

Gospel as News: εὐαγγελ- from Aristophanes to the Apostle Paul

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Against the contentions of a number of NT scholars, the present article aims to demonstrate that the apostle Paul's gospel language never refers to ongoing Christian instruction and only ever connotes announcements which are *news* to those who hear them. This conclusion, which is maintained even in connection with Rom 1.15, a key text for the 'broad-ranging' view of εὐαγγελ-, is shown to conform to the wholly consistent usage of gospel terminology throughout Graeco-Roman, Jewish and early Christian literature: 'gospel' is news.

Introduction

G. Friedrich,¹ P. Bowers² and, more recently, P. O'Brien³ have argued that εὐαγγελ- for Paul covers the 'whole range of evangelistic and teaching ministry'.⁴ Indeed, Friedrich goes as far as to state: 'The same Gospel is proclaimed in both missionary and congregational preaching. Paul makes no distinction.'⁵ A key text in this contention is Rom 1.15, in which the apostle is thought to have expressed a desire to 'evangelise' (εὐαγγελίζομαι) the *believers* of Rome. Against this, it will be shown, firstly, that 'gospel' language in Graeco-Roman, OT and early Christian usage uniformly connotes the announcement of *news*, and, secondly, that the Pauline usage, even in Rom 1.15, wholly conforms to this pattern.

1. 'Gospel' as news in Greek tradition

Εὐαγγελίζομαι denotes the activity of the εὐαγγέλος, the messenger of ancient Greece who was sent from the field of battle by ship, by horse, or as a swift

1 G. Friedrich, 'Εὐαγγελίζομαι', *TDNT* 2:707–37.

2 P. Bowers, 'Studies in Paul's Understanding of his Mission' (PhD diss., Cambridge University, 1976) 81–103.

3 P. T. O'Brien, *Gospel and Mission in the Writings of Paul: An Exegetical and Theological Analysis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1995) 61–5.

4 *Ibid.*, 62.

5 Friedrich, 'Εὐαγγελίζομαι', 720. He cites Rom 1.15; 1 Cor 9.12–18; Gal 4.13; 2 Tim 4.5 without explanation. The first will be treated below; the others offer no support so far as I can tell.

runner, to proclaim to the awaiting city the victory – εὐτυχής is commonly associated with the announcement – of the army or the death or capture of an enemy, or some other significant announcement. The noun εὐαγγέλιον, an adjective used as a substantive, derives from εὐαγγέλος and means simply ‘that which is proper to the εὐαγγέλος’,⁶ thus allowing the two-fold usage of antiquity, ‘reward/offering for tidings’⁷ and the ‘tidings’ themselves.

1.1. *Heralding news*

In Greek literature, the root εὐαγγελ- was not associated with moral or philosophical discourse in the way words such as διδασχία (teaching), νοθεσία (instruction/correction) and παράκλησις (exhortation) frequently were. ‘Gospel’ for the ancient world was something of a ‘media’ term, connoting the announcement of a message that was news to its hearers, not one belonging to the arena of education.⁸ The word is commonly used in relation to reports about military victories. So, for instance, Lycurgus, a high Athenian official (c. 390–c. 324 BCE), accuses a certain Leocrates of treason for abandoning Athens during the battle of Chaeronea (338 BCE) and then, on arriving safely in Rhodes, announcing the demise of the great city ‘as if’ he were making known news of great success: ὡσπερ τῆ πατρίδι μεγάλας εὐτυχίας εὐαγγελιζόμενος.⁹ A similar usage from a later period (c. CE 143–176) is found in Pausanias’s *Description of Greece* (IV.19.5), in which he describes the earlier violent exploits (c. 650 BCE) of the Messenian army ‘General’, Aristomenes, whose eventual capture (though he soon escaped) was important news for the nervous city of Sparta: ἐλθόντες Λακεδαιμονίοις Ἀριστομένην εὐηγγελίζοντο ἡλωκέναι.¹⁰

6 Ibid., 721. See also O. Michel, ‘Evangelium’, *RAC* 6 (1965) 1107–60, 1110.

7 The use of the noun meaning ‘reward/offering for news’ is of little significance for the present investigation, except to note that the message which prompts the reward or offering is always ‘news’ to the hearer: Homer *Odyssey* XIV.152, 166; Isocrates *Areopagiticus* 7.10; Diodorus *Historical Library* XV.74.2; Xenophon *Hellenica* I.6.37; Plutarch *Agesilaus* 17.3, 33.4; Plutarch *Agesilaus* 17.3, 33.4; *Sertorius* 11.4, 26.3; *Cato the Younger* 51.1; *Phocian* 16.6; *Moralia, Precepts of Statecraft* 799.F; *Moralia, Demosthenes* 846.E; Philostratus *Life of Apollonius* V.8.3 (verb).

