'the basis of educatability lies in the striving of the child to compensate for his weakness. A thousand talents and capabilities arise from the stimulus of inadequacy' (Adler 1927, 35).

(lalw/ e;xw eivdw/ fwmi,sw paradwII), is in actuality impotent by virtue of the fact that it fails to embrace love, ‘the power of the new age’ breaking into the present-- ‘the only vital force which has a future’ (Thiselton 2000, 1035).

The same thing can be said of Philippians 3:4 where Paul admits that what he previously thought was of inestimable value (his Jewish pedigree, etc) turned out to be somewhat of the same piece as ‘the weak and beggarly elements’ of human experience. For example, (following Silva 2005, 6) Philippians 3:7-8 may be schematized to make the point as follows:

<u>The Old Life</u>	<u>The New Life</u>
[evgw,] tau/ta, h[ghmai zhmi,an Cristo.n	dia. to.n
[evgw,] h`gou/mai pa,nta zhmi,an ei=nai to. u`pere,con th/j  Cristou/	dia.  gnw,sewj
[evgw,] evzhmiw,qhn ta. pa,nta o]n [i.e.,Cristo.n]	diV
[evgw,] h`gou/mai sku,bala Cristo.n kerdh,sw	i[na
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<i>These I have counted loss</i>	<i>for Christ</i>
<i>I also count all things loss</i>	<i>for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ</i>
<i>I have suffered the loss of all things</i>	<i>for whom</i>
<i>I count them as rubbish</i>	<i>that I may gain Christ</i>

‘If we focus on the items under the left column, we notice a significant progression of thought; clearly, Paul expresses with increasing intensity his sense of dissatisfaction with those things that had previously been most important to him’ (Silva 2005, 156). And the unadorned ‘I’ statements (i.e., without [εἰς τὴν ἑαυτοῦ]), each with overtones of weakness, serve to strengthen the personal testimony.

Therefore, we see that Paul’s penchant for using ‘weakness’ language is by no means limited to the use of ἀσθενεῖα, ὑμεινία and its cognates.<sup>242</sup> Whenever such language appears, it is part and parcel of a deliberate literary strategy, not just in polemical or apologetical contexts, such as Philippians 3 and 2 Cor 11-13, but in paraenetic ones as well.

Henceforth, when we come to the book of Romans we are not surprised to find the employment of weakness language strategically located in crucial sections of the epistle. For instance, Rom 5:6 describes what he and the recipients of his letter were spiritually before Christ died in order to empower them through the gospel. Rom 6:19 justifies his use of slavery language in regard to the Christian life by employing the phrase ‘the weakness of the flesh’, which in turn is expounded in the latter part of chapter 7 in relation to the law and with reference to the self (the ‘I’).

### C. Summary

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<sup>242</sup> ‘The root . . . appears in the NT 83 times and in the Pauline epistles 44 times or 53% of the total. . . . The motif is most extensively developed in Romans, 1 Corinthians, and 2 Corinthians’ (Black 1983, 15). For the concept in Revelation, see Blount (2004).

The foregoing pages have first sought to locate the epistle of Romans within the wider frame of reference of the Hebrew Bible, noting and interacting with the proposals of various New Testament scholars in this regard. It has been plausibly suggested that there is a narrative substructure that underlies chapters 1-8 and that this substructure betrays some connection to certain pentateuchal patterns.

In this way of reading the letter some have seen echoes of the prototypical Adam and Eve and even their first son, Cain. Other scholars are more convinced that select episodes from the books of Exodus and Psalms provide the best backdrop for a proper understanding of the early chapters of Romans.

In our exegesis of chapter 7 some of these intertextual concerns were factored in as we examined the major theories that are proffered relative to the identification of the ubiquitous 'I'. All of the theories have been found wanting, though for the time being we lean toward seeing this emphatic first person pronoun as some kind of composite expression. What appears certain is that the writer is at pains to defend the very law that forms the backbone of the corpus from which he has drawn in composing what is arguably his most mature literary output. We also noticed that in chapter 7 (as well as parts of Chap. 8), Paul highlights his own weakness even as he writes in defense of the law. After affirming the fact that believers are dead to the law (vv. 1-6), and after launching a spirited defense in its behalf (vv. 7-11), Paul then employs a form of weakness language to further exculpate the law by pointing out its inability to effect change in the 'I' (vv.14-17), enable the 'I' to do good (vv.

18-20),<sup>243</sup> and to emancipate the ‘I’ (vv. 21-24). Paul at one time may have agreed with the sentiments expressed in Ben Zoma’s (Danby 1933, 453) midrash on Proverbs 16:32 (‘Who is mighty? He that subdues his [evil] nature.’); but at the time of writing 7: 14-24, his utter weakness was the route to divine power (Rom 8). That is why the pericope at the same time illustrates the human condition (Caragounis 2004, 562, n. 279), with reference to his soteriological scheme outlined in the previous chapters.

## CHAPTER SIX

### PRONOMINAL ‘I’ IN ROMANS CHAPTER 15

#### A. Overview

We now examine chapter 15 in light of the literary framework of the letter for its possible contribution to our investigation. The overall structure of Romans may be set out as follows:

- A 1-5 Gospel for Sinners: Liberation from Sins’ Penalty  
(International)
- B 6-8 Gospel for Saints: Liberation from Sin’s Power/Presence  
(Doctrinal)

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<sup>243</sup> ‘The pursuit of the good is accompanied with tension, conflict, anxiety, and doubt’ (Kappen 1977, 139), with the result that ‘we live a life of victory, but it is qualified victory. We are not yet what we shall be. . . . We live in the tension between the “already” and the “not yet”. We are genuinely new persons but not yet totally new’ (Hoekema 1987, 190).

A´ 9-11 Gospel for Sinners: Liberation from Sins' Penalty  
(National)

B´ 12-16 Gospel for Saints: Liberation from Sin's Power  
(Practical)<sup>244</sup>

Both chapters 7 and 15 fall under the 'B' scheme, and in both chapters 7:9-24 and 15: 14-33 Paul uses a sustained 'I' throughout to develop his argument.

Both pericopae end with a petition/praise section. Also, the occurrence of the construction *αὐτοῦ ἐγὼ*, in 7:25 (B) and 15:14 (B´) appears more than coincidental. Myers (1993, 30 n.1) observes as well that in chapters 1-4 (our A section) the third person is primarily employed, but in 6-8 (B above) the first and second persons predominate.

Another observation relevant to our investigation has to do with the initial chapter of the letter as it pertains to chapters 7 and 15. Here a number of scholars have identified 1:16 as programmatically significant to the rest of the epistle (e.g., Haacker 2003, 27, 28; Jewett 2007, 135).<sup>245</sup> The verse has as its main focus the gospel of God, 'the single theme in Romans' (Jewett 2007,

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<sup>244</sup> Some close patterns on the micro-level to the one we are proposing appear in Ps. 27:14; Prov. 118:15-16 (ABA); Prov. 17:25; Is. 30:31; Amos 1:3; Nahum 3:17; Ps. 86:12; Cant.1:11—all ABA´ (Watson 1986, 204; cf. B. Longenecker 2005). A similar (macro) pattern is to be found in 1Cor (Palmer 1989, 32-33), which may be a prototype of Romans in terms of structure. For cautions on neat summaries like the above, see Caird (1994, 119ff) and especially McGrath (1998, 376-378).

<sup>245</sup> Black (1973, 29), for example, finds the great thesis of the book (Justification) in 1: 16-17. See also Fitzmyer (1993, 253ff), Harrisville (1980, 24), Johnson (2001, 26-30), Grieb (2002, 9-10), Jewett (2007, 92-93), Witherington (2004, 47-51), and Hunter (1990, 16-17), who sees three significant I-statements in verses 14, 15, and 16 which delineate, respectively, the writers earnestness, 'readiness' and 'boldness.'

135), about which the writer has reason to be proud (Witherington 2004, 50). The following verse states that only within the gospel is a quality of divine righteousness available. The gospel is then expounded in relation to Gentiles (chap. 1) and Jews (chap. 2), with reference to justification (1-5) and its implications in terms of sanctification and service (6-15).

We further observe that Paul's lexical choice of the verb *evpaiscu, nomai* (ashamed) is strongly suggestive of the weakness language he is going to develop later in relation to himself paradigmatically, and in reference to the cross, both soteriologically (chapter 7) and missiologically (chapter 15). It was to the dominant Graeco-Roman culture that the cross (and the evangel emanating from it) was considered 'foolishness'—something of which to be ashamed. If *evpaiscu, nomai* is a stand in for the affirmative 'I confess' as Harrisville (1980, 24) suggests, 'I am not ashamed' may hint at a sub-theme that will later on (in a more elaborate fashion) provide a suitable backdrop for the power inherent in the evangel. It might not be too much, then, to seek to establish the following nexus between the two chapters elected for study: chapter 7 (The 'I' struggles: language of shame and weakness, followed by language of victory-7:25-8:1-4); chapter 15 (The 'I' serves: the language of shame is abandoned for language of boldness and dependence, within the framework of the *Dei voluntas*-15:14).

If our observation is correct, then the link between the two 'I' chapters becomes clearer and the writer's gospel resume' can now be read in that light. Accordingly, the language of struggle in chapter 7 and service in chapter 15 is



skillfully employed to illustrate the transforming power of the gospel explicated in the letter.<sup>246</sup> In outlining the gospel in such a way the apostle hopes to solicit the aid of the Christians at Rome in order to help fulfill the divine mandate to evangelize Gentile audiences.<sup>247</sup>

In developing his thesis that Paul's apostolic self-awareness controls the book's soteriological focus, Chae (1997) proposes the following schema:

- 1:1-7 Personal Prospect of the approach to Romans  
= 15:14-21 Personal retrospect of the approach to Romans  
Theme: Paul's apostleship to the Gentiles in harmony with OT
- 1:8-15 Earlier plans to visit Rome  
= 15: 22-33 Future plan to visit Rome  
Theme: A strong desire for the apostolic visit
- 1:16-17 Thematic introduction to the main body of Romans  
= 15: 7-13 Thematic conclusion of the main body of Romans  
Theme: The inclusion of the Gentiles in God's salvation

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<sup>246</sup> There may be a faint echo here of the commissioning of the prophet Isaiah. First there is a display of weakness in response to a theophany (Isa 6:5 reads: kai. ei=pa w= ta, laj evqw, o[ti katane, nugmai o[ti a;nqrwpoj w'n kai. avka, qarta cei, lh e;cwn evn me, sw| laou/ avka, qarta cei, lh e;contoj evqw. oivkw/ kai. to.n basile, a ku, rion sabawq ei=don toi/j ovfgalmoi/j mou); and then a response to serve (v. 8: ei=pa ivdou, eivmi evqw, avpo, steilo, n me). Emphases mine.

<sup>247</sup> For 'It is today widely acknowledged that Paul was the first Christian theologian precisely because he was the first Christian missionary' (Bosch 1991, 124).

Chae's scheme is well in keeping with Bosch's<sup>248</sup> observation concerning the general missionary character of the Pauline corpus. It also points up one of the few flaws of the otherwise well written and cogently argued rereading of Romans by Stowers (1994), that is, the failure to give chapter 15 an integrative treatment. What may be added to Chae's proposal is that the apostolic self-awareness that he sees so evident throughout the letter includes emphatic expressions of inadequacy observed in earlier epistles and skillfully interwoven in the fabric of chapter 7. Seen in this way the I-statements of these pivotal chapters come together to form an integral part of the overall literary strategy of the letter.

Therefore, while it is conceded that the main body of Paul's discourse in this letter comes to an end at 15:1-13 with its two benedictions in verses 5 and 13, significant conceptual links with the central section (cf. 1:5 and 12:3 and the connection between 11:13-14, 25 and 15:27: 27-28 [Dunn 1988, 2:856]) may force upon us an 'anti-anticlimactic' rereading of the chapter (Johnson 2001, 223), particularly verses 14-32. We know, for instance, that Paul's 'finally' must not be read like a twenty-first century climatic marker, but like a summarizing device before going on to another matter (cf. Phil 3:1).

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<sup>248</sup> Chae seems unaware of Bosch's (1991) influential work. Both Stowers and Chae place emphasis on the Gentiles in Rome. Stowers's argument is that Paul's missionary strategy did not involve Jewish priority. The burden of Romans, according to Chae, is to demonstrate the equality of both Jews and Gentiles in the Messianic community.

More significantly, what he appears to be doing in 15:14-33 is providing a needed complement to important matters raised in the first chapter. These matters, though hinted at first, could not be fully discussed until they are properly grounded in the gospel outlined in the previous chapters. ‘The implication is clear that [chapters 1-14 were] intended in part at least to forward and facilitate’ (Dunn 1988, 856) the plans laid out in 15; 14ff., ‘which takes on a distinctly personal character’ (Ironsides 1928, 168).

#### B. Romans 15 Analysed (14-33)

The first I-statement of this pericope follows closely on the heels of the writer’s final attempt to urge the Roman Christians to maintain a harmonious relationship with one another as the people of God. But prior to writing the letter, Paul had never been to the capital as a Christian emissary; so on what basis and on whose authority does he write such a letter? It is possibly a question like this that prompted the thought expressed in verse 14:

Pe, peismai de, ( avdelfoi, mou( kai. auvtο. j evgw.  
 peri. u`mw/n o[ti kai. auvtοi. mestoi, evste  
 avgaqwsu, nhj( peplhrwme, noi pa, shj th/j gnw, sewj(  
 duna, menoi kai. avllh, louj nouqetei/n/Now I myself am  
 confident concerning you, my brethren, that you also are full of goodness,  
 filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another

In these words we encounter an occurrence of evgw, which is part and parcel of a diplomatic construction (Grieb 2002, 136). Like in 7:25, evgw, is conjoined to auvtο, j adding to its inherent emphatic presence. But unlike chapter 7 on a whole, its use in this pericope is along much more positive lines.

Whereas in chapter 7, *evgw*, is employed in such a way as to leave the writer (=Adam/Cain/Israel/humanity? [Dunn 1998, 99]) in an embarrassing position, 15:11 ‘redeems’ his usage in such a contrasting and exaggerated manner that charges of insincerity and flattery may be leveled. Cranfield (1979, 752; Cf. Dodd 1932, 226) prefers to posit that the apostle is expressing courtesy when he writes of the Romans being characterized by ‘goodness,’ etc.<sup>249</sup> Cranfield may very well be right, for as Edmondson (1913, 15) observes, ‘Such declaration implies a conviction based upon trustworthy evidence, otherwise his readers would be the first to perceive that here was only high flown language covering and empty compliment.’

The emphatic *kai . auvto . j evgw*, (and I myself) is matched by *kai . auvtoi*, (and [you] yourselves) the construction that directly introduces Paul’s commendation (Dunn 1988 2: 857). Black (1973, 202) speculates that the writer’s personal emphasis suggests that he did not expect the Roman church to believe ‘he could have such  $\infty$  high regard for the virtues’ predicated of them. Black’s speculation appears to move on firmer ground when he asserts further that there is ‘no doubt [Paul’s] hearers believed he had been influenced against them.’ Of course, there is no shred of evidence of this. The reason for Paul’s evidence lies elsewhere.

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<sup>249</sup>Bruce (1985, 246; cf. Thomas 2006) draws a comparison between the Roman believers at this point and that which is observed of the recipients of the ‘letter’ to the Hebrews (5:12). Osborne (2007, 88) believes Hebrews was sent to Rome.


First, assuming the authenticity of 16:1ff,<sup>250</sup> Paul's friends and acquaintances may have informed him of the steady growth of the Christians at Rome. The informants are possibly among those mentioned in 16:3-15, whom the writer had met previously and who, at the time of writing, were now back in the capital. It is also conceivable that the hyperbolic language of verse 14 may very well belong originally to those informants, whom Paul felt free to cite either in modified form or verbatim. If this be the case, all charges of insincerity, and the like, will prove baseless. Whatever the true situation behind Paul's expression at this point, there can be little doubt Paul believed (πε, παῖσμαί) <sup>☞</sup> in his own characterization of the addressees, if for no other reason than that the gospel they had come to embrace and promulgate had the kind of transforming power to produce the very virtues he highlights in verse 14 (Schreiner 1998, 765). Moreover, it is becoming increasingly

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<sup>250</sup>Gamble (1977, 127), with arguments based on a careful study of stylistic features and the overall structure of the letter, has drawn the following conclusion: 'We have shown that all the elements in ch. 16 are typically concluding elements, that without this chapter the fifteen-chapter text lacks an epistolary conclusion, and that unusual aspects of some elements in ch. 16 find cogent explanation only on the assumption of its Romans address. Thus the unity of the sixteen chapter-text and its Roman address are established.' For an updated textual report and a similar assessment to Gamble's, see Metzger (1994, 475-77), Witherington (2004, 375-377), and especially Jewett (2007, 4-18).

<sup>☞</sup>Here, according to Schreiner (1998, 765), Paul is not only 'emphatic' (αὐτο.ἰ ἐνγῶ,) but 'affectionate' (ἀνδελφοί, μου) as well.

recognized that this type of expression is expected of conventional confidence ‘formulae’ during that era (Rapa 2001, 221).<sup>252</sup>

Olson (1985, 585) views the entire pericope under consideration (15: 14ff) as highlighting apostolic self-confidence (possibly extending to chapter 16 as well). According to his reading of the passage, verses 14-16 constitute an apology for writing ‘very boldly.’ Beginning with verse 17 Paul turns from his written ministry to that which he does in person. The ‘I will be bold’ of verse 18 echoes the ‘very bold’ of verse 15; ‘to speak’ and ‘words and deeds’ echo ‘wrote.’ The confidence of verse 17 concerns all that Paul does *evn Cristw/| VIhsou/ ta. pro.j to.n qeo,n/in Christ Jesus in the things which pertain to God* 

For O’ Brien (1993, 47), 15:14-21 offers a synopsis of Paul’s missionary career from its very inception up to the time of writing. And, as we shall see later, this overview of his personal missionary engagement is merely a progress report, since he expects the addressees to become a part of his drive to take the gospel west of the capital. Seen in this light we can begin to understand the integral character of verses 14-21 in relation to that which precedes. These verses, in the language of O’ Brien (1993, 47), are ‘the

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<sup>252</sup> Maybe Rapa’s ‘confidence formula’ can be seen as a subset of Schoeni’s ‘hyperbolic sublime.’ Schoeni (2001, 187, 189) recognizes intra-textual clues between chaps. 5-8 and 15, but sees no logical connection between the former and the latter sections. Of course, on one level he is correct, since Paul’s main argument closes before chapter 12. However, how can 12-15 be ‘perfectly expendable,’ since most of Paul’s genuine letters close with a paraentic? For a thought-provoking essay on how the letter might have been heard, ‘listen’ to P. J. J. Botha (1992, 409-428; cf. Caragounis 2004, 397-474).

theological corollary of [Paul's] Gospel exposition which has been featured in the body of Romans.'