8 See C. A. Evans, ‘Preacher and Preaching: Some Lexical Observations’, *JETS* 24/4 (1981) 315–22. D. Litfin, *St. Paul’s Theology of Proclamation: 1 Corinthians 1–4 and Greco-Roman Rhetoric* (SNTSMS 79; Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1994) 195–7, has noted that εὐαγγελ- was of little significance in the rhetorical practices and literature of the period, since the term connoted ‘report’ rather than ‘persuasion’.

9 Lycurgus *Against Leocrates* 1.18. Compare the use of εὐαγγελ- by the great orator Demosthenes, from the same period (384–322 BCE). In his defence of his loyalty to Athens, he insists that he does not rejoice at the good fortune of the foreigner in his land and ‘announces it’ (εὐαγγελιζόμενος) about as a good thing (Demosthenes *On the Crown* 18.323).

10 Other examples of the terminology connoting ‘news of success’ at war include: Plutarch *Pompey* 41.3 (verb), 66.3 (noun); *Sertorius* 11.4 (verb); *Phocian* 23.4 (noun); *Moralia (On the Fame of the Athenians)* 347.D (singular noun used twice); Chariton *Callirhoe* VIII.2.5 (noun); Philostratus *Life of Apollonius* VIII.27.2 (noun); *Lives of the Sophists* I.508.14 (noun).

The terminology may also be used of ‘mundane’ announcements not necessarily associated with the state. The verb and noun (typically in the plural) may be seen together in the comical piece *Knights* 644–7, by Aristophanes, in which he humorously parodies the usual gravity of the terms by associating them with news of an all-time low in the price of anchovies at the local market: εὐαγγελίσσασθαι πρῶτον ὑμῖν βούλομαι . . . μὲν εὐαγγέλια. In his romantic, first-century novel¹¹ *Callirhoe*, Chariton uses the terminology to refer to an announcement concerning the purchase of the most beautiful girl in the world,¹² and then of the king’s intention to marry her.¹³

1.2. *Heralding news of the emperor*

The use of the substantive in relation to the imperial cult wholly conforms to that in wider Greek literature: the announcement of *news* (concerning the emperor’s deeds). One much quoted passage in this regard comes from the Calendar Decree of the Asian League (9 BCE), at the suggestion of the proconsul, that the birthday of Emperor Augustus (23 September) mark the beginning of the Asian new year.¹⁴ The letter of the proconsul recommending the measure and the accompanying documents were published in numerous cities throughout Asia,¹⁵ ensuring wide public knowledge of the decree and making it all the more significant for our purposes. The relevant part of the decree reads:

[Augustus] . . . has made war to cease and . . . put everything in peaceful order; and whereas . . . the birthday of our God signalled the beginning of Good News for the world because of him (τῶν δι’ αὐτὸν εὐαγγελίων) . . .

11 *Callirhoe*, which has often been ascribed a second-century provenance, displays a number of interesting verbal, stylistic and thematic parallels to the NT: for a discussion, see P. W. van der Horst, ‘Chariton and the New Testament: A Contribution to the Corpus Hellenisticum’, *NovT* 25 (1983) 348–55.

12 εὐαγγελίζομαι – *Callirhoe* II.1.1.

13 εὐαγγέλιον – *Callirhoe* VI.5.5. This mundane use of the terminology may be seen several times elsewhere: Theophrastus *Characters* XVII.7.1 (verb – news of the birth of a child); Plutarch *Caius Marius* 22.3 (verb – news of one’s election to council); *Moralia* (*Sayings of Kings and Commanders*) 184.A (noun – news of one’s brother’s safety); *Moralia* (*The Roman Questions*) 266.B (verb – returning husbands sending ahead to their wives news of their arrival); Philostratus *Life of Apollonius* I.28.37 (verb – announcing news of the arrival of the king’s advisor); *Lives of the Sophists* II.572.12 (noun – orator standing up to address a crowd with face beaming *as if* he were about to announce good news; καθάπερ εὐαγγέλια ἐπαγών).

14 The most complete copy of the decree comes from the famous Priene inscription (*OGI* 2, 458), but fragmentary copies of the documents and accompanying letter are also extant. For these see F. W. Danker, *Benefactor: Epigraphic Study of a Graeco-Roman and New Testament Semantic Field* (St Louis, MO: Clayton Publishing House, 1982) 215–22. The translation above is from p. 227.

15 Danker, *Benefactor*, 216.

Paulus Fabius Maximus, benefactor of the province . . . has discovered a way to honor Augustus . . .

Similar uses of the εὐαγγελ- in relation to proclamations about the emperor appear in the Jewish authors Philo and Josephus. In *Embassy* 231, for instance, Philo describes how the news of Gaius's (Caligula's) accession to the throne (CE 37) came to Jerusalem, and that it was 'from our city that rumour to carry the good tidings sped to the others' (trans. *LCL*).¹⁶ Similarly, in *B.J.* IV.618 Josephus describes the spread of the news of Vespasian's accession (CE 69): 'and quicker than thought rumour spread the news of the new emperor in the east. Every city kept festival for the good news (εὐαγγέλια) and offered sacrifices on his behalf' (trans. *LCL*).¹⁷

This is not to say that the usage of εὐαγγελ- by these Jewish authors was heavily influenced by imperial concerns; it was not. 'Gospel-language' for Josephus and Philo connotes the announcement of any significant or joyous news, as the following account makes clear.

1.3 References to εὐαγγελ- in Philo and Josephus

The 14 instances of εὐαγγελ- in Philo bear out the present argument. Without fail, gospel-language connotes a message that is *news* to the hearer(s). The texts in relation to Gaius have already been mentioned. Also representative are the following: the patriarch Joseph urges his brothers to return to his father and 'give him the good tidings (εὐαγγελίζομαι) that you have found me' (*Joseph* 245); the Midianite women are said to have reported the good news (εὐαγγελίζομαι) of their seduction of the Israelites to their compatriots (*Virtues* 41.1); once the servant had found a wife for Isaac, 'he brought the good news (εὐαγγελίζομαι) to him on whose behalf he had been sent' (*QG* 4.144).¹⁸ Even Philo's

16 *Embassy* 231 – ἀπὸ τῆς ἡμετέρας πόλεως εὐαγγελιομένη πρὸς τὰς ἄλλας ἔδραμεν ἡ φήμη. *Embassy* 18 refers to the announcement (εὐαγγελίζομαι) of Gaius's recovery from illness and then in 19 compares the joy resulting from this announcement to that felt when Gaius succeeded to the throne. An entirely negative use of εὐαγγελ- in relation to Emperor Gaius occurs earlier in *Embassy* 99. Philo mocks the emperor's decision to take as his emblem the symbol of Hermes, the great messenger of the gods. In contrast to Gaius, who is the bearer of everything bad and vicious, says Philo, the true herald (κῆρυξ) travels swiftly to each city bringing his good news (εὐαγγελίζομαι) of peace to the waiting hearers.

17 When the same news reaches Alexandria, εὐαγγέλια is again used (*B.J.* IV.656).

18 The news of reunited brothers reaches the Egyptian chiefs, who 'invited them to share their hospitality and hastened to bring the good news (εὐαγγελίζομαι) to the king' (*Joseph* 245). Of Gaius's recovery from illness, Philo writes: 'in quite a short time it was known even to the inhabitants of the ends of the world, for nothing is more speedy than rumour, and every city was on edge, ever craving for a better report until the good news of his complete recovery was announced (εὐαγγελίζομαι) by the travellers who arrived' (*Embassy* 18). The engulfing of the Egyptians into the sea is said to announce three most wonderful things to the soul

metaphorical usage conforms to this pattern: the dawn ‘anticipates the sunrise with the glad tidings (προευαγγελίζομαι) of its approach’;¹⁹ the movements of the Pleiades ‘announce (εὐαγγελίζομαι) reaping-time’.²⁰

Two Josephan texts have been mentioned above in connection with the news of Vespasian’s accession (*B.J.* IV.618, 656). The remaining 14 instances of εὐαγγελ- in Josephus similarly connote the telling of news: the angelic announcement of Samson’s birth (*A.J.* V.277; V.282); the announcement of the discovery of Saul’s donkeys (*A.J.* II.45); Herod’s returning report to his wife concerning his successful meeting with Octavian (*A.J.* XV.209); the news of Tiberius’s death (*A.J.* XVIII.229); Titus’s announcement to Vespasian that he had captured Tarichaeae (modern Hammam) south of Tiberius (*B.J.* III.503).²¹

1.4 *The evidence of the apostolic fathers*

The evidence of the second-century ‘fathers’ is also relevant. The term (in noun form) appears occasionally to refer to the written Gospels (2 *Clem.* 8.5;

(τρία δ’ εὐαγγελίζεται τῇ ψυχῇ τὰ κάλλιστα): first, that the passions of Egypt have perished; second, that their destruction came by ‘the lips of that fountain bitter’; and third, that their ruin was seen (*Dreams* 2.281).