What role, then, does the Pauline 'I' play in this context, and how does it differ from what we have examined elsewhere? Paul, by way of a triple emphasis<sup>253</sup> with *evgw*, being an important part of his rhetoric,<sup>254</sup> personally and sincerely commends the Roman congregation. The commendation, according to Olson (1985, 585), appears to draw upon ancient diplomatic use of the confidence formula in which a writer makes some sort of an apology to help 'to soften the tone of what is written, or to avoid the appearance of temerity.'

Verse 15 continues Paul's diplomatic piece with language that betrays his self-consciousness in writing rather daringly on certain topics (Louw and Nida 1989, 2: 307). How has he written daringly or boldly? Sanday and Headlam (1902), perhaps too neatly, see the 'boldness' expressed not so much in sentiment but in manner, and the prepositional phrase *avpo*. *me, rouj* possibly referring to 6:12ff; 8:9; 11:17ff; 12:3; 13:3ff; 14 and 15:1. Later commentators, however, have given up what may be called this piecemeal approach to understanding the phrase. Following Barth (1959, 175),

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<sup>253</sup>The presence of *avto, j*, as well as the position of the cluster of which it is part, are two emphatic features.

<sup>254</sup>Olson (1984, 282 n. 1) cites White (1972, 103-104) who sees the presence of *evgw* as one of the standard elements in a 'confidence formula.'

<sup>255</sup>'On some points' (NRSV), or as we have rendered the phrase above, 'certain topics.'


we conclude that what ‘we read in 15: 14-21<sup>256</sup> is written with reference to the whole epistle,’ while at the same time admitting that some portions are more ‘daring’ than others (e.g., 14:1-15:13), albeit by way of reminder.

The ‘I’ language of the previous verse is continued in verse 15, but in an unemphatic fashion. This is hardly surprising. In verse 14, Paul goes out of his way, so to speak, to lavish praise on his addressees. But in the next verse such emphasis is not expected in the writer’s apology. The net effect of this is that the unobtrusive ‘I’ in ἐγὼ helps to throw in sharp relief the ἐγὼ laden statement of verse 14 (*contra* Harrisville 1980, 238). If, along with Dunn (1988, 2:859), we take ἀπο. με, ῥοῦj ‘as a polite self-deprecatory reference,’ the contrast is even more impressive.

The second part of verse 15 (δια. τῆς χάριτος τῆς δοθείσης μοι ὑπο. τοῦ θεοῦ // *because of the grace given to me by God*) reveals a fundamental reason Paul wrote in general, and more specifically, why he wrote with ‘boldness’: it is by virtue of his special calling as an apostle (cf. Black 1973, 202). The verse also seems to reflect a purpose for writing with the telic phrase ὡς ἐπαναμνήσκων ὑμᾶς // *as reminding you* 

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<sup>256</sup>The many suggestions seeking to give full clarity to verse 15 testify to the truthfulness of Barth’s (1959, 175) admission to the effect that we are ignorant in regard to what Paul particularly had in mind.

REB translates the phrase with a telic clause; Moo (1996, 888) takes the particle ♦☺✂ as indicating manner. Strictly speaking this is correct; however, there seems to be an element of telic force present contextually (cf. Schreiner (1998, 766).



This is almost certainly litotes. Thus Manson (1962, 952) could write: '[Paul] has his own God-given status (cf. Gal 1:15), in virtue of which he makes bold to write them his little memorandum about essential Christianity (a deliberate understatement if ever there was one)'.

This 'God-given status,' that is, Paul's apostleship, has been thoroughly examined in the context of 15:14ff in recent times by Chae (1997, 18-37), who, in my judgment, has made a worthwhile contribution to the discussion concerning the purpose of the Roman correspondence. Chae traces the history of the debate concerning Paul's apostleship to F. C. Baur's (1876, 1:310-311) summary of the significance of determining a purpose for the epistle as a basis of proper interpretation—an area in which, according to Chae, there is much confusion. Chae himself proposes that the purpose of Paul's letter to the Romans is best understood in light of his apostolic self-awareness in reference to the Gentiles. Crucial to Chae's thesis is 15:14-21. This seems to accord well with the 'boldness' motif discussed above, as well as with verse 17 of the initial chapter (cf. 11:13; 15:15-16; Gal 1:15-16).

In fact, as Chae highlights, the purpose clauses in the pericope (e.g., v.16) should go a far way in helping to determine Paul's intention in writing. It is Chae's conclusion, then, that the clauses of 15:14ff inform us of Paul's stated purpose to address the predominantly Gentile congregation<sup>258</sup> out of his strong awareness of being the apostle to that particular grouping of humankind.

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<sup>258</sup>Stowers (1994) argues for an exclusively Gentile congregation.

Chae admits that the pericope on which he builds so much of his argument is late in the letter. But when it is realized that 1:1-17 is thematically linked to 15:14-21 (Chae 1997, 21; cf. Jewett 2007, 902), and that the intervening section (it may be safely assumed) was written with the same apostolic consciousness, it appears justifiable to support Chae's thesis.

It is difficult to draw another conclusion, if one's attention is mainly on 15:14-21. What other scholars (e.g., Haacker 2003, 32) are saying though is that the epistle on a whole seems to reveal more than one purpose. The one with which verses 15-16 are somehow bound up is Paul's messianic ministry to the Gentile world of his day—a ministry that is deeply reminiscent of the Levitical priesthood.<sup>259</sup> However, Jewett (2007, 906-907) urges instead a Hellenistic backdrop to the kind of language selected by Paul. The linguistic association is that of an ambassador. The lexical choice may very well betray the writer's *double entendre* resulting in the mixed audience of Gentiles and Jews being impressed with the rhetoric.

The personal reference (εἰς ἐμὴν ἰσχυρίαν) in verse 17 is more of a conventional type.<sup>260</sup> It is neither emphatic as in verse 14 nor circumlocutionary as in verse 16. In verse 17 Paul returns to the theme of confidence begun in verse 14. But

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<sup>259</sup>According to Harrisville (1980, 239), *leitourgo, j* (v. 16) is found only in this letter (cf. 13:6), and that *ἰεραουργου/ντα* is a NT hapax. The *εἰς ἐμὴν ἰσχυρίαν* phrase is circumlocution for 'I may be/become.' This is a stylistic variation of the pronominal feature we are examining (cf. Downs 2006).

<sup>260</sup>The verse harks back to the richly described ministry outlined in vv. 15 and 16, thus the inferential particle at the beginning.

unlike that verse, the expression of confidence is self directed, though properly qualified by ‘in Christ Jesus,’ et cetera. ‘Such expression of self confidence comes from Paul’s awareness of the ministry that he has carried out among the Gentiles so far’ (Fitzmyer 1993, 713). But has Fitzmyer (1993, 712) also pointed out, the apostle’s ‘pride and boast’ is ultimately grounded in the Messiah (and v.18 will confirm this), in contrast to that to which the Jew (whose boast is in Torah) referred in chapter 2:17, 23.

But what does Paul really mean when he declares in verse 18, οὐκ ἄρ  
 τολμήσω τι λαλεῖν ἢ ἔργα ποιῆσαι τοῦ Χριστοῦ διὰ  
 ἐμοῦ, εἰς ἵνα ἡ ὑπακοὴ τῶν ἔθνων  
 ἐργασθῇ. // *For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ has not accomplished through me, in word and deed, to make the Gentiles obedient?*

For Yagi (1987, 118-119), the verse is one more instance, like Galatians 2:19-20, that demonstrates the ‘double structure’ of the Pauline ‘I’. According to Yagi the co-crucifixion of Paul effected a change of ‘subject’, resulting in Christ becoming the apostle’s ultimate subject.

For Paul [then] the ultimate subject and the ego are both one and two at the same time . . . We can say *Christ acted as Paul* [his italics] because Christ can work in history only through those who are aware of the reality of Christ. In this way the ultimate subject<sup>261</sup> and the ego of Paul are one.

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<sup>261</sup>In a previous work he writes, ‘Christ is *das eigentliche Subjekt des Paul*’ 1 Cor 7: 10-12; 14: 37-38; 2 Cor 5:20; 13: 3 are cited as support.

As we shall see later, Yagi's understanding of the association of Christ and Paul in Romans 15:18 is quite close to Rastafarian theology, notwithstanding his later qualification of the 'paradoxical identity of the divine and human.'<sup>262</sup>

The 'I' of verse 18 governs the thought of verses 19 and 20 as well, all part and parcel of the apostle's careful explanation of his philosophy of missionary engagement and show-casing of the kind of success he had so far, which was the result of Christ working through him. As he was accustomed to do, Paul invokes scriptural support for what he has just outlined.<sup>263</sup> The text cited is from Isaiah 52:15b. O' Brien (1995, 46) expresses the thought that the citation of this particular text by Paul reveals that he 'believed . . . he was carrying on the work of the servant of Yahweh.'<sup>264</sup> If O' Brien is correct, then Paul's 'I' statement in these verses takes on a different complexion, though Paul, as O' Brien is careful to point out, is not identifying himself with the servant.<sup>265</sup>

#### Paul's Missionary Itinerary and the *Dei Voluntas*

In the closing verses of chapter 15, the apostle Paul shares his evangelistic plans with the Roman believers, after having delineated his missionary

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<sup>262</sup>Yagi writes from a Buddhist perspective.

<sup>263</sup>For example, Rom 1:17; 3: 4, 10-18; 4:7-8; 8:36; 9:9; 10:18-21; 11: 9; etc.

<sup>264</sup>Archer and Chirichigno (1983) correctly note that both the LXX and the NT render the Hebrew verbs as prophetic perfects, but fail to point out the *peri. aurtou/* (not explicit in the Hebrew) that Paul has exploited.

<sup>265</sup>Dunn (1988, 2: 869), however, comes close to making this identification: '[T]he passage cited . . . effectively ties together Paul's conviction of his call to fulfill the Servant's commission to the Gentiles.' So also Witherington (2004, 357).

achievements by the hand of the Lord. Associations with chapter one are patent in verses 22-29 in that ‘Paul elaborates the reasons for his impending visit to Rome that was announced in 1:11-13’ (Jewett 2007, 921). And in both sections Paul’s ‘I’ statements are prominently displayed and strategically connected to the divine will in its twofold expression.<sup>266</sup>

Here (according to Josephus) it appears that the apostle still held to the doctrine of the Pharisees, who

when they determine that all things are done by fate, they do not take away the freedom from men of acting as they think fit; since their notion is that it hath pleased God to make a temperament, whereby what he wills is done, but so that the will of men can act virtuously or viciously (Whiston, 1987, 477).<sup>267</sup>

Διο, of verse 22, then, divides Paul’s evangelistic report from his itinerary delineated in verses 23-32. The ‘I’ statement of verse 22 merely summarizes the report, while at the same time providing a rationale for the delayed visit to the capital.

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<sup>266</sup>It would appear that this ‘two-fold expression’ is a Jewish understanding extrapolated from Deut. 29: 29b (contra Lieber 2004, 1168), which alludes to ‘secret’ and shared aspects of the *Dei voluntas*; cf. R. Akiba’s (Danby 1933, 452), ‘Everything is foreseen [secret?], yet freedom of choice is given [shared?].’ Murray (1968, 223) calls the former ‘decretive’ and the latter ‘perceptive.’ For a slightly different perspective, see Caird (1994, 45, 47, 48).

<sup>267</sup>What Bultmann (1955, 281) calls ‘The old Jewish formula, which is indeed found elsewhere in the world, “what God wills”, “if God wills”, turns up again and again in Paul, even in the expressions *evn tw/ | qelh, mati qeou/*, *dia. qelh, matoj qeou/* (Rom 1.10; 15.32), thus “according to the will of God”, “if it is the will of God I will come to you” and the like. . . . Paul can make precisely the same pronouncement of *ku, rioj*, too, as is made of God. And so God and Christ can alternate in synonymous *parallelismus membrorum* (1 Cor 7.17)’.

Schreiner (1998, 774), however, has suggested that  $\epsilon\nu\nu\epsilon\kappa\omicron\pi\tau\omicron, \mu\eta\nu\eta$  is theologically pregnant. According to him, Paul was ‘hindered by God, since other work was appointed for him in the east.’ This is intriguing. One wonders, though, why would the writer elect to use a divine passive at this juncture that deliberately masks the reasons for his failure to visit Rome, while at the same time providing an explicit explanation for such failure in the preceding verses? As early as the first chapter, Paul had made his intention known to visit the Roman Christians (v.11), as well as his frequent attempts to do so. No reason was given why those attempts were unsuccessful.<sup>269</sup> Neither has Schreiner given justification for seeing a divine passive in verse 22.

But the possibility remains that he may be correct given the fact that a similar construction is found in chapter 1:13, and that in none of Paul’s other epistles is the impression ever given that he was in the habit of offering lame excuses for his own inaction. There is in fact evidence elsewhere where Paul was prevented by God himself from carrying out some evangelistic enterprise (Acts 16:6).

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$\mu\eta\nu\eta$  Schreiner translates this verb as, ‘I was *often* [my emphasis] hindered’, to bring out the (possibly) iterative force; cf. Vincent (1975, 3:175), and Burton (1976, 13).

<sup>269</sup> This has prompted speculations from some commentators. For example, Bruce (1985, 72) has proffered the suggestion that ‘the imperial edict of AD 49 expelling Jews from Rome’ may have been one such hindrance.

Additionally, one may further posit a kind of theological *inclusio* at 15:22 and 15:32, with both verses having links to the *Dei voluntas* that provides the backdrop for the intervening verses. In 15:17-22, the divine will is implicitly mentioned. In 15: 23-32 it is explicit. The former embraces the writer's missionary past, and the latter, his plan. This structure provides another piece of evidence of the careful crafting of the letter in its employment of a literary device to serve a theological end. Since the 'I' statements within the *inclusio* are best understood in that context, we will now examine the concept of the divine will within the framework of Paul's *Weltanschauung*, and we may appropriately begin with the following observation on the pericope:

[Paul] writes very personally (maintaining an 'I-You' directness throughout), affectionately ('my brothers', 15:14), and candidly. He opens his heart to them about the past, present and future ministry. . . . In these ways he gives us insight into the outworking of God's providence<sup>270</sup> in his life and work (Stott 1994, 377).

It would appear that Paul was ever conscious of this divine 'providence' in his ministry. Evidence of this may be gleaned from the book of Acts, but the main lines of evidence can be clearly observed in our primary sources: the epistles. For example, in Romans 1:10 Paul shares with his audience his earnest prayers to God to carry out his wish to pay them a visit. Such prayers, he indicates, were fully submitted τω/ | θεῷ, ματι τοῦ/ θεοῦ/ (God's secret will?). In the following chapter, Paul again uses θεοῦ, ἰθυμα

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<sup>270</sup>If providence is defined as the unfolding of the divine will, it is interesting to note that Stott dubs 15:14-16:27, 'The Providence of God in the Ministry of Paul.' (Cf. Calvin [1539], 348; Getz 2000, 105-109). On the complexity and intricacy of theology, missiology and history in Paul, see (Bosch 1991, 123-132).

(will), but this time in an absolute sense. What seems clear from the context is that the reference is to what we have called above God's 'shared' will (cf. Deut. 29: 29c), or the law (Rom 2:18).

The next explicit reference to the divine will come in 12:2 in connection with Paul's exhortation to the church to offer itself to God in a total act of worship and service. The description of this aspect of God's will as perfect (Psa 19:7), as well as the presence of *dokima, zein* (approve) in the text all seem to point in the direction of the *shared* purpose of God (cf. Moulton 1977, 137-140).<sup>271</sup> Murray (1968, 115) shares this conclusion: 'It is the will of God as it pertains to our responsible activity in progressive sanctification. The decretive [secret] will of God is not the norm according to which our life is to be patterned'.

Concerning 15:32, Murray (1968, 223) also opts for what he calls the 'decretive will', which is 'realized through providence (cf. Matt 18:14; John 13; Rom 1:10; Gal. 1:14; Eph. 1:5, 11; 1Pet. 3:17; 2 Pet. 1:211; Rev. 4:11)'. This belief in the divine will, both in its secret and shared dimensions, appears to have been widespread amongst Jews and Christians of Paul's day, as the foregoing citations testify. Other examples are as follows: 'Upon the whole, a man that will peruse this history, may principally learn from it, that all events succeed well, even to an incredible degree, and the reward of felicity is proposed by God; but then it is to those who follow his will, and do not venture to break his excellent laws' (Josephus *Ant.* 1:14; cf. Carson 1981, 110-

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<sup>271</sup>Of course, there are also clear allusions to the *Dei voluntas* in chapters 9-11, specifically to its inscrutable features.



111). ‘Will’ in this citation is almost certainly a reference to the revealed version, though not necessarily written.<sup>272</sup>

But the phenomenon is not limited to Judeo-Christian circles. For instance, after expressing gratitude to Serapis for rescuing him at sea

(*euvcaristw/| tw|/ Serapi,di o[ti mou kinueu,santoj eivj qa,lassan e;swse e;qewj*), Apion, a Roman soldier, urges his father to respond to him and adds these words: *evlpi,zw tacu.*

*Proko,psai tw/n qew/n qelo,vntwn;* Deissmann 1910, 168).<sup>273</sup>

What is not readily evident from a text like this is the bifurcation of the divine will into secret (decretive) and shared (prescriptive) dimensions.





This, however, cannot be said of the following excerpt:

*Tw/n o;ntwn ta. me.n evf’ hvmi/n e;qeto o` Qeoj ta. d’ ouvkv evf’ hvmi/n* (Epictetus 1928, 2: 444). Presumably, *ta. ouvkv evf’ hvmi/n* are indeed the very matters which a Jew or a Christian, like the apostle Paul, may subsume under *ta. krupta. kuri,w| tw/| qew/|* (Deut 29:28a LXX). Both for the writer of Deuteronomy 29: 29 (EV) and Epictetus (LCL 1: 11-12; cf. 2:444), writing centuries apart, human responsibility must be treated with the utmost seriousness. Thus the latter

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<sup>272</sup>Carson (1981, 113-114) also cites a number of other passages in Josephus that relate ultimately to God’s secret will. Cf. respectively, the medieval and Jamaican ‘*Homo proponit, Deus disponit . . . Man plan . . . Gad wipe out*’ (Chevannes 2006, 145).

<sup>273</sup>Cf. the following by Socrates (?): ‘I have been seeking, according to my ability, to find a place;--whether I have sought it in a right way or not, and whether I have succeeded or not, I shall truly know in a little while, *If God will*, when *I myself* arrive in the other world.’ (Demas 1927, 164; my italics).

could also write: ‘We must make the best of what is under our control    as God wills [w`j o` qeo.j qe,lei]; and the former: ta. de. fanera. h`mi/n kai. toi/j te,knoi j h`mw/n eivj to.n aivw/na poiei/n pa,nta ta. r`h,mata tou/ no,mou tou,tou (But those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law).

Focusing on the will of God in this way allows us to see yet another mode in which the first person ‘I’ functions in some Pauline contexts.

As a stranger to the Roman congregation (albeit, an important one being the apostle to the Gentiles), Paul was not only anxious to impress its members with his knowledge of the gospel and its wide-ranging ramifications (thus the close reasoning of 1:16-11:36), but also to provide paradigmatic structures within the letter for their benefit. The exemplary employment of ‘I’ statements appears to be an integral part of this literary strategy.