¹⁹ *Creation* 34 (trans. *LCL* as in the following).

²⁰ *Creation* 115. In a similar metaphorical vein are the following: the almond tree is ‘the first to blossom with a welcome promise (εὐαγγελίζομαι) of a plentiful crop of fruit’ (*Moses* II.186); the ‘fledgling ... likes to flutter or shake its wings, thus giving a welcome promise (προευαγγελίζομαι) of its ability to fly hereafter’ (*Names* 158); in describing the eye as the revealer of the soul, Philo remarks: ‘When a friend approaches, its peaceful and sunny look is the happy herald (προευαγγελίζομαι) of the kindly feeling within’ (*Abraham* 153); ‘hope’ is a herald going ‘before as a harbinger of the plenitude of good (εὐαγγελίζομαι) which is to be’ (*Rewards* 161).

²¹ In *A.J.* II.45 Josephus repeats the LXX’s εὐαγγελίζομαι in the story about the announcement of Joab’s death (2 Sam 18.19); in *A.J.* V.24 the news of God’s intention now to sack Jericho is announced (εὐαγγελίζομαι) by Joshua to his expectant troops; in *A.J.* VII.50 Josephus follows the LXX’s εὐαγγελιζόμενος in recounting the announcement of Absalom’s death (2 Sam 18.26–8); *A.J.* XI.65 describes how, upon hearing the favourable decree of Darius toward the Jews, Zerubbabel returned thanks to God and then ‘came to Babylon and brought to his countrymen the good news (εὐαγγελίζομαι) from the king’; *A.J.* XVIII.229 tells how ‘Marsyas, the freedman of Agrippa, having learned of the death of Tiberius, forced his way at top speed to announce the good news (εὐαγγελιζόμενος) to Agrippa’; in *B.J.* I.607 the pompous pronouncements of Antipater are described: ‘he wrote from Rome to announce the good news (εὐαγγελιζόμενος) of his early return and of the honours paid to him by Caesar’; in *B.J.* II.420 Josephus says that news of rebellion among the Jews was received by Gessius Florus as a godsend: ‘To Florus the news was a wonderful godsend (δαιμόνιον εὐαγγέλιον ἦν); determined as he was to kindle the war’ (the use of the singular substantive is rare); in *B.J.* III.143 Josephus relates how the news of his arrival (with troops) at Jotapata was quickly brought to the attention of Vespasian: ‘A deserter brought to Vespasian the welcome intelligence (εὐαγγελίζομαι) of the general’s movement, and urged him to hasten to attack the city’.

Diogn. 11.6).²² The remaining instances of εὐαγγελ- in the *Apostolic Fathers* – both verb and noun – refer to the foundational proclamation of the apostles and/or the fixed tradition concerning Jesus: 1 *Clem.* 42.1, 42.3; *Ign. Phld.* 5.1, 5.2 (twice), 8.2, 9.2 (twice); *Ign. Smyrn.* 5.2, 7.2;²³ *Pol. Phil* 6.3; *Did.* 8.2, 11.3, 15.3, 15.4;²⁴ *Barn.* 5.9, 8.3 (twice), 14.9 (here it appears in a quotation of Isa. 61.1 as a proof of the scriptural basis of the apostolic tradition); *Mart. Pol.* 1.1, 4.1, 19.1, 22.1.

2. 'Gospel' as news in biblical tradition

There is widespread agreement amongst scholars that the Hebrew root בָּשַׂר as found in biblical tradition was highly significant for the rise of the Christian use of at least the verb εὐαγγελίζομαι.²⁵

The usage of the εὐαγγελ- root in Greek descriptions of the announcement of (grand) news is mirrored perfectly by the consistent employment of בָּשַׂר with respect to such announcements in biblical tradition. In 2 Sam 18.19–31, for instance, messengers (בָּרָשָׁה) are sent from the field of battle to proclaim (בָּשַׂר) to the king the news (בְּשִׂרָה) of victory and the death of the king's son. Similar uses of the root בָּשַׂר, connoting the announcement of hitherto unknown news, are found throughout the scriptures of Israel.²⁶ Of special interest here is the use of the terminology in the Psalms.

2.1. 'Gospel' as news in the Psalms

The use of בָּשַׂר in the Psalms may be construed as evidence *against* understanding the term as the announcement of 'news', since the context of these proclamations is clearly that of the believing community. A closer look at the texts, however, suggests otherwise. Ps 40.9–10 states:

I have told the glad news of deliverance (בְּשִׂרָתִי צְדָקָה) in the great congregation; see, I have not restrained my lips, as you know, O LORD. I have not hidden your saving help within my heart, I have spoken of your faithfulness and your salvation; I have not concealed your steadfast love and your faithfulness from the great congregation.

22 That these texts refer to a *written* Gospel has been disputed by R. H. Gundry, 'Gospel: How Soon a Book', *JBL* 115/2 (1996) 321–5.

23 On the use of εὐαγγελ- in the letters of Ignatius, see W. R. Schoedel, *Ignatius of Antioch: A Commentary on the Letters of Ignatius of Antioch* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985) 207–8.

24 On the use of εὐαγγελ- in the Didache, see K. Niederwimmer, *The Didache* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1998) 48–52.

25 A lengthy account may be found in J. P. Dickson, *Mission-Commitment in Ancient Judaism and in the Pauline Communities: The Shape, Extent and Background of Early Christian Mission* (WUNT 2.159; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003) 153–77.

26 See also 1 Sam 4.17; 31.9; 2 Sam 1.20; 4.10; 18.19, 20; 18.26, 31; 1 Kings 1.42; 1 Chron 10.9; 16.23; Ps 40.10; 68.12; 96.2; Isa 40.9; 41.27; 52.7; 60.6; 61.1; Jer 20.15; Nahum 2.1.

If the text were referring to the shared salvation of all members of Israel, such as the exodus or some other national event, one would have to conclude that בִּשְׁרָ can on occasion refer to the rehearsing of previously known facts. In Ps 40, however, this is not the case. The opening words of the psalm (vv. 1–3) clarify that the ‘salvation’ spoken of throughout is that of a personal deliverance from some calamity:

I waited patiently for the LORD; he inclined to me and heard my cry. He drew me up from the desolate pit, out of the miry bog, and set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure. He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God. Many will see and fear, and put their trust in the LORD.

This ‘new song’ – probably a reference to the psalm itself – is just that, ‘new’ (שִׁירָה). Thus, telling the congregation about his deliverance is indeed an announcement of (hitherto unknown) good news.

Ps 68.11–12 offers an entirely different situation, and one which wholly conforms to the usage elsewhere: ‘The Lord gives the command; great is the company of those who bore the tidings (מְבַשְׂרִים): “The kings of the armies, they flee, they flee!”’ Clearly, the reference is to a particular announcement of good news in Israel’s military history, which is now liturgically recollected.

Ps 96.1–2 presents a particularly fascinating example of ‘mission consciousness’ on the part of the psalmist. A post-exilic setting for the psalm seems clear in view of the references throughout to worshipping God ‘among’ (בְּ) the nations.²⁷ H.-J. Kraus notes further that the psalm exhibits a strong dependence upon Isa 40–65 (40.10; 44.23; 49.13; 44.23; 52.7; 55.12; 59.19; 60.1; 62.11),²⁸ a point that is rather unsuccessfully disputed by Dahood.²⁹ Having said this, a pre-exilic core to the psalm also seems very likely.³⁰ Whatever its precise tradition history, the psalm as it stands exhorts the gathered faithful to conduct their public worship in full view, or rather ‘hearing’, of the gentiles among whom they live:

O sing to the LORD a new song; sing to the LORD, all the earth.² Sing to the LORD, bless his name; tell of his salvation (בְּשִׁירֵי יְשׁוּעָתוֹ) from day to day.³ Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples.