So how is this carried out in chapter 15? One way to answer this question is to observe that as early as the initial chapter the ‘I’ is portrayed as being in submission to the divine will (1:10). Of course, given the religious climate of the first century milieu, this concept was not necessarily a new one to the Roman believers, as was hinted at above. However, ecumenical knowledge in general that humans depend on their deities would not prevent a teacher of Paul’s ilk from providing paradigmatic instances as to what it means to acknowledge the providential moments of the God and father of the Lord Jesus

Christ-- the one who synergizes all of life's experiences into something beneficial for his people (Rom 8:28).

Under the secret will of God, then, the 'I' submits, waits, and prays (Rom 15:30), and may even experience a measure of frustration (Rom 1:13). Therefore, 'One can readily sense . . . [Paul's] relief when he writes Romans 15: at last he can take up again the work he was really called to do!' (Knox 1964, 7). On the other hand, we also observe in 15: 22ff a freedom to choose, to plan, and to self-actualize. 'Hence', as Brunner writes, 'The heart of the creaturely existence of humanity is freedom, selfhood, to be an "I", a person [because] Only an "I" can answer a "Thou"' (1952, 2: 55ff). Brunner (1947, 102) grounds this freedom in the *Imago Dei*: 'The summit of man, purely from the point of view of man, is the "I-Self". The "I-Self", however, is what it is, and what it ought to be, through the divine "Thou".' As an apostle of Christ, then, in whose liberty he stands and serves (Gal. 5:1; cf. 1 Cor 7:22), the *imago Christi* was the foundation of Paul's *missio Dei*.<sup>274</sup> Therefore, it was quite natural for him to express this liberty in outlining his missionary itinerary in terms that underscore at one and the same time the parameters of his freedom, as well as its latitude; thus the following string of 'I' statements (vv. 24-32):

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<sup>274</sup> Cf. Augustine's affirmation of responsible freedom: 'I am the field upon which I labor with difficulty and much sweat.' Cited in Tselle (2002, 128).


poreu, wmai ... evlpi, zw ... evmplhsqw/ ... poreu, omai .  
 .. avpeleu, somai ... oi=da ... evleu, somai ...  
 parakalw/ ... r`usqw/ ... sunanapau, swami.

The first statement (v. 24) beginning with ‘I go’ (poreu, wmai), like the one in verse 25, is a present tense construction which vividly presents the writer’s resolve to execute the very plans that are laid out in the letter (Moo 1996, 902 n. 28). The verb in the subjunctive mood is actually preceded by the particles w`j a`n which altogether, Turner (1963, 112) believes, point to some definite anticipated action. This may be supported by the fact that ‘Paul uses w`j a;n with the subjunctive as the equivalent of ο [tan with the subjunctive’, thus yielding a translation like, ‘on my imminent journey . . .’ (Blass *et al.* 1961, 237-238).

There is no doubt that future action is intended by the phrase. But to speak of definiteness seems out of character with such a construction and the very nature of the case (cf. Moule 1959, 133; Robertson and Davis 1977, 309). The second ‘I’ statement (evlpi, zw/I hope) in verse 24, supportive of the first, expresses some measure of uncertainty concerning another aspect of the plan, that is, the willingness or readiness of the Roman believers to ‘fund his vision for the Spanish mission’ (Grieb 2002, 140).<sup>275</sup> Whether the apostle was able to receive this kind of support or whether he managed to reach Spain, no one is able to tell for sure.

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<sup>275</sup> propemfqh/nai is one of Paul’s euphemistic terms, according to Witherington (2004, 362). It means in this context ‘traveling money’. For the textual integrity of another ‘I’ statement ( evleusomai

However, Clement, writing at the end of the first century and roughly thirty five years after Romans (Freedman 1992, 6:176), says that Paul kh,rux geno,menoj e;n te th/| avnatolh/| kai. evn th/| du,sei [Rome?]  dikaiosunhn dida,xaj o[lon to.n ko,smon kai. evpi. to. te,rma th/j du,sewj evlqw.n [Spain?] (After preaching both in the east and west, he gained the illustrious reputation due to his faith, having taught righteousness to the whole world, and come to the extreme limit of the west. Holmes 1999, 34).

Holmes (1999, 35; cf. Murray 1968, 217 n. 27) appears confident that the phrase to. te,rma th/j du,sewj refers to ‘the Straits of Gibraltar’. But neither the language of verse 24ff nor any extra-biblical material gives us any certain knowledge on the matter of Paul’s subsequent work in Spain.

The final ‘I’ statement in verse 24, incorporating evmplhsqw/, was ‘probably a familiar polite locution in current use’ (Black 1973, 204)<sup>276</sup> and may be periphrastically rendered as in NRSV, ‘once I have enjoyed

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pro.j u`ma/jv<sup>Ⓢ</sup> in verse 24, see Sanday and Headlam (1902, 411) and Metzger (1994, 474). According to Haacker (2003, 19), a possible obstacle to Paul’s receiving the ‘travel money’ was the serious tensions ‘within or between the local groups of believers. . . . The support by only one faction of Christianity in Rome would not have served the purposes which Paul had in mind.’ Cf. Rom 14:1-15:6.

<sup>276</sup>Schalatter (1995, 267) believes the phrase to have a ‘Palestinian’ (Aramaic?) provenance.



letter-writing<sup>280</sup> is embedded and which it is meant to serve' (Haacker 2003, 20; cf. Chae 1997), and that 'Paul was engaged in "Zenrumission", that is, mission in certain strategic centers' (Bosch 1991, 130), even to Spain, the 'end of the earth' (Keener 1993, 445). Rome, then, would become one of these 'strategic centres', not because it needed a church there, but because of its centrality within the empire and proximity to Spain, Paul's ultimate port of call (Jewett 2007, 74-91).

But did not the apostle declare his intention to evangelize Rome (1: 15)? And would not this declaration a breach of the very principle he outlined in 15: 20 –21? Three things may be said in response. The fact that a church was already established in the city would not necessarily prevent the apostle to the Gentiles from having some 'fruit' of his own (new converts; 1:13), bearing in mind that these new converts could be easily incorporated into one of the local assemblies (e.g., chapter 16) and that Rome, after all, was for Paul a transition point (διὰ ὑμῶν; 'via you', 'passing through' [Moule 1959, 55; Porter 1992, 148 respectively] v. 28), not a place to start a rival congregation. Second, if we translate οὐ [τῶ] τοῦ κατὰ ἐμὲ προσηκουσάτω καὶ ὑμῖν τοῖς ἐν Ῥώμῃ εὐαγγελισάτω (1:15) as '[F]or my part *I was prepared* [my emphasis] to preach the gospel to you in Rome as well' (Käsemann 1980, 14), then the tension between chapters 1 and 15 is removed. Third, even if the traditional rendering of 1:15 is retained, we have to bear in

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<sup>280</sup>This includes, of course, his paradigmatic 'I' statements, whether in the service of his soteriology (chapter 7) or missiology (chapter 15).

mind that Paul's preaching of the gospel is seldom limited to the winning of unbelievers to the faith (Schreiner 1998, 52-55).<sup>281</sup>

Verse 29, with its triple pronominal emphasis ('I know<sup>282</sup> . . . when I come<sup>283</sup> . . . I shall come'), expresses an unparalleled confidence (in so far as this letter unfolds) and promises unprecedented blessing in the pregnant phrase *evn plhrw, mati euvlogi, aj Cristou/* (not 'the fullness of God' [Kroll 2002, 234]).

The final pericope (Cranfield 1979, 775-776) within the chapter is introduced by the Pauline plea, *Parakalw/ de. u`ma/j avdelfoi,* ('I urge you sisters and brothers'; v. 30). The introductory clause, unfinished as it is, is followed by its complement, which contains an embryonic Trinitarian reference (*dia. tou/ kuri,ou h`mw/n VIhsou/ Cristou/ kai. dia. th/j avga,phj tou/ pneu,matoj/* through our Lord Jesus Christ . . . and by the love of the Spirit-v. 30; Morris 1988, 523). Both 'by our Lord Jesus Christ' and 'by the love of the Spirit' present the ground of the request (Cranfield 1979, 776), with 'God' being the authoritative source from whom the answer is urgently

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<sup>281</sup>See also items B and B' (Gospel for Saints: Salvation from the Power of Sin) above.

<sup>282</sup>*oi/da,* but *ginw, kw* in F G m *inter alia*. For other textual features in v. 29, see the NA text.

<sup>283</sup>*evrco, meno;j*; actually a nominative participle used with a 'greater vividness in description' (Fanning 1990, 409; cf. Moule 1959, 134).

<sup>284</sup>The noun, according to Delling (1964, 6:302), signifies the 'overflowing wealth' of Christ; cf. John 1:16; Cranfield (1979, 2:775).



anticipated, and to whom the strong petition is made on Paul's behalf. The verse also appears to be some kind of variation on the pronominal theme in that the thought expressed is both theological and exemplary: the request for personal prayer in the NT is rare and is bound to constitute a paradigmatic point. Also, the strength of the compound infinitive (sunagwni , sasqai , /to strive together) also seems to re-enforce the point in so far as it subtly suggests the apostle's dependence on God.

The content of the kind of prayer Paul has in mind, that is, the way that he expects the Romans to intercede on his behalf is delineated in verses 31 and 32. The first of these two verses echoes 7: 24 with its mention of the verb r`u , omai (I may be delivered). In fact verses 14-32, particularly the 'I' statements, somewhat mirror 7:14-25 with its fair share of 'I' locutions, many of which are of the emphatic variety.

Verse 32 contains the final 'I' statement in the chapter. Apart from completing the apostle's prayer request begun in the previous i [vna clause, the verse also underscores the critical reality of the divine will that was discussed above. Here the reference seems certain to be what we have called above God's secret will that appears at times to be fixed and at other times flexible, especially in regard to prayer. Henceforth, all of Paul's plans to reach Rome are entirely in the hand of God,<sup>285</sup> so to speak—even his anticipation of

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<sup>285</sup> *Les mots par la volonté de Dieu, nous rappellent combien e'est une chose nécessaire pour nous de vaquer à des priers, parce que e'est Dieu seul qui dirige toutes nos voies par sa providence* (Calvin [1539], 348)/ 'The phrase *through the will of God* reminds us of the necessity of devoting

mutual refreshment expressed in his, ‘so that by God's will<sup>286</sup> I may come to you with joy and be refreshed [sunanapau, swmai] in your company’ (v. 32; NRSV).

Although 15:14ff does not have a preponderance of first person pronouns, it is significant on account of the fact that Paul very likely intended the pericope to be read and heard as paradigmatic clauses, especially when placed alongside their intra-textual echoes of 1:8-13 (Howell 2006, 367). All the verbs in question point to the ‘appropriateness of making plans’ since ‘God neither commanded Paul to go to Rome, nor forbade such a journey’ (Friesen 1980, 235).

The paradigmatic structure at this level is clearly that of the ‘historical’ type, that is, one based upon the apostle’s own experience and not that of the ‘created’ kind (λο, γογ), to use one of Aristotle’s categories (1926, 272; 479).<sup>287</sup> And if Kümmel’s (1974, 121) listing of Pauline fictives (e.g., Rom 3:5, 7) is anything to go by, we are on safe ground in positing a historical backdrop for the ‘I’ locutions of this pericope. So the force of these statements may best be appreciated against the thesis that the postscript (Rom 15:14ff) is

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ourselves to prayer, since God alone directs all our paths by his providence’ (Calvin 1960, 318).

<sup>286</sup>The verse ‘involves a nest of variant readings’ (Metzger 1994, 474), including the ‘will of Christ Jesus’, which, if original, is a ‘hapax legomenon’.

<sup>287</sup>‘There are two kinds of examples (“paradigms”, *paradeigma*, τῶν); namely, one which consists in relating things that have happened before, another in inventing them oneself.’ In this passage, Aristotle only elaborated on the latter category (Aristotle 1926, 273).

‘well composed and . . . can be shown to be fully integrated with the letter’ (Wuellner 1991, 339) as an Hellenistic peroration.

‘This observation is extremely important for the interpretation of Romans’, according to Wuellner. Why? Because ‘the assertions in the peroration of Romans are mainly concerned with the specific application of the general thesis’ (Wuellner 1991, 340; cf. Darnisch 1999, 92). Therefore, although  $\epsilon\nu\gamma\omega\upsilon$  does not occur as frequently in 15:14ff as in chapter 7, the ‘assertions’ are carried by a cluster of pronouns, which ‘restate once more the thesis which was recapitulated in 15:14-15 at the beginning of the peroration’.<sup>288</sup> And the ‘thesis’ highlights a theme which, according to Schreiner (2001, 37), is a neglected one in NT scholarship. Thus Schreiner (2001, 38) writes regarding the apostle’s career and primary aim:

He was a missionary who wrote letters to churches in order to sustain his converts in their new found faith. He saw himself as a missionary commissioned by God to extend the saving message of the gospel to all nations.

Paul also expected his converts, and even those who were not his converts (e.g., the Romans and Colossians), to be actively engaged in the missionary enterprise. In this regard the ‘I’ statements of chapters 1 and 15 are to be read as paradigmatic.

### C. Summary

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<sup>288</sup>Another rhetorical function evident in Paul’s peroration at this point is his *pathos*. Wuellner (1991, 340-341) also believes that the *pathos* section begins at 15:30, with  $\text{parakalw/}$  and continues with  $\text{r}^{\text{usqw}}\text{II}$  (v. 31),  $\text{sunanapau, swmai}$  (v. 32) and  $\text{sun, sthmi}$  (16:1).

It seems that Paul in Romans employs his ‘I’ statements in two distinctive ways.<sup>289</sup> In chapter 7 the personal pronoun is for the most part employed to underscore his language of weakness, whereas elsewhere he uses specific terms for the same concept. 7:14-25, in particular, demonstrates that the apostle is well able to vary his mode of communication in order to impress upon his addressees important theological themes. The theme of chapters 6-8 appears to be that of salvation as it relates to the believing community, and chapter 7, then, explores the relation of the ‘I’ to this. It is within this literary context that Paul’s weakness language shines through.

Chapter 15, on the other hand, employs the identical pronoun in a less emphatic way. In fact, though the ‘I’ expressions of this chapter are not marked (with verse 14 the notable exception), emphasis is achieved differently, that is, through the use of epistolary and rhetorical features from the Graeco-Roman milieu. All this seems to bring into sharp focus the paradigmatic character of 15:14-32—a passage that gains further prominence from its correspondence with elements of chapter 1.

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<sup>289</sup>Outside of chapters 7 and 15 the pronoun sometimes serves as an autobiographical pointer, whether by way of ethnic solidarity (Rom 11:1b) or overwhelming national concern (Rom 9:3: *huvco, mhn ga.r avna, qema ei=nai avto.j evgw. avpo. tou/ Cristou/ u`pe.r tw/n avdelfw/n mou tw/n suggenw/n mou kata. sa, rka*). Other times it is used to draw attention to apostolic authority (Rom 11:13), and the like (Rom 11:19).

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### RASTAFARI AND THE JESUS TRADITION IN CONVERSATION: DOMINICAL 'I'

As we carry out the main task of the study we now seek to draw a comparison between the NT usage of 'I' and that of the Rasta. The investigation from the very outset is faced with the problem of the unevenness of the materials that have been brought together. Much that has been looked at so far has to do with well established literature, that is, certain pieces or 'books' of the New Testament. These were produced in a relatively short

period of time during the first century. The movement of RastafarI, on the other hand, started in the twentieth century but has not produced any significant volume of religious literature compared to the documents of the NT. Nonetheless, Rastas do view themselves as the true people of God today, and many of them do appear to take more seriously the biblical documents as Scripture than many traditional Christians (Erskine 2007, 67-68).

This is reason enough to believe that their Dread Talk, especially in its distinctive use of the 'I', is somehow inspired by the NT. Others have already made a similar point in respect of the OT (e.g., Erskine 2007, 71). But a clearer case, I believe, can be made regarding the Gospels and Revelation. Of course, the hypotheses are not in any way mutually exclusive. The task at hand is not to prove either, but simply to compare the Rasta Talk in respect of 'I' with its ancient canonical counterpart. We now aim to classify some of the ways Rastas employ their ubiquitous 'I' expressions in what may be considered theologically pregnant senses.

Rasta I-statements quite often express their dignity, freedom from all oppression, and black pride. However, these are not the only distinctives that are embellished and adorned by the personal pronoun of Dread Talk. 'Higher truths' are communicated as well. But before we look at the two main ones, let us examine a little the subversive nature of Dread Talk, particularly the use of the independent pronoun, 'I'—for it is within this communicative process that what Rastas call 'livity' and their concept of things divine must be understood.

#### A. Subversion

According to a revered Rastafari, Elder Wato, Dread Talk came about for at least two reasons: first, to improve precision in communication, and, secondly, to create a lexicon that would be virtually incomprehensible to the children of Babylon, that is, non-Rastas.

Says Wato: 'I and I as Black people must be able to stan up and talk and the Chineseman nuh [does not] hear wha we say and the Englishman nuh hear wha we say not even the Jamaican can't hear what we say' (cited by Pollard 2000, 87-88). With regard to the first reason for the creation of Dread Talk, another Rasta has this to say:

The English language does not fit our soul, and many times the heights and demensions [sic] of expression which we require are not achievable. English is European and not for . . . the Black man and especially the Jamaican Rasta man (Jahmona 2001, 49).

Here Jahmona is consciously following Emperor Haile Selassie, whom he cites as saying in an address to the League of Nations in 1936, 'I should like to speak to you in French, but it is only in Amharic that I can speak with the depth of my soul and full force of spirit.' French, Jahmona informs us, was one of the main languages of diplomacy, but the Emperor would rather break with protocol (and tradition) than to betray his linguistic instincts. It is this kind of subversion of the status quo that appeals to the community of Rastafari. So what might appear to be trivial and sometimes humorous changes to standard Jamaican English (the official language), such as *I and I* (for 'we'), *di I dem* (for 'you all'), *I-ses I* (for hello), 'Ingel' (for angel), are in fact Rastafarian attempts to subvert the 'Babylon tongue' (Jahmona 2001, 40).

It is my conviction that this aspect of Dread Talk, which is under investigation in this thesis, owes its existence more to the plethora of ‘I’ propositions attributed to Jesus in the NT than to any other source.<sup>290</sup> In fact, in tomes on the life of Selassie (Naphtali 1999; Selassie 1976), there is nothing comparable to these relevant dominical sayings.

Another possible connection between the language of Rastafari and the utterances of Jesus is the dimension of subversion common to both. There is no doubt that the Jesus of the NT was quite straightforward in his speech. He was, it appears, anxious to communicate his mind to every stratum of the Graeco-Roman world represented in Palestine. But what is also clear is that his speech was at times mystifying and there is evidence that this was deliberate on occasion. Could all this be subversive in some way? This is the conclusion of Herzog (1994, 27), whose provocative monograph explores the inner workings of some of Jesus’ parables:

If parabling was part of Jesus’ public activity that was followed with suspicion and eventually deemed actionable, then his parables must have dealt with dangerous issues, which always means political and economic issues, since preservation of power and the extraction of tribute from the peasants dominates the concern of the ruling elites of the ancient world. Any teaching that exposes exploitation . . . would have been considered a threat.

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<sup>290</sup>This calls into question Middleton’s (2000, 201) suggestion that the ‘significance of “I” for Rastafarians may have originated in a simple misreading of the Roman numeral in . . . Haile Sellasie I . . . [which] has turned out to have powerful subversive potential.’ Cf. Afrika (1998, 58): ‘Those who experienced the ending of their ego have talked very strangely (John 10: 30)’.



Even from the above quotation one can see that Herzog has somewhat overdrawn his claim; for example, his statement to the effect that ‘dangerous issues’ are invariable political and economic in nature is simply not true. However, this does not detract from his insight into the subversive character of many of Jesus’ stories. In fact, the same could be said of other ‘speech acts’ attributed to Jesus by the Gospel writers. For example, Witherington (1990, 187) drawing upon Jeremias (1971, 35-51), points out that the introductory formula  $\alpha\upsilon\tau\eta\sigma\iota\varsigma\ \epsilon\gamma\omega\ \lambda\epsilon\gamma\omega\ \pi\alpha\pi\acute{\alpha}\rho\omicron\upsilon\tau\omicron\varsigma$  (solemnly I speak to you), and the like, is unique to the Gospels and is often used to introduce significant propositions, including ‘a solemn and authoritative pronouncement, on the basis of his own authority’.<sup>291</sup>

The radical and sometimes subversive character of these  $\alpha\upsilon\tau\eta\sigma\iota\varsigma\ \epsilon\gamma\omega$  (truly I--) statements become evident when they are compared with the ‘thus says the Lord’ formula in the OT. According to Witherington, the OT phrase is its closest parallel; however, he feels that  $\alpha\upsilon\tau\eta\sigma\iota\varsigma\ \epsilon\gamma\omega$ , goes beyond ‘Thus says the Lord,’ found on the lips of the prophets, because ‘Jesus is not merely speaking for Yahweh, but for himself and on his own authority – something a prophet did not do.’ When ‘the use of *amen* followed by “I say unto you” [is] given its full weight in light of its context-- early Judaism’, and when ‘consideration [is] given to what sort of sentences were introduced in that manner, statements concerning the inbreaking of God’s Kingdom’

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<sup>291</sup> More recently, and much more cautiously, Bauckham (2006, 30-36) has used these sayings as part of his thesis that much of the discourses and dialogues of Jesus appear quite credible within their first-century milieu.

(Witherington 1990, 188), it is difficult not to conclude that this phrase is perhaps the most subversive of all found on the lips of Jesus. Here is a sampling from the pertinent sources:

VAmh.n le,gw u`mi/n o[ti ouv mh. pare,lqh|  
h` genea. au[th me,crij ou- tau/ta pa,nta  
ge,nhtai( *Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no  
means pass away till all these things take place-Mark 13:30*);

[avmh.n/avlhqw/j] le,gw u`mi/n (Truly I say to you--  
Q; Robinson *et al.* 2000, 370; Robinson *et al.* 2002, 142);

VAmh.n le,gw u`mi/n\ o[sa eva.n dh,shte  
evpi. th/j gh/j e;stai dedeme,na evn  
ouvranw/| ( kai. o[sa eva.n lu,shte evpi. th/j  
gh/j e;stai lelume,na evn ouvranw/|Å Pa,lin  
Iavmh.nÐ le,gw u`mi/n o[ti eva.n du,o  
sumfwnh,swsin evx u`mw/n evpi. th/j gh/j  
peri. panto.j pra,gmatoj ou- eva.n  
aivth,swntai( genh,setai auvtoi/j para. tou/  
patro,j mou tou/ evn ouvranoi/jÅ  
*(Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound  
in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in  
heaven. "Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth  
concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My  
Father in heaven-Matt 18:18, 19)*;

kai. ei=pen auvtw/|\ avmh,n soi le,gw(  
sh,meron metV evmou/ e;sh| evn tw/|  
paradei,sw|Å ( *And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to  
you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."* Luke 23:43).

ei=pen auvtoi/j VIhsou/j\ avmh.n avmh.n le,gw  
u`mi/n( pri.n VAbraa.m gene,sgai evgw.  
eivmi,Å ( *Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you,  
before Abraham was, I AM."* John 8:58).<sup>292</sup>

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<sup>292</sup>Says Jeremias (1971, 36), ‘The retention of this alien [avmh, n] shows how strongly the tradition felt that this way of speaking was new and unusual. . . . The novelty of the usage, the way in which it is strictly confined to the sayings of Jesus, and the unanimous testimony by all strata of the tradition in the Gospels show that here we have the creation of a new expression of Jesus.’

How does all this square with Dread Talk? It is of interest to observe that both Jesus and the ‘Dread Talkers’ who profess to be his only true disciples in the modern world<sup>293</sup> have paid dearly with their lives for their subversive speech (cf. McPherson and Semaj 1985, 117-118; Acts 2:22-23). However, for the twenty-first century exponents of Dread Talk and the radical users of the ‘I’, there has been a significant ease in tension in the original land of Rastafari (Erskine 2007, 79-82; cf. Edmonds 1998, 2003). Of course, in comparing Jesus Talk and that of the Dread, one definitely sees more I-locution in the latter, precisely because Jesus was much more sparing in his use of such utterances, to judge from the ‘transcripts’ handed down to us.

### B. Divinity

Another possible similarity between the Rasta ‘I’ and that of Jesus’ is the expression that may be regarded as the highest and at the same time most controversial. Probably the best interpretation of the ‘I’ in regards to the divinity of Rasta comes from Forsythe (1983; cf. Afari 2007, 79), one of the Brethren to put pen to paper. Forsythe provides an interesting taxonomy in speaking of ‘I and I’ as a reference to the speaker in unity ‘with the most high (Jah) and with his fellowmen.’ He makes reference to the little ‘I’, which is an expression of ‘the lower self of man, to his body and its ego, that part of him

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<sup>293</sup>And for whom the collective employment of ‘I’ is characteristic of modern worship (cf. Rogerson 1970, 15).

which is born and will die.’ This little ‘I’ is really the outer garment of the big ‘I’. So what is the big ‘I’, according to Forsythe? ‘The big I is the everlasting, immortal or “true” self that was never born and can never die. It is the spirit of divinity and holiness.’<sup>294</sup> Later Forsythe identifies the big ‘I’ with Jah, ‘the great spirit of creation that must be worshipped in spirit and in truth’.

The recognition of the two ‘Is’ is critical to Forsythe’s soteriology, because the knowledge of self for Rasta means moving towards merging the little ‘I’ with the big ‘I’. Scriptural support for this is grounded in the theological perspective of the writer of the third Gospel: ‘as a doctor, Luke saw Christ as the “Great Physician” who wanted the upper half of the self (the big ‘I’) with the lower half (the little ‘i’) . . . “self-revelation” (Inity) comes thus from the merger of the big I and the little i, like father and son’(Forsythe).

The Father-Son analogy is left unexplained by Forsythe and no Lukan reference is given to illustrate the point that is made based on the Gospel. Nevertheless, Forsythe goes on to talk about the salvific benefits of the intra-personal merger in terms of spiritual strength, ‘as the self is thereby opened up to the inexhaustible energy of the cosmos.’ That this power is no mere cosmic energy is seen in the lines of a once popular Rasta song cited by Forsythe (1983, 87): ‘O let the power fall on I, Fari [i.e. Selassie]/Let the power from Zion fall on I.’

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<sup>294</sup> Cf. ‘I am he who evolved himself under the form of the god Khepera, I, the evolver of evolutions evolved myself.’ (In Kamalu 1990, 45). Afari (2007, 73-74) posits a trinity of Selassie, the ‘supreme father of humanity, His empress, Menen . . . [and] Their Majesties’ children.’

Forsythe refers to the whole process of inner transformation as Rasta rebirth in ‘which “I and I” become unified and is merged with truth. “I and I” refers to “me” in unison with my Creator/Nature/Jah.’ According to Forsythe, the resulting integrated self is what he calls the ‘African I’, or as others have dubbed it ‘The African personality’. For Forsythe (1983, 87), the African ‘I’ is grounded in the teachings of Christ himself, a teaching which is clearly reflected in the following:

When you make the two one, and when you make the inside as the outside and the outside as the inside and above as below, . . . when you make the two one into one, you shall become the sons of mankind. And when you say “mountain be moved,” it shall be moved (1983, 87).

This, declares Forsythe (1983, 87), is when ‘the lower I is integrated and [is] proportioned according to Jah nature’s ordering’ (1983, 87).<sup>295</sup>

Another fundamental doctrine which Forsythe feels is crucial to the understanding of the theology of Rastafari, relative to the locution ‘I and I’ as ‘God’ is the notion of re-incarnation. This teaching, Forsythe affirms, is rooted in ancient African belief in both the immortality of the soul and the cyclical nature of the universe.<sup>296</sup> ‘Herodotus’, he says, ‘credited the Egyptians with

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<sup>295</sup> On the following page, Forsythe bemoans the fact that this secret knowledge is not found in the canonical Gospels.

<sup>296</sup> Says Johnson-Hill (1995, 14) ‘Specifically, it is illuminating to understand Rastafari in relation to the “Ethio-Egyptian tradition” . . . understood as referring to a syncretistic folk mythology.’

originating this doctrine, and its associated belief that it takes a soul some 3,000 years to reach the end of its cycle.’ (Forsythe 1983, 87).<sup>297</sup>

People of African descent, according to Forsythe, have never forgotten the notion of re-incarnation, and this is partly evidenced in the shared belief and testimony of instances of *déjà vu*. In Jamaica in particular, it is the Rastafarians who have revived the theory by applying it to the faith. This results in their seeing ‘themselves as re-incarnations of earlier personages, even Christ’ (Forsythe 1983, 89; cf. Neita 2005, 263).<sup>298</sup>

In fact, Christ and the ancient prophets can never die (Jah-Jah lives); they live on by becoming re-incarnated into others bodies. Many Rastafarians say that there have been some 71 appearances of God in man [*sic*] bodies, with the Imperial Majesty, Selassie I as the 72<sup>nd</sup> and last re-incarnation (89).

Despite Forsythe’s claim to the contrary, it is still not certain how widespread the belief in re-incarnation is amongst the ‘I-dren’, especially as it relates to their divinity. His work, however, does appear to shed some light on a quotation from a group of RastafarI elders:

But at this time I-n-I stand for I-ver  
To see the redemption of I-n-I, Jah Rastafari,  
For I-n-I must stand within I gates.  
I-ses I! Fire bun! Black I-ses.  
Selassie –I move [*sic*]  
72 different from [*sic*]  
72 different names  
72 different nations

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<sup>297</sup>This transmigration of souls ‘was among the accepted doctrines of the early Christian Church, but it was eventually dropped by the Roman Catholic Church!’ (Forsythe 1983, 88). No evidence is proffered by Forsythe.

<sup>298</sup> If, as Wright (1992, 79) suggests, Paul re-tells the Jewish story using Jesus as the centre and climax, the Rasta does the same with Selassie replacing Jesus.

72 different language [sic].<sup>299</sup>  
 Selassie-I is the first ancient king of creation-birth now and for I-vermore.  
 I accept Selassie as I personal father  
 I personal teacher, I personal master. Jah, the most high,  
 Who is king alpha and omega, first and forever,  
 Beginning, without last. Selassie-I liveth in the hearts of I-n-I  
 Idren. . . . I liveth with I father, because I father liveth forever and  
 forevermore (Owens 1976, 258).

Both Forsythe and the Rastafarian elders mention the number 72 in regards to Selassie, but its significance and source remain a mystery.<sup>300</sup>

What is manifest is that the language of Rastafari has ‘gone beyond the classic primary combinations of Martin Buber’s I-thou relationship . . . the I-thou and I-it relationships move into the third level of being and become I and I’ (Barrett1997)--the apex of which is the big I, the complete merger between deity and humanity. It stands to reason, therefore, that ‘a large part of the Rastafarians’ choice to use the symbol of I as their symbol of unity was because in the Bible, God described Himself as “I am the I am”. . .’ (Jahmona 2001, 35; cf. Lieber 2004, 330).<sup>301</sup> Hence the notion of ‘I’ goes beyond the reaffirmation of the individual as an individual or the unity of Rastafari.

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<sup>299</sup>The reference to ‘72’ is enigmatic. Neither Forsythe nor the Elders explain its significance for Rastafari theology. The number appears in Luke 10: 1, 17 with some textual uncertainty, as well as the LXX of Gen 10-11 (cf. *Zebah* 1:3; 3 Enoch 17:8; 18: 2-3; 30:2). According to Hurtado (2005, 343 n. 209), the number is associated with the Gentiles in Scripture.

<sup>300</sup>The quotation is also found in Loth (1991) with no ‘*Ich*’ before *persönlichen Vater*. The possessive, *mein*, replaces it.

<sup>301</sup> Jahmona’s citation is not exact but it clearly alludes to Ex. 3: 14.

Consequently, every Rasta, then, is an ‘Immanuel’—a god with us (Birhan 1981, 21).

If Forsythe’s insights regarding Rasta-as-god aetiology is correct, this, then, may be the rationale behind the strong asseverate typical of many a Rasta: ‘I am Christ.’ W. D. Spencer, perhaps the first theologian outside of the Caribbean to critique Forsythe’s views, shares the following: ‘The first Rasta I ever interviewed in 1979 was a young St. Lucian dread locks. When I asked him, “What do you think of Jesus?” he replied, “Jesus? I am Jesus.”’ (Spencer 1999, 84; cf. Afrika 1998, 58 *passim*).<sup>302</sup>

Serious reflection, therefore, on the ‘I’ is of paramount importance for Rastafari, because ‘the end result of “knowing the self” is the ultimate realization that man is divine, that “I am divine, therefore I am god”’ (Forsythe 1983, 16).<sup>303</sup>

Rastas on a whole would agree with Forsythe, though there are a few prominent exceptions. For example, popular Jamaican dub poet, Mutabaruka (2005), from the perspective of some other dreads, is an atheist, since he believes that man was the one who created the concept of God. Mutabaruka also agrees with Brown’s (2003, 252) Teabing that ‘Nothing in Christianity is

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<sup>302</sup>A similar claim was made by one Daniel Roots on ‘Our Voices’, a programme aired every Monday night on Jamaica’s CVM TV, 9: 30-10:30 pm. Daniel Roots was interviewed on August 18, 2003.

<sup>303</sup>The movement is seen by some as a ‘spiritually inspired phenomenon of God-realisation through self-realisation’ (Mansingh and Mansingh 1985, 97). Others, like Maddix (1987), are sure that the ‘Rastafarian doctrine that Haile Selassie is the living God is one which Garvey would . . . find both repulsive and obnoxious.’



original.’ Therefore, when he employs the ‘I’ there is nothing intrinsically or potentially divine about that speech act.<sup>304</sup> This is essentially the view of two other popular Jamaican personages, psychologist Dr. Leahcim Semaj and journalist, Barbara Blake Hannah (2002, 37, 44). Writes Semaj (1980, 4): ‘From the African world-view, we see that God is a man-made reality. Human beings make Gods and then Gods reciprocate by making human beings.’ The concept of the ‘I’ for these exceptional Rastas appears to be no more than what Yawney (1991, 99, 101) outlines:

Among Rastafarians an emphasis on human equality is apparent in the centrality of the term *I and I*. *I and I* refers to the basic unity of mankind, the basic nature that people share . . . , among these Rastafarians there is an additional dimension of *I and I* consciousness which promotes the experience of inter subjectivity and this heightens the emphasis on egalitarianism.

Notwithstanding the fact that some Rastas still preach Black superiority, Yawney is correct in so far as she sees unity/egalitarianism as just one of the locutionary functions of the ‘I’. For many more Rastas, though, possibly the majority, the ‘I’ is and can be divine. And Selassie I is God. So if Hurtado (2006, 117) and Bauckham are correct that the ‘earliest Christology was already the highest Christology . . . [one] of divine identity’ (Bauckham 1998, viii; cf. Stuckenbruck 1995, 270-272), then the latest, in terms of Rastafari reasoning, is no less so, since ‘Sellassie I [is] the Black Christ’ (Tafari 2001, xxxvi). And both the earliest that is ‘text’ bound and the latest which is

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<sup>304</sup>He continues to be a chief spokesman for the movement, and can say: ‘“I-an-I” is seeing the being, the manifestation of the supreme in man and woman and in every living thing that exist [sic] . . . “I-an-I” is referring to the spirit in the man, which is the good in the man, so this is the supreme being that he is referring to, when he says “I-an-I”’ (Mutabaruka 2006, 31).

‘discourse’<sup>305</sup> oriented have a preponderance of ‘I’ affirmations in support of their claims (see Bauckham 1998, 53-56, for the ‘text’). Thus according to Salter and Tafari<sup>306</sup> (2005, 762):

Rastafari [then] emphasizes the interior location of deity, often referred to as the I, an overdetermined symbol that includes both a sense of the self divinity residing internally and the notion that the spirit and power of Haile Selassie I dwell within individual Rastafari. In terms of the collective, Rastas tend to speak of “I n I” (I & I) as opposed to “you” and “me”. This urges Rastafari to identify human value universally, communally, and from a viewpoint independent of the value projected on people by a corrupted society.

There are some pertinent questions that arise at this juncture: When did Rastafari begin to employ their ‘I’ in such an elevated fashion? And at what period did it become the norm for a Rasta to declare ‘I am God’? Perhaps, more importantly, what is the frame of reference for such personal divine claims? Historians from within the movement give no clue in answering the first two questions, and only Forsythe (and to a lesser extent Jahmona) has made any attempt to answer the third.

As was pointed out previously, Forsythe traces the movement back to Africa and in one section of his book keen interest is shown in the utterances of a particular Egyptian deity who declared ‘I am the God Atum, I alone was; I am the God Ra at his first splendour; I am the great God self-created; God of God to who [sic] no other God compares; I was yesterday and now tomorrow’ (Forsythe 1983, 26). For Forsythe the biblical prophets and apostles are the

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<sup>305</sup>Respectively, ‘discourse’ and ‘text’ are ‘language in use . . . and the verbal record (spoken or written) of a communicative act’ (Groom 2003, 131).

<sup>306</sup>Tafari is Rasta.

successors of the African guild of holy men, so it is no surprise that he sees within the pages of the NT (as well as the Gospel of Thomas) instances of paradigmatic 'I' for the community of Rastafari.

The closest parallels to the divine 'I' of Rastafari are found in the Gospels, especially the Fourth. For example, in John 5:58 Jesus makes the astounding claim, 'Before Abraham came into being I ['n'] I exist; cf. Bauer 1957, xxv.'<sup>307</sup> What is clear from the context is that members of Jesus' audience were visibly upset with such a bold affirmation, and, according to the Evangelist, the consequent threat was taken seriously (v. 59).<sup>308</sup> But here Jesus does not appear to be as bold as Rastas who leave no doubt concerning their claim to divinity. What is also becoming increasingly clear is that the Evangelist somehow intended his hearers/readers to see Jesus as divine and as one who accepts worship (see Aland 1994, John 1:1, 18; 20: 28).

Even before the time of the Fourth Gospel (and long before the elaborate Christology of the ensuing centuries [Dunn 2003, 11-12, n.1]), there is evidence of Christolatry. Thus Cullman (1995, 86) could speak of Paul praying to 'Christ (Kyrios)' and writing of Christians as 'those who call upon Christ' (2 Cor 12: 8; Rom 10:12). Hurtado (2006), for example, has recently canvassed an impressive list of artifactual evidence to demonstrate that many

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<sup>307</sup>This is my overly literal rendering, reflecting the pronominal emphasis through the prism of Rastafari. Coetzee (1986, 174) remarks that 'this clearly shows that they regarded his claim as utterly blasphemous . . . from their view point of Ex 3, especially 3:6 and 13-17'

<sup>308</sup> This is in contrast to those early Jewish Christians whose conviction was that 'Jesus shares God's name and glory . . . [as] a worthy recipient of worship' (Hurtado 2006, 111).

early believers, like the scribe of p<sup>46</sup>, ‘regularly treat[ed] Ihsouj as a *nomen sacrum*’ (Hurtado 2006, 129). Other terms of like manner are similarly handled (note the abbreviated forms for ‘God’, ‘Lord’, and ‘Jesus Christ’ that I have underscored below).

ouvdei.j QC eiv mh. ei-j<sup>Å</sup> kai. ga.r ei;per eivsi.n lego,menoi qeoi. ei;te evn ouvranw/| ei;te evpi. gh/j( w[sper eivsi.n qeoi. polloi. kai. ku,rioi polloi,( avllV h`mi/n ei-j QC o` path.r evx outa. pa,nta kai. h`mei/j eivj auvto,n( kai. ei-j KC IHCXPC diV ou- ta. pa,nta kai. h`mei/j diV auvtou/Å (1 Cor 8: 4b-6 [146]; Hurtado 2006, 130;

*There is no other God but one. For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are many gods and many lords), yet for us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we live).*

### C. Summary

While modern scholars continue to debate the issue of the deity of Christ,<sup>309</sup> Rastas for the most part give full credence to the notion of Christolatry, provided, of course, it is recognized that Selassie is Christ incarnate<sup>310</sup>--and if Birthwright (2005, 1) is correct that the Rastafarian movement is ‘the leading counter-hegemonic subversive discourse to have emerged in the modern Caribbean’, then the Rasta’s affirmation of divinity may be regarded as taking on strong political overtones as well. What is not

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<sup>309</sup> See, for example, Williams (2001, 343-352) on the Fourth Gospel.

<sup>310</sup> ‘Incarnation’ is ‘Reincarnation, an important tenet in Rastafari way of life’ (Farika n.d., 22).

clear from Rasta reasonings, though, is whether or not the worshippers of Selassie should themselves be worshipped.<sup>311</sup>

Rastas are also certain that they and they alone constitute the genuine people of the living God (Jah Rastafari) in this generation. In making this claim they have relegated all of Christendom to the babylonish system which seeks to 'down-press' the godly and pervert the truth.

The truth, however, as seen particularly through the prism of Rastafari and as reflected in the Bible and the words of His Imperial Majesty, cannot be suppressed. In fact, it finds its greatest expression in the language and 'livity' of all those who are committed to blackness, to repatriation and to Haile Selassie as King of Kings.

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<sup>311</sup> Bob Marley was worshipped by some Nepalese, according to Spencer (1999, 77-78), and Prince Emmanuel Edward was 'invested with the title "Black Christ" by his followers' (Tafari 2001, 318).

## CHAPTER EIGHT

RASTAFARI AND THE PAULINE CORPUS IN  
CONVERSATION: DOMESTICATED 'I'

## A. Dignity

Given the history of the movement it should come as no surprise that Rasta I-locution is integrally tied up with issues of self-esteem and black dignity.<sup>312</sup> The history of blacks in Jamaica includes some of the most horrendous types of slavery imaginable (cf. Haley 2007). This, along with its aftermath, has been well documented elsewhere (Austin-Broos 1997, 39-40; Carson 2002, 89-95; Dawkins 2006, 266-267; Dick 2002, 68-34; Lawson 1998, 103-04; Miller 1986; Parsanal 1996, 4-6; Skinner 1968, 15-19; cf. Erskine 2007a; Gosse 2005; Hylton 2002; Lewis-Cooper 2001; Mutabarurka 2005, 20-22, and Shepherd 2007, 54-139 *passim*).<sup>313</sup> But my purpose is to briefly trace the massive psychic legacy left in its train (Stone 1994, 96-100).<sup>314</sup> The ancestors of Rastafari and all black Jamaicans were considered nothing but animated instruments, 'depersonalized' by their slave masters for maximum profit. It is believed that even after emancipation the effects of such inhumanity are still to

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<sup>312</sup> 'There is scarcely anything in life that we consider more precious, more spiritually charged, than our selfhood and its formation.' (Hefner 2003, 22; cf. Duncan 2002).

<sup>313</sup> Cf. Aristotle's definition of a slave as a 'living property . . . the slave is a living tool and the tool a lifeless slave' (cited in Ferguson 1987, 46).

<sup>314</sup> An example here is the bleaching of the skin on the part of some Jamaicans; but see Charles (2003), who argues that 'bleachers' do not necessarily suffer from low self-esteem and self hate.

be observed (Strachan 1992, 21-26 *passim*), making it imperative, according to one Caribbean theologian, that

We . . . develop self-pride, so that we will know that what we have by way of music, language and literature is pleasing to God. . . . How, for example, might Rasta hermeneutics help in the process of self affirmation, as it forces us to search diligently for and acknowledge the Black presence in the Bible? (Mulrain 2004, 49, 51).

The group<sup>315</sup> that has done more than any other to restore black pride among the seventy-seven percent black population of Jamaica is the one whose hermeneutic is commended by Mulrain (cf. Elliot 1999, 16-17, 19-20; Chevannes 1989).

And the linguistic phenomenon used chiefly to achieve this end is the perlocutionary ‘I’ (Lyons 1977),<sup>316</sup> creatively spoken in Jamaican Creole (cf. Hutchinson 2004; Maxwell and McLaren 1981). This gave ‘agency to the Caribbean need for a liberated ethos, and in effect has served to re-engineer black space’ (Birthwright 2005, 179). Of course, while the process of creolization is more than speech, speech is definitely an integral part of the multidimensional complex described as:

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<sup>315</sup>‘Theologians have not been generally active in this fundamental endeavor . . . . It is nevertheless the task of the Caribbean theologian to demonstrate systematically that to be of African descent is not the result of a divine mistake. . . . Emancipation and self-affirmation are inseparable’ (Davis 1990, 63).

<sup>316</sup> ‘At the heart of the contemporary Rastafarian experience of reality is a relational sense of self which is expressed by the term I-n-I’ (Johnson-Hill 1995, 22). The adoption of African names is another, since ‘a NAME is the life program of its bearer’ (Lorne 2003, 3).

*Authentic*: in the New World African Diaspora communities, “Creole” indicates authenticity in language use and demonstrated affect. To “break away” into Creole is to go “natural,” to “be real” . . . *Transgressive*: Creole depends upon both an intimate and practical knowledge of social and linguistic norms, especially in diasporic conditions of cultural hegemony. Language comes into creation by transgressing established norms of usage while retaining older forms, meanings redefined according to new experience.

*Innovative*: Creolization is the realm of new cultural creation at the boundary between older cultures (Bond 2005, 81).

Bond (2005, 79) may be correct that Creole:

as a hermeneutic phenomenological symbol is especially well suited for the purpose of disclosing ontological dimensions in Paul’s experience, . . . [since] the term is particularly, though not exclusively, associated with diasporic phenomena.

But by virtue of their history and shared experience, the term is more appropriately associated with Rastafari (not Paul) and their unique ‘Iyoric’ language:

This use [of the Iyoric] language not only provides cohesion within Rastafari and provides an effective means of communicating the Mysteries; it also actually begins the process of development within the individual by challenging one’s fundamental perception of individuality. Changing language changes thought; changing how we think changes who we are (Ras Steven 2004, 18).

With this linguistic tool it seems as though Rastafarians have been able to transform the psyche of a vast number of people of African descent (similar to what Nina Simone [Palmer 2003] did for her own people with the song, ‘Young Gifted and Black’), with the result that no longer are they ashamed of their skin colour, language, or roots (Erskine 2007, xv *passim*; Bute and Hamer 1997, 157). We are informed by one of their own that:



Rastafari inherited the traditions established by the Maroons and Garvey and are committed to ministering to disadvantaged Africans through the construction of lividity that is designed to restore pride in self through the reclamation of race as a discourse of resistance (Tafari Ama 2004, 100-101).<sup>317</sup>

Linton (2001, 6), a Christian, agrees: ‘Rastafarianism developed out of the need for the neglected descendants of the African slaves to affirm their personal dignity and racial identity.’ This was not done overnight, as one would expect. There was much in the way of prejudice to overcome (Mutaburka 2005).<sup>318</sup>

### B. Liberty

In the lyrics of the late Robert Nesta Marley, the most popular Rastafarian prophet:

*Old Pirates, Yes, They Rob I/Sold I To the Merchant Ships/Minutes  
Later Took I From The Bottomless Pit/But My Hand Was Made*

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<sup>317</sup> Rastafari tackled head on ‘The problem of the twentieth century . . . the problem of the color-line—the relation of the darker to the lighter races of men in Asia and Africa, in America and the islands of the sea’ (Du Bois 2005, 16). Garvey, from one of the ‘islands of the sea’ was a contemporary of Du Bois (2005, xi) and each worked assiduously for the upliftment of blacks through his respective organization--the Niagara Movement (founded 1905 by Du Bois) and the Universal Negro Improvement Association (1914; Garvey). But Garvey felt Du Bois and his movement were ‘the greatest enemies the black people have in the world’ (Garvey 1925, 238). Famous Jamaican policeman, DSP Renato Adams, revealed recently that at age twelve he was expelled from primary school because he said that Jesus was a black man (Jamaica’s *Sunday Gleaner*, December 25, 2005, p. D6).

<sup>318</sup> According to Erskine (2007, 58, citing Braitwaite 1971, 167), Rastas overcame ‘middle-class Jamaica valued whiteness’ expressed in the following stratification: Sambo—child of mulatto and Negro; Mulatto—child of white man and negress; Quadroon—child of mulatto woman and white man; Mustee—child of quadroon and white man; Mustiphini—child of mustee and white man; Quintroon—child of mustiphini and white man; Octoroon—child of quintroon and white man.

*Strong/By' The Hand of The Almighty/We Forward In This Generation  
Triumphantly/Won't You Help To Sing These Songs of Freedom?/  
'Cause All I Ever Had, Redemption Songs . . . Emancipate Yourself  
From Mental Slavery/None But Ourselves Can Free Our Minds/Have  
No Fear For Atomic Energy/'Cause None Of Them Can Stop The  
Time/How Shall They Kill Our Prophets/While We Stand Aside And  
Look?/ Yes, Some Say It's Just A Part Of It/We Got To Fulfill The Book  
(Garrick 1993, 156).<sup>319</sup>*

The theme of liberation dominates this piece that was released soon after the passing of Marley (Bramwell 1984; Kuck 2007, 50; Thompson 2004). In the opening lines the Rastafarian 'I' figures quite prominently to underscore the degradation of Rasta's bondage. This is perhaps the only place where the 'I' is used in a context of helplessness. Surprisingly, this is not carried through to the next important thought, that of the liberation of Rasta.

Here it is doubtful that there is anywhere else to be found a more succinct, graphic, and beautiful summary of the redemption of Rasta. What is of interest too is the skillful admixture of pronouns ('I', 'my', 'we'), which at the same time expresses personal interest ('I', 'my'), as well as subtle Rasta inclusiveness ('yourselves', 'our'). The other pronouns in the song point ostensibly to the 'fatalists' ('some') who insist 'We got to fulfill the book' (that is, Bible prophecy), and also to those who murder the prophets of Jah. This is an allusion more so to Rasta prophets than to the Biblical variety. Undoubtedly, Marcus Garvey is included.

Redemption Song also points to vestiges of slavery and the urgent need of Black people in particular (Rastas excluded?) to emancipate themselves from

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<sup>319</sup> For a stimulating commentary, see Dawes (2002, 308-311): 'In four minutes Marley tells of a history that spans 400 years.' Cf. Bramwell (1984).

cognitive and spiritual bondage. This task must be carried out courageously even in the face of the threat of ‘atomic energy’.

I find the second stanza intriguing in that it urges liberation of the self by the self, yet in the opening lines physical redemption was, it seems, only effected by the ‘Hand of the Almighty’. On close examination, however, the song writer declares that his hand was indeed strengthened by the Almighty himself. Here there may be a parallel with the bondage of the ‘I’ in Romans 7:14, who gains liberation by God, through the agency of his Son (7:24, 25).<sup>320</sup>

But perhaps the most telling correspondence between Redemption Song<sup>321</sup> and Romans 7:14ff is the way the independent first person pronoun is used in a universalizing sense, though Paul’s ‘I’ is much more inclusive. One major difference between Paul’s prose and Marley’s poetry is the fact that the former alludes to eschatological redemption (if not in Romans 7:25, certainly in Chapter 8). Some may find this quite surprising given the emphasis of repatriation<sup>322</sup> in Rasta theology. Redemption Song, however, is not a long piece and is not expected to include everything. Its brevity is part of its beauty. Absent as well from the song is any explicit mention of the dignity of

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<sup>320</sup> Perhaps, too, there is a parallel with the Pauline thought of divine energy working in tandem with human initiative (cf. Phil. 2:12, 13), for ‘Dependence on God is fully compatible with human exertion’ (Chamblin 1993, 156); cf. Gen 49: 22-24.

<sup>321</sup> ‘The religious and commercial resources of “Redemption” suggest both divine grace and the practical justice of freeing a slave.’ (Cooper 1993, 124).

<sup>322</sup> ‘[T]he Rastafarian settlement of Shashemane in Ethiopia represents a concrete manifestation of their desire and determination to identify with Africa as the ancestral homeland’ (Wariboko 2007, 209).

humanity. This dignity is most certainly implicit in the call to effect his/her own emancipation from mental slavery, while at the same time acknowledging a measure of the fractured human condition in the form of cognitive limitation or intellectual ‘depravity’.

If this depravity is properly defined as the effect of evil on all facets of the human personality, then we have here in Marley’s lyrics a firm reminder of that aspect of the human condition—a condition that is so often illustrated in the letters of Paul (Caird 1994). In fact, one finds so many references in Paul of fallen humanity that an impression is left with the modern reader that he was a religious man with a very poor self-image and low self-esteem, given the way in which he describes himself at times. This is seen, for example, in Romans 7:18. Of course, a verse like this is sometimes blown out of all proportion and, as a consequence, used to ‘induce a crippling sense of guilt’ leading many to believe that ‘their “natural” selves are bad.’ (Armstrong 1983, 63).

But Paul himself had a much more (to use the modern parlance) positive image of himself (Anglin 2001, 9-15). If he had wanted to, he could speak of his pedigree as an outstanding Jew and Roman citizen. But, with the use of weakness language,<sup>323</sup> he much preferred to boast in what Christ was doing in and through him. ‘By the grace of God I am what I am’ could very well have been the Apostle’s programmatic (if not paradigmatic) life affirmation (1 Cor

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<sup>323</sup>Hardly the kind of talk found among Rastas, who would vehemently disagree with the following: ‘I should be the last one to deny the patent weakness and shortcomings of the Negro people’ (Du Bois, 2005, 125). See our reading of Romans 7 above for Paul’s employment of this language with the ‘I’ pressed into service.

15:10). However, a *prima facie* reading of Romans 7:14ff in particular hardly gives the impression that the Apostle ‘felt good about himself’. And there is a sense in which he did not. What I mean by this is that Paul was never satisfied with what he had already achieved spiritually. He was constantly pursuing total ‘self-actualization’, which for him was nothing less than the *imago Christi*. Rastas, on the other hand, are after the ‘imago Selassi’--an image they already exhibit.<sup>324</sup> And the language which expresses this above all else is that which highlights the ‘I’. Marley, for example, could say, while focusing attention on the dignity of all humanity, ‘the God who mek I and I, him create technicolour people’ (Marley 1993, 54).

Many a Rasta feels though that the Church itself is antagonistic to the kind of ‘treatment’ that uplifts Black people. In fact the Church is seen as one of the institutions of Babylon that seek to enslave Rasta.<sup>325</sup> Ras Bongo Spear (1995, 129) speaks for most if not all Rastas when he says:

Now I and I have seen that religion especially within the Caribbean Context . . . has been used as an instrument of colonizing the people. That is to say, people come from Africa through slavery and bondage under the guise of religion. Because even in our recent history, 1936, when Rome invaded Ithiopia (they call it Ethiopia), I and I see that . . . [it] had blessings even from Pope Pius X.<sup>326</sup>

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<sup>324</sup>Of course, Paul, in the ‘already/not yet’ sense, would make a similar claim.

<sup>325</sup> The Church instead ‘must see itself as the agent of God, inviting everybody, regardless of “race”, colour and religion, to come and share in the fullness of life which is *shalom* . . . and the glorious liberty of the children of God’ (Abogunrin 2003, 249).

<sup>326</sup> From this point onwards, every Pope seems to be a sworn enemy of Rasta (Birthwright 2005, 169-170), even those who write enthusiastically about the 1<sup>st</sup> century Power of the Trinity (Ratzinger 2007).

So I and I don't really deal with religion because I and I see the great deception. Not only religion in terms of Christian philosophy, but also by extension even if I and I examine Islam.<sup>327</sup>

It is undeniable that historically sections of the Jamaican church aided and abetted slavery (cf. Skinner 1970, 17-35) and later, racism of all sort. However, Ras Bongo Spear appears to have painted with too broad a brush. There were Christians as well in the forefront of the fight for 'the African-Jamaican on his remote plantation [helping to] destroy slavery' (Sherlock and Bennett, 1998, 177; cf. Gerig 1967). This notwithstanding, the Jamaican Church of the twenty-first century still has a far way to go in addressing the needs of the predominantly black membership in dealing effectively with persisting feelings of racial inferiority, self-contempt and even the social structures which institutionalized race and colour prejudice.<sup>328</sup>

Meanwhile the African Diaspora continues to be an invaluable source of inspiration for a world-view alternative to the one which would label as inferior all that the victims of the Diaspora have created or achieved. The Rastafarians of Jamaica have attempted such alternative with not insignificant or unrewarding results for themselves (Nettleford 2003, 164).

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<sup>327</sup>The other religion of the book, Judaism, is conspicuously absent, possibly because some Rastas see themselves as the true Jews. Marley, for example, was a member of the tribe of Joseph (See n. 318 above). Later he writes, 'I and I see how the instrument of Christianity as a religion has been used to subdue Black people, not as a liberating force for which the Christ man came to set the captives free and return the captives to their homeland, their heavenly country, Ithiopia.'

<sup>328</sup> Perhaps one way to begin is to heed the Rabbi's (1969, 192) counsel: 'If you think of yourself as grasshopper, you must not be surprised when other people come to regard you in the same light.', as well as Russell's (2006) warning against uniformity.

The dehumanizing *Weltanschauung* of all that is inimical to black pride has been tackled head on by Rastafari, ‘the first mass “grassroots” movement among West Indians predominantly preoccupied with the task of looking into themselves’ (Forsythe 1983, 203). Therefore, armed with what Erskine (2000, 220) dubs ‘A Hermeneutic of Hope and Empowerment’, Rastas insist that the Bible exists to serve the needs of a predominantly black community. ‘Their primary concern has to do with the ways in which the biblical text affirms Rastafarian identity and addresses issues of dignity in Jamaican society’. This for Rastas ‘involves a critical reflection on historical experience in Jamaican society and on the global scene’, even as they busily engage in the exegesis of both the sociological and scriptural contexts.

In the last century a few Caribbean theologians have made their voices heard on these Rastafarian themes, notably Watty (1973), Smith (1984), and Noelliste (1997). Whittle has very early in this century placed the issue of black pride on the agenda of Caribbean theological reflection, doing on a small scale what Garvey did for the early twentieth century (Whittle 2002, 1-17).

The Rastas were not the first to consciously ask ‘the fundamental cultural and human question, Who am I? . . . What am I?’ in the context of the Caribbean social reality (Forsythe 1983, 203).<sup>329</sup> It was Marcus Garvey:

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<sup>329</sup> The first question ‘is the fundamental question of our existence. Our self-identity is the window through which we perceive and engage the world; it determines all that we do’ (Waltke 2007, 11).

While our God has no colour, yet, it is human to see everything through one's own reflection, and since the white people have seen their God through white spectacles, we have only now started out (late though it be) to see our God through our own spectacles. The God of Isaac and the God of Jacob, let him exist for the race that believe in [this] God . . . the God of Ethiopia, the Everlasting God – God the Father . . ., the Son . . . and the Holy Ghost, the One God of all eyes. That is God in whom we believe, but we shall worship Him through the spectacles of Ethiopia (Garvey 1986, 44).

Here is a virtual credo from the lips of Jamaica's first National Hero. Here is the black man's *Shema*, with contextual and hermeneutical application. What Garvey is calling for is what, I believe, every ethnic group does unconsciously - worship God through the prism of its own experience. In the early part of the twentieth century a few Jamaicans of Graveyite persuasion sought to take their leader seriously, and out of this exploration stemmed the movement that was to give to the world Dread Talk with its lexicon of 'I' terms, designed in part to declare that to be black is to be beautiful.<sup>330</sup>

Rastas,<sup>331</sup> however, took Garvey's statement to yet another level, for the God they worship is not colorless and bears little resemblance to the Trinitarian Father, Son and Holy Ghost that Garvey believed in. For many Rastas:

The blackness of God ensures the sanctity and divinity of black people. This means that "blackness" is no longer a curse but is taken into the

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<sup>330</sup>According to Chevannes (2006, 97), '[t]he brilliance of . . . [Rasta 'I' locution] was publicly acknowledged when the Prime Minister in a retort aimed at quieting the Opposition's call for a general election in 1971 declared, "Is only one man can call election, and dat [that] man is I man".'

<sup>331</sup> Cf. Mutaburka's (2005, 42-43, 52-53) 'Melanin Man', and 'I Don't Have a Colour Problem', two poems which celebrate blackness; and Bediako (2004).



divinity of God and becomes a point of departure for talk about the divinity of black humanity (Erskine 2000, 223).

Further, ‘*Jesus wurde in Afrika geboren, war also ein Schwarzer*’ (Loth 1991, 36), and as ‘the dread Christ [he] is one who equips Black folk to face and destroy all structures of oppression’ (Beckford 2000, 201; cf. Beckford 1998).

Garvey’s aim to instill black pride in his people has certainly in a measure been achieved, but some,<sup>332</sup> like Whittle, believe that it has been accomplished at too great a price. She writes:

Though by far not the most important aspect, it is nevertheless an important aspect. Man, created in God’s image . . . came in a physical body.<sup>333</sup> . . . From this, it can be deduced that the physical features of all races much like a kaleidoscope, all reflect the image of God. This includes the Black race. Although this position offers a link with God; it does not lead us in the error of recreating God in our image and positing a black God (2002, 9).

For Whittle (2002, 10-11), the Black Christ ‘is not necessarily one who came in a black body, but one who identifies with the suffering of Blacks (Isaiah 53; Hebrews 4:15).<sup>334</sup> Blacks can therefore identify with Christ in this way, and incorporate this into their identify.’ Similar to Paul’s affirmation in Galatians 2:20, according to Whittle (2002, 7), the NT passages that could

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<sup>332</sup>Most recently, Chisholm is one such (2005; 2006; *pace* Enuwosa 2005). See Hays (2003 *passim*) and Taylor (2003) for a fairly balanced treatment of racial issues in the canon and from a sociological perspective, respectively.

<sup>333</sup>Cf. ‘The body is an *inseparable aspect of the human person* and for this reason it is regarded as partaking of the *Imago Dei*’ (Zizioulos 1975, 423; italics his).

<sup>334</sup> For a useful survey of differing images of Christ, see Kaur-Mann (2004, 19-44).

undergird a theology of blackness include I Corinthians 6:20 and I Peter 1:18, which disclose ‘the high value God places on all men’, Galatians 3:28 which ‘makes it clear that as far as place and position in the new creation are concerned, racial, social and gender distinction,--often divisive factors in this world--are of no importance. Thus, creation and redemption affirm the intrinsic ontological worth and equality of all human beings.’ Philippians 4:12-13 is also pressed in service:

One aspect of the image of God in Caribbean man may be expressed in the Jamaican proverb: “Tun yu han mek fashion”<sup>335</sup>. This saying expresses not only artistic creativity, but also creativity in the face of limited resources . . . . This is a God-given quality which needs to be lauded and encouraged. This is what the apostle Paul was expressing when he testified . . . [I know what it is to have little, and I know what it is to have plenty. In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being well-fed and of going hungry, of having plenty and of being in need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me. NRSV] (Whittle 2002, 11).

Therefore, while there is virtually nothing in Roman 7 that seems to affirm human dignity, elsewhere in his letters Paul does speak to the issue indirectly, as in the foregoing references. In addition what is generally regarded today as ‘self-trust, self-esteem, self-respect, and creativity, lost elements of authentic humanity, which Christ has come to restore’ (Ng’weshemi 2001, 24), can also be teased out from Paul’s teaching on justification. This is a conviction expressed by Lane (1995, 213):

The Gospel has implications for self-esteem. Justification by faith is about God’s verdict on me, his acceptance of me. If God accepts me, this enables me to accept myself. The Gospel achieves something that

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<sup>335</sup> This popular proverb is surprisingly absent from Anderson and Cundall (1972), and Dennis (1995).

no secular theory or therapy can achieve. It enables me to accept myself. . . . Not by lowering my moral standards . . . [or] by pretending that I live a life without sin, but by full acknowledgment of my moral plight, knowing that in Christ God accepts me as I am.

The gospel (at least the way Lane understands it) is not the sort of ‘teachment’ emphasized in Rasta I-reasonings. Consequently, one would seldom if ever find Rastas grounding their identity in the *euaggelion*, traditionally understood. The good news in RastafarI is bound up with the hope of repatriation and the perceived reality of divine status. But Paul’s identity appears to have been bound up with the traditional gospel (cf. Rom 1:1-4, 16-17; 2:16).<sup>336</sup>

Therefore, if the ‘I’ in RastafarI is sometimes invested with divinity, Paul’s personal statements are to be found squarely within the realm of the common clay of humanity, and the highest function of the Pauline ‘I’ serves the purpose of either a literary example of paradigmatic value, or as part of a liturgical report such as is found in Romans 15. Paul’s I-statements, therefore, can hardly be regarded otherwise. He wrote for the most part to Christians at Rome with a view to building them up.<sup>337</sup>

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<sup>336</sup> But ‘Since all human beings, red, white, Black, brown and yellow are “flowers in God’s garden”, should not every single one of us . . . “be willing and glad to be part in God’s bouquet?”’ (Jagessar 2003, 157).

<sup>337</sup> This is evidently a part of the process to encourage the worship of Jesus, since in many of his letter-openings one can see a binitarian (God and Christ) invocation of blessings, the liturgical derivation of which reflects the ‘devotional life of early Christians’ (Hurtado 1999, 224).

### C. Frailty and Ministry

In our study of Romans 7 and 15 we have identified two other functions of the Pauline ‘I’, namely, that which is designed to draw attention to the writer’s own weakness in the face of the law and sin, and that which is associated with divine power<sup>338</sup> for witness and proclamation. This latter function of the ‘I’ is quite evident in Rastafari as well.

But the weakness language that characterizes part of Romans 7 is singularly absent from Rastafarian argot. Consequently, the counsel of O.J. Anglin (2001, 15) to the effect that ‘our natural strengths and abilities cannot accomplish God’s work’ would mean nothing to a typical Rasta.<sup>339</sup> The posture of power within the movement seems logical, given the identification of the “Divine-I” with the internal essence of the “Human-I” (Tafari 1996, 121).<sup>340</sup> If the first person pronoun is Rastas’ favourite literary tool symbolizing their

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<sup>338</sup> This is a power available to the vulnerable through prayer, as in Josephus (*Autobiography* 1:138): evgw. de. tw/ | qew/ | ta. katV evmauto.n.

<sup>339</sup> Schriener (2001, 87-102; an entire chapter) has pointed out that books on Pauline Theology seldom give attention to Paul’s suffering, and wrote in part to correct the imbalance.

<sup>340</sup> Tafari (1996, 122) traces the Rastafari movement back to Africa through the ‘oral African traditions passed on from the Koronmante to Maroons. . . .’ This tradition ‘indicated that Hebrew culture had spread into the African interior and to West Africa long before the advent of slavery. According to these traditions, therefore, many Black Hebrews (by religion, blood and culture) were among those Africans brought to the West. . . . Thus their claim to be exiled Ethiopians, or more precisely, to be reincarnated Hebrew Israelites with Ethiopian ancestry.’ Tafari admits to going beyond Garvey’s theology in giving ‘unbridled adoration [to] Emperor Selassie as the returned Messiah—Christ in his kingly character’.

power, then, without a doubt, the lion takes pride of place in furthering that notion. According to Forsythe (1983, 101), ‘So engrossed are Rastafarians with the lion symbolism that they actually see themselves as bearing the face, countenance, power, dignity, beauty, fearlessness and wholesome integrity’ which come from that self-realization. Forsythe (1983, 99) also points out that Jah is likened to a lion in texts such as Jeremiah 50:44 and Hosea 13:7.

The ‘I’ language of Paul, on the other hand, is much more self-effacing. Consequently, Paul’s symbol of *pride* is never a zoomorphic one. Instead, and quite out of character with the Graeco-Roman world, Paul chooses the lifeless and life eclipsing gibbet as his symbol of power. In this regard, he could say with all seriousness: *evmoi. de. mh. ge, noito kauca/sqai eiv mh. evn tw/| staurw/| tou/ kuri,ou h`mw/n Vihsou/ Cristou/ ( diV ou- evmoi. ko, smoj evstau, rwtai kavgw. ko, smw| (But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world; Gal. 6: 14). And as to his self-deprecatory statements we read:*

*VEgw. ga, r eivmi o` evla, cistoj tw/n avposto, lwn o]j ouv k eivmi. i`kano. j kalei/sqai avpo, stoloj ( dio, ti evdi, wxa th. n evkklhsi, an tou/ qeou/ (For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God; 1 Cor 15:9)*

*evmoi. tw/| evlacistote, rw| pa, ntw n a`gi, wn evdo, qh h` ca, rij au[th( toi/ j e; qnesin euvaggeli, sasqai to. avnexicni, aston plou/ toj tou/ Cristou/ (To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; Eph. 3:8)*

*pisto. j o` lo, goj kai. pa, shj avpodoch/ j a; xioj ( o[ti Cristo. j Vihsou/ j h=lqen eivj to. n ko, smon a`martwlou. j sw/sai( w- n prw/ to, j eivmi evgw, (*

*This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. I Tim.1:15)*

All this is a part of Paul's weakness<sup>341</sup> language which enables him to communicate to his people his own philosophy of life and theology of ministry summed up in texts like 2 Corinthians 12:9 (and 1 Cor 15:10), within their contexts. The verse (2 Cor12:9a) in its chiasmic arrangement (Harris, 2005, 862; A avrkei B soi C h` ca,rij mou /C' h` du,namij B' evn avsgenei, a| A' telei/tai), centrally lays stress on Christ's ability (C/C'), as well as on the apostle's powerlessness in its other dimensions (B/B'). The two A-items that envelope the structure integrate the others in a manner reminiscent of the dynamics of Isaiah 40:31 in terms of the renewing or *exchange* of strength (LXX avlla, xousin [Lust *et al.* 1992, 20]; MT Wpyliäx]y: [Gesenius 1949, 282]), and virtually confirms the implausibility of Dawn's (2001, 37-38) reading of the text—a reading that denies that h` du, namij (the power) is a reference to Christ's enabling power. Harris (2005, 863) further supports his case for the traditional rendering with the observation that '(1) the (possessive) article with du, namij ... matches h` ca,rij (mou; [my] grace), (2) the subsequent h` du, namij tou/ Cristou/ (Christ's power; v. 9b), and Paul's

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<sup>341</sup>Dawn (2001, 49) correctly observes that 'biblical "weakness" is described not simply in that word, but in all places where the New Testament writers show themselves as operating not out of their own skills, pedigree, background, training, or power, but out of their infirmities and dependency and humility. Frequently, the Scriptures picture the disciple or church with images not of power, but of smallness—or the work of God accomplished in the hiddenness of weakness.'

restatement of *evn avsqenei, a* (in weakness) by the phrase *evn tai/j avsqenei, aij mou* (in my weaknesses; 9b).<sup>342</sup>

#### D. Summary

Whereas grammarians are uncertain as to whether *evgw*, is invariably emphatic (Porter 1992, 129), a survey of Pauline usage of this independent pronoun reveals a variety of functions not unlike the prominent pronominal in Rastafari lexicon. First, the pronoun sometimes serves as an autobiographical index (Rom 11:1b). Other times it is used to highlight apostolic authority (Rom 11:13) or to underscore an interpretative situation which may be connected somehow to apostolic authority (Rom 11:19). B. Dodd has also ably demonstrated that the Pauline 'I' functions in various contexts in a paradigmatic sense.<sup>343</sup>

In places Paul's self-references engage the pastoral situation faced, while in other places his self-characterizations may have more to do with generally held social requirements surrounding self discussion. He often uses paradigmatic 'I' expressions as punch lines, summarizing and providing a transition to the next phase of his letters, and at other times his self-exemplification and personal example is at the heart of his argument (Dodd 1999, 171).

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<sup>342</sup> *avsqenei, a* here will not refer to generic human weakness. First and foremost it will refer to the weakness Paul felt during and after the assault of his . . . [thorn], then more generally to his weakness as "a slave of Christ Jesus" (Rom 1:1). . . . But we should probably find a still broader reference in *avsqenei, a*, a reference to attitudinal weakness, the acknowledgement of one's creatureliness and of one's impotence to render effective service to God without his empowering' (Harris 2005, 863).

<sup>343</sup> This feature can be discerned in part in Rasta discourse; more studies need to be done to determine its extent.

CHAPTER NINE  
IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY FOR AN ANGLOPHONE  
CARIBBEAN THEOLOGY

A. Introduction

There were two significant events slated for the first half of 2007 in the Anglophone Caribbean, and both of them were unprecedented planned experiences for the region. None of them is without theological import. Reference is made here to the International Cricket Council (ICC) World Cup and, more importantly, the bi-centennial celebration of the abolition of the trans-Atlantic slave trade.

On the surface of it, the latter event may seem to lend itself more to theological reflection than the former. After all, one, it may be said, is of purely entertainment value, whereas the other by its very character is a serious issue. However, when the real nature of any theological enterprise is laid bare, both planned events invite serious reflection. Both Callam (1983) and, to lesser extent, Campbell (2003), have admirably shown already how theological thinking may be brought to bear on the issue of regional cricket. And we have within the region not a few theological



reflections on the legacy of slavery (e.g., Bolt 1998; Russell 1979). But the reflection must take place against the backdrop of what it means to do theology in the region. So, before we seek to draw out some ramifications of the study undertaken in this project for application to regional concerns, we need to trace the main contours of theology in the English speaking West Indies.

### B. Roots

The roots of a Caribbean Theology may be traced to the formulation of theological objections against slavery by enslaved Africans (Williams 1989, 1-2; 1999, 2; cf. Bosch 1979). This represents the first stage. The second stage emerged with people like Sam Sharpe, who saw in the words of Jesus ('No man can serve two masters' [cf. Jennings 2007, 52]) a powerful broadside against the colonizers who sought to prolong that which was inevitably doomed to fail. But it was not until the middle of the twentieth century when 'a representational gathering . . . of the churches throughout the region' met in Trinidad 'to analyze the Caribbean's theological inheritance' that things began to take shape.<sup>344</sup>

One of the discoveries made at that conference was that serious 'deficits in terms of relevance' attend the brand of theology that was inherited from the North Atlantic region (Williams 1999, 2), especially in light of the fact that 'the Christian church came to the Caribbean as the religious tradition of the oppressors [raising serious doubts] as to the

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<sup>344</sup> James Cone (1979, 449, 460 n. 6), it would appear, was a special guest at the conference.

legitimacy of its claim to be God's agent of salvation/liberation' (Sitahal 1999, 9).

It was therefore decided from that point onwards that any theological enterprise in the region should purposefully engage not only academics and clergy, but *Am ha arets*, ('everyday people' [West 2006, 15]) the so-called laity as well, for only a:

theology of, for, by and with the "*people*" is a priority for the Caribbean theologian. . . . Theological reflection then becomes part of Christian responsibility to participate in the transformation of the world order to fulfill the requirements of the Kingdom of God'. It will eschew theological reflection on 'the supernatural for its own sake [and include] reflection on how sacred reality acts upon the world, human affairs and history (Sitahal 1999, 3, 4).

In tandem with Sitahal's vision are the words of another Caribbean luminary who affirms that 'The question of authenticity, situatedness, meaningfulness and effectiveness of . . . [this] theology becomes the question of relevance. Therefore a relevant theological project should bear such characteristics. This is what a Caribbean Theological Project must be' (Taylor 1992, 24). As Taylor sees it, such a project, in terms of methodology, is very much 'open to the use of multi-disciplinary tools of analysis along with Caribbean-oriented studies for understanding the Caribbean Reality' ((Taylor 1992, 25).

### C. Task

With these tools to hand, the Caribbean theologian must address *inter alia*, as a matter of urgency, the pressing need for a Caribbean social ethic (29). This social ethic, I suggest, should be grounded in the Dominical

‘I,’<sup>345</sup> despite the call elsewhere (notably Dawkins 2006 and Mutaburka 2005) to abandon such an agenda. In an earlier piece Taylor, it would appear, set himself to do just that: lay a foundation for a regional ethical praxis in the dominical pronouncements found in the Apocalypse, particularly chapters 2 and 3. One of the impressive features of the Apocalypse noted by Taylor (1995, 3, 10):

is the manner in which contextual relevance and universal significance are held together creatively and effectively . . . in the letters. . . . The message [they] convey is not one that is interested in exploring religious themes and ideas without concrete practical reference.

Accordingly, the Dominical Presence is keenly felt throughout the first three chapters of the Apocalypse (Taylor 1995, 16ff).

We have already seen in the foregoing chapters how the selfsame Dominical Presence exerts himself in word and deed in the canonical Gospels, and how the inimitable Sam Sharpe employed a dominical saying as part of his arsenal against colonial tyranny (Jennings 2007, 52-53). Sitahal (1999, 4-5), citing passages like Matthew 5:3; Mark 6:34; and

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<sup>345</sup>Only this ‘I’ can bestow fully the ‘freedom to be free’ (Mandela 1995, 624; cf. John 8)—the same One who ‘might well have learned to walk and talk in Africa. Further . . . [This ‘I’] and his Jewish family, being Afro-Asiatic in color and culture, would have appeared more chocolate-brown than Caucasian in complexion’ (Yorke 1995, 12; similarly, Spong 2007, 50; cf Abrahams 2000, 16: ‘The dark God on whom the sun has shone’).

I am tempted to dub the project for such an undertaking ‘**Theology in the Caribbean Today, I-Perspectives**’—the inadvertently printed title of a book appearing in Taylor’s paper (29). The correct citation is on the following page with the ‘**I**’ not ‘informing’ but ‘following’ ‘Perspectives’ (bold type original).

Luke 6: 220, has sought as well to construct a paradigmatic and foundational theological edifice to serve the needs of the region, even if its application in the first place is limited to those who speak English.<sup>346</sup>

What Sitahal and others have attempted on a more modest scale was, some may say, eminently achieved by Luke when he shaped the Jesus tradition handed down to him to meet the needs of a Theophilus, and subsequently provided a sequel with a universalizing literary format with no less persuasive rhetoric. In the sequel which has come down to us as the Book of Acts, Luke seems anxious to show that the early followers of the Dominical 'I' not only sought to understand their world but engaged it in an effort to introduce other-worldly life transforming values (cf. Roper 1986). In other words, the theological relevance in terms of a radical social ethic that Taylor insists should become a part of God-Talk in the region was already a Lukan burden shared with Theophilus and company.<sup>347</sup>

One of the ways this was achieved by the writer was to provide a variety of progress reports as the trajectory of his narrative moved inexorable

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<sup>346</sup> Here Williams' (1989, 245) counsel is apropos. Although 'Contextualization to some extent runs the risk of the "cultural captivity" of Christ, Caribbean Theology is willing to admit that in Christology the universal as well as the contextual significance exist.' This significance was keenly grasped by Selassie (Naphthali 1999, 11-12) who confessed that the 'New Testament in which our Lord Himself gave the command to go into all the world and preach is of high value. . . . Matthew, Mark, Luke and John—the four gospels in which the sayings of our Lord are recorded—are pillars for all men on the earth.' See especially Tutu (1999, 257-282)

<sup>347</sup> The conviction here is that the Lukan plot is no mere narrative but a story which invites us to share its world, the commitment of its leading characters, and its enthusiasm for life (Neill and Wright 1988, 445).

from a religious capital to the imperial capital that was no less religious but much more pluralistic in orientation.

A central part of the narrative juxtaposes the conversions of three prominent individuals who appear to be descendants of Ham (Adamo 2006a), Shem and Japheth, the three men given the primary responsibility of re-populating the earth, according to the Genesis record. After citing a few instances of ‘mass’ conversions, Luke begins his triadic show-piece by telling the story of a Gentile treasurer (Adamo 2006, 15), who may well have been regarded as among the ‘first-fruits’ of the promise found in Psalm 68: 31 (Acts 8; Chambers 1993; Yamauchi 2006). The third example of an individual coming under the influence of the Dominical ‘I’ (chapter 10) appears to be an adumbration of the final episode of Acts which is located in Rome.

The centre-piece within the triad indicates Luke’s main interest in the former Semitic zealot who became the chief agent in carrying the evangel beyond the borders of Palestine. Saul of Tarsus, then, becomes for Luke the best example of a person who has fully committed herself or himself to the revolutionary ethic of the imposing Dominical Presence-- immanent and transcendent--which is lived out by the power of the Pentecostal Spirit (Black 2006). This can be easily borne out by the amount of space (an estimated two-thirds of his material) dedicated to this convert. As a potential source of doing theology in my own context, I will now take a closer look at Luke’s Paul, right after a word from the ‘horse’s mouth.’

It seems logical to start at the first recorded contact of Saul of Tarsus with the risen Lord. Following Murphy O' Connor (1997, 71), who gives priority to the apostle's writings in these matters, we examine two 'glancing allusions' in 1 Corinthians. The first is in 9:1 where we are confronted with Paul's rhetorical, *ouvci. VIhsou/n to.n ku,rion h`mw/n e`o, rakaE*<sup>348</sup> sandwiched between two similar queries. The question appears in a context wherein the apostle defends certain ministerial rights. Here 'Paul pursues the idea, found at the end of chapter 8, that one must do everything possible to prevent other people from being hindered in their attempts to live the Christian life' (Thrall 1965, 66). So though Paul affirms his apostolicity and its attendant privileges, his love for those to whom he ministers must always take precedence over any of those rights. The rights, according to Paul, have their source in the vision. What we do not know from verse 1 (and this was not the writer's interest at this point) is the timing of this vision.

But there is another verse in the 1 Corinthians 15 which gives us a clue to this. The chapter discusses the resurrection in a pastorally sensitive manner. Although the Corinthians had believed the gospel, that is, the dying and rising of Christ (vv. 1-4), they consequently came to doubt the notion of a physical resurrection. For most of the chapter the writer seeks to prove them wrong, reasoning from the resurrection of Christ himself. If the resurrection is an

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<sup>348</sup>'Have I not seen Jesus our Lord?' The question anticipates a positive response (Bruce 1971, 83).

integral part of the *kerygma*, how can there possibly be a *euangellion* (vv. 1, 12, 13; cf. Rom 4:25)? And without this *euangellion*, both preaching and believing are futile, and both preachers and their audiences are liars and losers, respectively (vv. 14-18).

But Paul insists that Christ is indeed alive (v. 20), a point emphasized by the perfect verb. One of the main lines of evidence, according to Paul, is that the living Christ was seen alive by a ‘cloud of witnesses’. This group includes Cephas, a solid witness in his day, along with the ‘twelve’ (v. 5) and at one time over five hundred people (vv. 6, 7). Finally, Paul was able to see the risen Christ for himself (vv. 8-10).

Similar allusions are to be found in Galatians 1:12, 16. In the first verse we read, ‘For I did receive it [sc. The gospel] from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ’ (NRSV). Although it is clear from verse 11 that Paul is talking about the gospel which he received, it is not far-fetched to see within the statement itself a carefully worded testimony—a reference to the writer’s conversion, especially in light of verse 16. ‘In Paul’s case conversion and call to ministry are inseparable’ (Murphy-O’ Connor 1997, 71). But can we get any further detail concerning Paul’s conversion<sup>349</sup> from his own writings? It does not appear so. Neither do we have to be as skeptical as Murphy-O’ Connor (1997, 78), who writes concerning Paul’s conversion, ‘What actually happened must remain a mystery unless we are

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<sup>349</sup> On whether or not Paul was really converted, see Segal (2003, 159-160).

prepared to invoke the vivid details of Luke's accounts, in each of which, incidentally, Jesus has to identify himself (Acts 9:5; 22:8; 26:15).' Murphy-O'Connor at least mentions the Lukan testimonies, though, admittedly, quite grudgingly. Sanders (1977, 432), on the other hand, dismisses them completely. Both these scholars are to be commended for their methodological rigour in sticking to primary sources, in this case the undisputed Pauline letters. But if a biography, ancient or otherwise, can give us fruitful insights into a person's life, then Luke, whom some regard as a friend of the apostle, may be helpful in this regard notwithstanding his fraternal biases. Granted, Luke did not write a biography of Paul, and we are well aware that not all NT scholars are convinced of the reliability of the book of Acts. But while we cannot mount a defense here of the trustworthiness of the Lukan corpus, the nature and purpose of our investigation will not in any way be impoverished by including the aforementioned Lukan passages (cf. Campbell 2005; Fung 1986; Munck 2001).<sup>350</sup> Therefore we turn our attention to Acts 9.

According to verses 1-9, Saul requested and received visa from the authorities in Judea to go to Damascus to carry out his mission against the early disciples of Jesus. While he was near his destination he was confronted with a light from heaven out of which came a voice saying, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?' (v. 4). Saul immediately responded, 'Who are you,

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<sup>350</sup>A nuanced appraisal of the issues involved and a cautious defense of Luke's trustworthiness are to be found in Bruce (1987, 379-393), Barrett (1999, 515-534), Porter (1999) and Chilton (2004, xv). For the Sisyphus-like character of doing history vis-à-vis the NT in general and Rastafari in particular, see respectively Meeks (2005) and Patterson (1964).



Lord?’ (v. 5a); then came the surprising rejoinder: *evgw, eivmi*  
*VIhsou/j o]n su. diw,keij* (I am Jesus whom you persecute; v. 5b).  
 Barrett (1994, 450; cf. Bock 2007, 349, 354-362) sums up the significance of  
 verse 5 in this way:

The question corresponds to the *evgw, eivmi*, that follows. Saul is aware that he is confronted by a superhuman being; . . . The question leads to identification: the superhuman stranger is Jesus . . . The discovery that the crucified Jesus was in fact alive agrees with Paul’s own account of the origin of his Christian life (Gal. 1:15, 16; Cor 9:1; 15: 8; CF. Phil. 3:7-11), and was the root of the new understanding of the OT and the reinterpretation of Judaism that were the foundation of his theology. See *Romans 7-9*.

In chapter 22 Paul witnesses before Jewish authorities; in chapter 26, civil authorities.<sup>351</sup> 22: 8 accords well with 9:5 in terms of the pronominal emphasis.<sup>352</sup> After receiving permission to speak (in Greek? v.1), Paul proceeds to share his revolutionary experience; and for the first time we are explicitly told that the resurrected Lord spoke in *th/| ~Ebrai<di diale,ktw|* (v.14; ‘Hebrew language’ [RSV];<sup>353</sup> ‘Aramaic’ [NIV]). Again we have the contrastive *evgw, . . . evgw,* as in 22:8. The fact that *evgw,* is placed on the lips of Jesus in all three Lukan pericopae seems to justify

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<sup>351</sup>For a useful synopsis of the three passages, see Dunn (2003, 210-212).

<sup>352</sup>An interesting observation is the apostle’s own use of *evgw,* in 22:3, but especially in v. 8 where it is set in contrast to a dominical ‘I’. This Pauline ‘I’ is undoubtedly autobiographical.

<sup>353</sup>The NRSV has the identical rendering accompanied with a marginal note that reads ‘That is, Aramaic’. The NLT has just the opposite, and the REB with its ‘Jewish language’ is non-committal.

Dalman's (2004, 241; cf. 1967, 17)<sup>354</sup> Aramaic re-construction 'anā Yēshûa' . . . ' (cf. [ ;WvyE ynIâa] ; *Hbrt Hhdsh*), as well as shows Luke's interest in the Dominical 'I'.<sup>355</sup> What appears certain here is that Jesus spoke a Semitic language (Chilton 2004, 49), at least on this occasion, and the dominical 'I' has certainly played a prominent role in the dialogue.

One could say that it not only adorned the authority of the Dominical 'I' but also points in the direction of his divinity, because the construction  $\nu\epsilon\gamma\omega, \epsilon\iota\upsilon\mu\iota \nu\iota\eta\sigma\upsilon\upsilon/\text{j } \omicron\text{]n } \sigma\upsilon. \delta\iota\omega, \kappa\epsilon\iota\text{j}$  (*I am Jesus whom you persecute*; v. 15) preceded by  $\omicron\text{` } . \kappa\upsilon, \rho\iota\omicron\text{j}$  (the Lord) 'is certainly intended in this sense' (Dalman 1997, 330).<sup>356</sup> This no doubt left an indelible impression on Saul, and his own employment of 'I' would never approach anything like

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<sup>354</sup> *Mit . . . hebräischen Sprache . . . in welcher nach\_Apg. 21, 40; 22, 2 Paulus zu den Jerusalemern, nach 26, 14 Jesus zu Paulus redete, wird das Aramäische gemeint sein* (Dalman 1965, 5) 'Aramaic . . . must be meant by the "Hebrew tongue" in which . . . Jesus spoke to Paul (Acts 26: [14])' (Dalman 1997, 7). Another of Dalman's (1967, 17) original reads: 'anā jēshûa' . . . /Ach bin Jesus'.

<sup>355</sup> *Pace* Dunn (2003, 166): 'Had the striking "I am" self-assertions of John been remembered as spoken by Jesus, how could any Evangelist have ignored them so completely as the Synoptics do?'. But see Luke's (7: 27) intriguing omission of  $\epsilon\upsilon\gamma\omega,$  from Malachi 3:1 (LXX). It appears that Stott (2003, 36) also finds this Johannine phenomenon a trifle suspicious: 'This prominence of the personal pronoun ("I- I- I- . . .") is very disturbing, especially in one who declared humility to be the pre-eminent virtue.'

<sup>356</sup> *Sicherlich ist das dem Lukas geläufige*  $\omicron\text{` } . \kappa\upsilon, \rho\iota\omicron\text{j}$  *von ihm so gemeint* (Dalman 1965, 272).

that he encountered on the Damascus road.<sup>357</sup> From now on there is only one supreme ‘I’ clothed in humanity—the one who spoke from heaven.

Luke (and the other Evangelists) , I believe, has paved the way for all who would seek to do theology in their own context by underscoring first of all the value of narrative and *bios* for such an enterprise, since a ‘narrative communicates meaning through the mimesis of human life’ (Waltke 2007, 93; cf. Moltmann 2006). In his first volume the central figure is undoubtedly what we are calling the Dominical Presence—the embodiment of truth (Thompson 2003)—and, secondarily, those who come under his influence. In his second volume, though the Dominical Presence is not as noticeable, the influence is even stronger with Paul taking much of the spotlight, demonstrating beyond the shadow of a doubt Dr. Joel Edwards’ (1998, 18; cf. Noelliste 1987; Russell 2000; Warner-Lewis 2007) observation that ‘when God sets people free, He doesn’t set them free for their own ends and their own means; it doesn’t become self-indulgence, it’s a “giving awayness”.’

#### D. Summary

For theology in the English-speaking Caribbean to approach anything like maximum beneficence, its practitioners can ill afford to ignore the Lukan

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<sup>357</sup> ‘We have seen that Paul’s previous self-concept portrayed the features of someone who was highly satisfied with his religious achievements. This self-appraisal was totally shattered by the Damascus event. . . . He realized that, because of human sin, man not only has no ground for any self-boasting before God (Rom 3: 27; 4:2; [7: 1-25] 2 Cor 12:5); he is totally and irrevocably dependent on *grace* [as a spiritual weakling. Therefore] Paul’s new self-understanding [as dependent ‘I’] also becomes clear in the radical way in which he understands himself as transformed by God’ (du Toit 1996, 84; my italics).

paradigm sketched above. This approach would bring into sharper focus the lives of people like Marcus Garvey himself (Cone 1969, 130; Gordon 2001, 7; Maddix 1987; e.g., Coke 2001). But the fundamental frame of reference must always remain the Dominical ‘I’ of the chief NT witnesses, the One who exemplified the dictum, ‘All that is not eternal is eternally out of date’ (Heitzig 2003, 187; cf. Cone 1969, 40). These witnesses in one way or the other all point to a way of doing theology that manifests itself ‘only in concrete action’ (Gutierrez 1973, 199; cf. Ama 2004, 97-102). This alone is authentic theology—a theology which interprets faith,<sup>358</sup> like James (Andria 2006; Palmer 2005), as philanthropic engagement with the poor ‘to whom the good news is addressed as a way of understanding the hoped-for horizon of God’s new creation’ (Russell 1985, 18),<sup>359</sup> and as ‘The diligent pursuit of piety [which] is the surest method of attaining sure learning’ (*De certissima ad veram eruditionem perveniendi ratione per studium pietatis*; Johann A. Bengel, cited in Ehrman 2007, 109). Only this way of theologizing transforms a person into a real *Mensch*—where, at the end of the day, s/he can say, ‘bin ich mir ein wertcs Ich’ (Moltmann 2006, 363)—I am myself a worthwhile ‘I’.

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<sup>358</sup> This *pi, stij* (142 times in the NT), rightly understood, is the vital link between *qeo, j* (548x) and the *criso, j* (379x) on the one hand, and *a; nqrwpoj* (126x) on the other (Yorke 1991, 24). Without this kind of faith, it is impossible to please the One who makes the call to be engaged in authentic theology and praxis in and on behalf of the body of Christ (cf. Heb. 11:6; Thomas 2006).

<sup>359</sup> Cited in Murrell (1988, 343) as part of his critique of what he perceives to be James Barr’s truncated hermeneutical agenda and theology.

## CHAPTER TEN

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

There are three blocks of material that display a rich tapestry of emphatic first person singular pronouns within the NT canonical period: the Synoptic tradition, Paul's letter to the Romans and, pre-eminently, the first and last two pieces of the Johannine literature (Appendix D).

A survey of Pauline usage of the independent I-pronoun reveals a variety of functions. First, the pronoun sometimes serves as an 'autobiographical' indicator. Other times it is used to highlight apostolic authority or to underscore an interpretative situation which may be connected somehow to apostolic authority. Quite often the Pauline 'I' functions in various contexts in a paradigmatic sense. We have observed as well that Paul was not afraid to employ *ἐγώ* to bolster his language of weakness—a language that also serves paradigmatically at times.

As far as we can tell, only one other period during the Christian era has shown similar interest in the pronominal 'I', that is, the period of Rastafari which has its genesis in the twentieth century and flowering in the twenty first. Hence the question: How is it that outside of the NT Rastas are the only Christian sect that has such a prominent pronominal lexicon?

Nowhere in the literature on or by Rastafari is this question addressed with any conviction. This may be due to the fact that most works on the movement

take a predominantly historical or sociological approach in their investigation, resulting in very little treatment of its theological presuppositions, philosophical underpinnings and internal dynamics. The present work has now sought to correct this deficiency.

Our examination revealed two tendencies in respect of the use of the pronoun in RastafarI argot: one toward a deliberate and variegated literary strategy, and the other in the direction of a theological agenda with a Christocentric focus.

Therefore in the foregoing pages, I have attempted to compare the lexical and theological significance of the ubiquitous 'I' in the living discourse of RastafarI with its putative source of inspiration, the NT itself. During the course of my investigation I observed a far greater continuity of what may be regarded as theologically pregnant expressions between the lexicon of RastafarI and the Johannine literature than with that of the Synoptics. Given RastafarI's preoccupation with the Apocalypse as a messianic legitimizing document in particular, this is hardly surprising.

In respect of Rasta's use of the 'I' vis-à-vis the Pauline epistles, just about the only common ground of comparison is in the area of creativity. Theologically, the contrast is stark, with Paul's 'I' functioning at times to underscore human weakness and the 'I' of RastafarI to focus attention on the divine spark in man.

These observations, I am painfully aware, are by no means exhaustive. They are at best explorative. Much more needs to be done. For example, we

have only skimmed the surface where the unemphatic dominical pronominals are concerned. These of necessity appear much more frequently than their morphologically isolated counterparts. Our decision to leave them out of the equation may lead to the erroneous conclusion that the creative and theologically constructive employment of the 'I' is limited to their cognate. Though this was bound to have less than an enriching effect on our subsequent comparative analysis, it nonetheless also raises the potential for further investigation.

Much more work, for instance, is left to be done in exploring the relations between the Dread Talk and Jamaica Talk. The former is a subset of the latter, but Jamaica Talk which has been spoken over a longer period than Dread Talk, appears to be spoken with far less confidence than its younger linguistic relative. In fact, it seems as though the language of RastafarI has injected new life into the common language of the Jamaican society. Why is this so? And how is it that, like the English at one time, many Jamaicans are ashamed of their mother tongue, preferring instead to give pride of place to an exotic speech form?

Another area, not unrelated to the question of language, which has remained underdeveloped, is the complex issue of skin colour and how it relates to biblical revelation, the church, and society. What is it that has caused the RastafarI movement to have transcended the colour question, and the

church in the Anglo-phone Caribbean to have ignored it?<sup>360</sup> If indeed the church has a deficit in this sensitive area, how can this be addressed, and can Caribbean theologians learn from those who have evidently benefited the most from Garvey's legacy?<sup>361</sup> These are just some of the questions which may need serious, if not urgent, attention by those who might wish to delve further in the narrow field of the lexical choice of 'I-n-I' and its potentially broad theological dimensions within the context of the NT canon.

*Hold onto my hand my sister  
 Hold hands with me my brother  
 Let's all walk together  
 Into the hope we have in Jesus Christ.  
 If I cannot teach you to fish  
 I will give you a fish  
 If that's all I can do  
 That is the all I shall do  
 Let the change in the mindset,  
 Hence the culture,  
 Begin with first person singular. (Austin G. Henry\*)*

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<sup>360</sup> One Rasta's 'criticism of Christianity was that it did not teach "race consciousness" while Rasta taught "race-consciousness, identity and cultural perspective' (Spencer 1999, 175; cf. Selassie 1967, 19-21).

<sup>361</sup> A South African/Jamaican--and a staunch Garveyite--contends that the greatest legacy of Marcus Garvey is his contribution to the 'emancipation of mental slavery' (Abrahams 2000, 16; see also pp. 245-256 on Rastafari).

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## APPENDIX A

## Chiastic Analysis of the Apocalypse

(Featuring the invincible/visible 'Power of the Trinity'\* from a Rastafarian Christological perspective)

<i>A</i> The Eternal Alpha: 'The First and the Last'	1
<i>B</i> The Ecclesial Christ: 'Among the Lampstands'	2-3
<i>C</i> The Royal * <i>Selassie</i> : 'The Lion of the Tribe of Judah'	4-5
<i>D</i> The Judicial Christ: 'The Wrath of the Lamb'	6-18
<i>C'</i> The Regal * <i>Selassie</i> : 'King of kings'	19
<i>B'</i> The Congregational Christ: 'They Reign with Him'	20
<i>A'</i> The Eternal Omega: 'the Beginning and the End'	21-22

## APPENDIX B

## 15 Reasons why Jamaican Patois is a Language

By Karl Folkes

Posted Wednesday, March 24, 2004--

[http://www.jamaicans.com/speakja/patoisarticle/patois\\_language\\_15\\_points.shtml](http://www.jamaicans.com/speakja/patoisarticle/patois_language_15_points.shtml)

In the fifteen points below I have summarized the issues on why Jamaican Patois is a language. As a Jamaican educator and linguist I have been working diligently to have our Jamaican language fully and officially recognized by our Jamaican Government. So far I've been receiving favorable commentary from the Jamaican Press and the Jamaican Government. Thanks for your highly valuable support! Karl Folkes (Yaadibwai).

Fifteen points on "why Jamaican Patois is a language":

1. Creole languages are in effect the modern languages of the world; and have evolved and developed with varying degrees of automaticity over the last 400 years.
2. There are more than 200 attested Creole languages in the world and represented in all continents of the globe.
3. Creole languages are popularly described as evolving from an earlier 'Pidgin', or putatively "less fully-developed form". However, this is merely a linguistic theory framed within a Western European ideological worldview.
4. The majority of Creole languages (again, the term 'Creole' is of European origin, and therefore troublesome for several reasons) have their origins in African languages. Thus, while their vocabulary or lexicon may be largely European-based (with lexical contributions from the hypothesized 'superstrate' languages), their syntax or grammar is distinctly non-European, and certainly more closely African (a continent historically described as "the dark continent" and therefore genetically contributing hypothesized 'substrate' languages).
5. The Creole languages of the Caribbean Basin are essentially syntactically more alike than they are different in their underlying or deep structure, despite their surface phonological, morphological, and lexical differences.

6. Creole languages all adhere to linguistic standards. This means it is linguistically correct to speak of Standard English, as well as Standard Jamaican, Standard Haitian, Standard Sranan Tongo, etc., with these latter languages being separate languages and not dialects of English or Dutch.

7. These standards adhere to the rules of their own grammar, which makes communication reliable, uniform, and possible among speakers of the various Creole languages.

8. Creole is not the name of a language, but the family name of several distinct languages which include Jamaican, Haitian, Garifuna, Sranan Tongo -- and, yes, Afrikaans (in South Africa) and Yiddish (in Israel and other countries around the world).

9. All human languages belong to language families: as examples English, German, Dutch, Danish, Swedish (to Germanic); Spanish, Italian, French, Portuguese (to Latinate or Romance); Chinese, Korean, Japanese (to Sino-Sinitic), etc. Languages which belong to the same language families can be expected to share similar phonological, lexical, morphological, and syntactic features; but they are different enough to be recognized as different languages, and not dialects of one another.

10. Languages, in general, are named after the countries that produced them natively: English (England); German (Germany); French (France); Spanish (Spain); Russian (Russia). Occasionally languages bear the name of ethnic or cultural affiliations. This logically suggests that the language of Jamaica should more properly be called "Jamaican"--certainly not "Patwa" or "Patois" which is a derisive term that was spawned by Europeans within a colonial imperialistic paradigm to describe and to maintain relations of inequity between 'slave' and 'master'. These terms should no longer be used, certainly not in Independent Jamaica.

11. All languages, including Jamaican, started out in spoken form only. That is a natural course of linguistic development. The written forms came afterwards. More importantly, all spoken languages can--without exception-- be represented uniformly in writing.

12. When a language is represented uniformly in writing (i.e., when there is uniformity in phonemic-graphemic correspondence, prestige is given to the language around the world and literacy development of the speakers of that language is encouraged in the native language.

13. Most Jamaicans are bilingual to varying degrees in Jamaican and English. Of course, some Jamaicans are monolingual Jamaican, with a small percentage monolingual English (perhaps the British, Americans, or Canadians in Jamaica).

14. "Jamaican" is the native language of most of its speakers for whom English is indeed a second language.

15. It is psychologically uplifting and culturally empowering to be bilingual and biliterate!

## APPENDIX C

## The Language of Paul

If the language of Jesus was Semitic, Paul's was definitely Greek. His letters have come down to us in this language, and that of the Koine variety. At the time of the apostle it was the *lingua franca* of the Mediterranean world, legacy of the great Alexander of Macedonia; and while Jesus must have been fluent in Hebrew and especially Aramaic, Greek must have been known to him as well (Horsley 1996, 154-71). Once thought to be a combination of the Classical and Hebrew by some scholars, we have come to realize that the language of Paul was indeed the language of the common wo/man (Horrell 2005, 403). This knowledge has been vouchsafed through the discoveries of various papyrus materials in Egypt (Mounce 1995, 1).<sup>362</sup>

The Greek language in general has over 3000 years of history, from the 16<sup>th</sup> century BCE to the present. The Koine, the language of Paul, flourished between BCE 300-300 CE. In comparison to the forms which preceded it, the Koine was characterized by simplicity of syntax, form and vocabulary amenable and useful for merchants, travelers, soldiers and statesmen alike (Taylor *et al.* 2004). This is well attested by the thousands of Papyri found in North Africa, preserving 'for us the actual life of the day and includ[ing] letters

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<sup>362</sup> 'The conclusion is that "Biblical Greek", except where it is translation Greek [like the LXX], was simply the vernacular of daily life' (Moulton 1908, 5).

of all sorts . . . contracts, receipts, proclamations, anything, everything’  
(Robertson and Davis 1977, 12-13).

Accepting the overall contribution of the masses of Greek papyri on our understanding of the NT, Nigel Turner (1980, vii-xiv) feels, however, that their value has been overstated to the neglect of other important features, such the influence of the LXX and, what the REB calls, the Jewish languages. In other words, not all important terms in the Greek New Testament can be elucidated by invoking the papyri.

There are many words that are best understood against a Semitic background, and even where the papyri shed light on some terms, a more complete colouring can be seen from the perspective of the Aramaic or Hebrew.

So with this caveat<sup>363</sup> in mind, there is a wealth of knowledge to be gained by carefully weighing the vocabulary of Paul in the light emanating from the ancient Orient. Writing on ‘the more or less *popular*’ appeal of the NT writers Deissmann (1910, 63-64) remarks:

St. Paul too can command the terse pithiness of the homely gospel speech, especially in his ethical exhortations as pastor. These take shape naturally in clear-cut *maxims* such as the people themselves use and treasure up. But even where St. Paul is arguing to himself and takes more to the language of the middle class, even where he is carried away by priestly fervour of the liturgist [cf. Rom 15] and the enthusiasm of the psalmist [e.g., Rom 3: 10ff], his Greek never becomes literary. . . . thickly studded with the rugged, forceful words taken from the popular idiom [like that of Rasta] , it is perhaps the most brilliant example of

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<sup>363</sup> ‘It is important, therefore, to guard against two opposing errors: not everything which conforms to Semitic idiom is a Semitism, nor is everything which appears somewhere or sometime in Greek genuine Greek’ (Blass 1961, 4). Cf. Neil (1966, 150).

the artless though not inartistic colloquial prose of a traveled city resident of the Roman Empire, its wonderful flexibility making it just the Greek for use in a mission to all the world.

Since Deissmann wrote, not a few studies have demonstrated that the apostle was a much better literary artist than was first imagined (e.g., Spencer 1984). But what Deissmann and his followers have done is to put beyond doubt the character of Paul's writings as 'Holy Ghost' language dressed in the garment of a Graeco-Roman. But where the nominative 'I' is concerned there does not seem to be any great deal of difference between the Koine usage and its classical counterpart. The only possible exceptions to this are the Gospels, where the influence of Hebraism appears substantial (Blass 1961). The few published examples from the papyri seem to support this: *evgw. no, mouj avqrw, pouj evqe, mhn ... evgw, Kro, nou quga, thr presbuta, th ... evgw, eivmi h` avlh, qeia ...* (Moulton and Milligan 1930, 180). The lines, which predate the time of Jesus, remind one of certain Johannine passages, especially the words I have underscored (cf. Deissmann 1910, 135).

More recent studies of the language of Paul's letters have returned to an emphasis which was that of early Greek grammarians, that is, on the verb (Campbell 2007; Porter 1992, 20). In fact, the modern study is enriched by the study of linguistics, particularly the investigation into the nature of the verbal system. More than a decade ago two scholars, namely, Fanning (1990) and Porter (1989), published revisions of their doctoral work in the area of

aspectual theory. The latter,<sup>364</sup> for instance, defines verbal aspect as ‘*a semantic (meaning) category by which a speaker or writer grammaticalizes (i.e., represents a meaning by choice of a word-form) a perspective on action by selection of a particular tense-form in the verbal system* (Porter 1992, 21; italics his).

This understanding of aspect, then, links the form of the verb (morphology) with its function. Although the concept of aspect is closely tied to the tense forms, Porter feels strongly that the verbs *qua* verbs have nothing to do with temporal matters. These can only be inferred from the context. For Porter, there are three verbal aspects that were available in Paul’s day. This therefore means that in the writing of Romans, for example, one may very well find 1) the aspect complete in which ‘*the action is conceived of . . . as complete and undifferentiated process*’ (e.g., Rom 5:14), 2) the aspect continuous in which the language depicts an action in progress (Rom 6:8), or 3) the aspect as complex, in which ‘*the state of action is conceived of by the language user as reflecting a given . . . state of affairs*’ (e.g., Rom 6:7; Porter’s [1992, 22] italics).

Certain verbs, however, particularly *εινμι*, found regularly on the lips of the Jesus of the Gospels, do not carry any aspectual feature whatever, and so as a consequence may have very little exegetical significance.<sup>365</sup> Of course, an

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<sup>364</sup> Porter’s influence is seen especially in Young (1994), Decker (2001) and Gundry (1993); and Fanning in McKay (1993) and Wallace (1996). Both are well utilized by Harris (2005), and evaluated in Porter and Carson (1993).

<sup>365</sup> Future tense verbs are also ‘aspectually vague’ (Porter 1992, 23).

affirmation like *evgw, eivmi. h` avlh, qeia* (John 14: 6) *evgw. eivmi sa, rkino, j* (Rom 7: 14) will have exegetical significance in their respective contexts that would be determined, not by the aspectually ‘challenged’ linking verb, but perhaps by the prominent nominative and the contextual force of the discourse.

In essential agreement with Porter, at least at the level of definition, is Buist Fanning.<sup>366</sup> His

conviction is that verbal aspect is too dependent on other features of the context for it *alone* [his emphasis] to be determinative in interpretation. However, [aspect] in combination with other features . . . is a significant linguistic element to be weighed in interpreting a number of texts in the NT.’ (Fanning 1990, vi).

Porter would agree with Fanning’s distinction between *aktionsart*, an early twentieth century description of the fundamental function of the verb, and aspect. Whereas *aktionsart* is said to describe how an action actually occurs, aspect, on the other hand, ‘involves a way of viewing the action; [it] reflects the subjective conception or portrayal by the speaker; focuses the speaker’s representation of the action’ (Fanning 1990, 31).

But despite their general agreement on the importance of the subject, Porter and Fanning, it has been observed, have some serious differences in the way they perceive how this promising approach to the study of the Greek verbal system apply to the Pauline and other NT corpora. For instance, Porter

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<sup>366</sup>Later (p.1) he seems to cite approvingly those scholars who distinguish the tenses from aspect, which is ‘concerned rather with features like duration, progression, completion, repetition, inception, current relevance and their opposites.



believes that the high incidence of present subjunctives in 1 Thessalonians may have been chosen by the writer to express urgency, while Fanning gives a similar emphasis to corresponding aorists.

Since aspectology is such a young and complex discipline, and since its serious application to the NT has barely begun, it is definitely too early to determine its full contribution to the understanding of Paul's usage of language, particularly in the book of Romans. Notwithstanding this reality, the work of Porter or Fanning in this regard should be consulted for any light it may shed on even familiar passages, along with that of Caragounis's (2004, 317-336) which purportedly provides important checks and correctives.<sup>367</sup>

#### Summary

The character of the Greek of Paul and the other NT writers may best be summarized in the words of a twentieth-century translator:

I must, in common justice, confess here that for many years I had viewed the Greek of the New Testament with a rather snobbish disdain. I had read the best of Classical Greek both at school and Cambridge for over ten years. To come down to the *Koine* of the first century A.D. seemed, I have sometimes remarked rather uncharitably, like reading Shakespeare for some years and turning to the Vicar's letter in the Parish Magazine! But I think now that I was wrong: I can see that the expression of the Word of God in ordinary workaday language is all a piece with God's incredible humility in becoming Man in Jesus Christ. And, further, the language itself is not as pedestrian as I had at first supposed (Phillips 1967, 18).

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<sup>367</sup>After commenting on a methodological problem that may be responsible for differences between Fanning and Porter, Silva (1993, 81-82) advises pastors and exegetes to say very little about aspect.

## APPENDIX D

## The OT, the Jesus Tradition and Rastafari

In his summary of the OT data, Stauffer (TDNT 2: 343ff) informs us that the 'I-style' became characteristic 'of the self-revealing God of Israel'. This is perhaps best exemplified by the  $\text{h}y<+h.a, (\text{rv}<\text{\AA}a] \text{h}y<\beta h.a, (\text{ of Ex. 3:14 (I am what I am) and the introductory } \text{h}w" \text{\AA}h y > \text{ 'y}k i \text{\AA}n O a \text{ ' (I am YHWH) of the Decalogue (Ex. 20:2ff; cf. Dt. 32:39ff).$

According to Stauffer, God is presented as the 'ultimate Subject' in Isaiah 40-45--the first and final Word, the omnipotent Will and exclusive Source of 'revealing and reconciling grace [on which] we are totally dependent'.

Therefore, similar predications of kings or gods are considered arrogant and blasphemous (Ezek. 28).<sup>368</sup>

Stauffer continues:

The NT maintains the belief that God is absolute Subject, but offers few I-declarations on God's part except in quotations, e.g., Is. 45:23 in Rom 14:11, Deut. 32:35 in Rom 12:19, Ps. 2:7 in Acts 13:33; Heb. 5:5, and Ex. 3:14 in expanded form in Rev. 1:8. . . . The rabbis avoid this style, fighting against the real or apparent

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<sup>368</sup>Commenting on Phil. 2:5-8, Simpson (1944, 22) has this to say about a similar passage: 'Surely the apostle is here re-evoking the colossal effigy of Lucifer drawn from Isa xiv under the mask of the Babylonian despot, whose manifesto . . . culminates with the arrogant vaunt: "I will ascend . . . I will be like the Most High"' For a thorough discussion of divine 'I-style' predications in the OT, the Targumim and Rabbinic literature, see Williams (2000, 15-205).

pretension of I-sayings in the name of monotheism (cf. Gamaliel's caution in Acts 5:36-37).

It is against this background—the reticence of the Rabbis to use first person pronouns in the singular, the infrequency of the divine 'I' in the NT, and the shared conviction of the NT writers that God is the ultimate Subject-- that the dominical 'I' and that of the Rasta stand out in bold relief as first and twenty first century predications.

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