The reference is to the corporate worship of God’s people: the words ‘sing’ (שִׁירָה) and ‘bless’ (בְּרַךְ) make this plain. The phrase ‘all the earth’ (כָּל־הָאָרֶץ), however, indicates that it is not worship within the borders of Israel that is in view but a new worldwide scenario. While this summons to worship may be thought to be directed toward all the peoples of the earth, this is to read too hastily the

27 F.-L. Hossfeld and E. Zenger, *Psalmen 51–100* (HThKAT; Freiburg: Herder, 2000) 668.

28 H.-J. Kraus, *Psalms 60–150: A Commentary* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 1989) 251–2.

29 M. Dahood, *Psalms II: 51–100* (AB; New York: Doubleday, 1979) 357.

30 See Kraus, *Psalms*, 252.

climactic vision of the psalm (vv. 11–13) into its introduction. However understood, it is the people of God who are to offer worship ‘among the nations’ (בְּגוֹיִם) and ‘among the peoples’ (בְּכָל־הָעַמִּים), an obvious reference to the gentiles throughout the earth. Only in v. 7 are the gentiles themselves addressed.

They are to sing a ‘new’ (חֲדָשׁ) song. Unlike the new song of Ps 40, this song signals a display of God’s power over all people. Such an international scope resonates strikingly with Isa 40–65 and with Isa 42.10 in particular: ‘Sing to the LORD a new song, his praise from the end of the earth!’ Like Isaiah, the occasion for this new song is probably a realisation of God’s promise to gather the exiles back to Zion and to bring righteousness (v. 13) to all the gentiles. What is especially striking about the opening summons is that the singing of this new song is said also to be an ‘announcement’ (בְּשֹׁרָה) of God’s salvation. While a new song (occasioned by a new display of God’s kingship) will indeed be ‘news’ to those hearing it, the psalm is saying much more. Vv. 4–5 introduce the motive for such ‘worship/proclamation’, Yahweh’s preeminence over the gods of the gentiles: ‘For ... he is to be revered above all gods. For all the gods of the peoples are idols ...’ This then provides the rationale for the direct call to the עַמִּים to acknowledge this fact:

Ascribe to the LORD, O families of the peoples, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength. Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; bring an offering, and come into his courts. Worship the LORD in holy splendor; tremble before him, all the earth. (vv. 7–9)

Here is the sense in which the public worship called for in vv. 1–3 functions as an ‘announcement’ of God’s salvation. Such vigorous praise informs not God’s people but the nations/peoples among whom they dwell. The congregation has heard the news of God’s salvific action (cf. Isa 40.9; 52.7), and now, through renewed worship centred on this fact, they are to announce God’s salvation to the gentiles. V. 10 resumes the call for the faithful to declare among the nations the ‘news’ of Yahweh’s sovereignty: ‘Say among the nations, “The LORD is king!” (יְהוָה מֶלֶךְ).’ The content of this declaration is almost identical to that contained in Isa 52.7,³¹ the difference being that whereas the latter is directed toward Zion, the former is declared among the nations. The repetition of the preposition בְּ (*in* or *among*) in v. 3 and v. 10 rather than לְ (*to*) is significant. By it the psalmist indicates that the announcement of God’s sovereignty is not ‘pitched’ at the gentiles (as the declaration of Isa 52.7 was directed לְצִיּוֹן), it is merely overheard by them as the faithful congregation sing their new song to Yahweh. It is as the nations hear this announcement that they are thereby summoned to embrace for themselves the worship of the God who is to be revered above all gods and idols.

³¹ מבשר ... אמר לְצִיּוֹן מֶלֶךְ אֱלֹהֵיךָ אֱלֹהֵיךָ 52.7 Isa.

Something very similar to this is envisaged in Tobit 13.3–6.³² In sum, then, while the import of Ps 96.2 is striking in its ‘missionary’ dimension, its usage of בְּשֵׁרֶךְ conforms to that evidenced throughout the scriptures of Israel.

Of some importance also is the usage of ‘gospel’ language in Isa 40–65 (40.9; 41.27; 52.7; 60.6; 61.1) and the plentiful post-biblical Jewish traditions arising from this usage.³³ It is widely agreed that ‘gospel’ in this Isaianic tradition connotes the announcement of hitherto unknown news of great eschatological import.³⁴

2.2. *Gospel as news in the synoptic Gospels*

The εὐαγγελ- language of the synoptic Gospels is heavily indebted to the Isaianic gospel-herald motif found in biblical and post-biblical Judaism. Consistent with this background, εὐαγγελ- in the Gospels connotes the eschatologically charged announcement of/about Jesus and the kingdom.³⁵ While several instances of the terminology appear in stock descriptions of Jesus’ preaching ministry, wherein the connotation of hitherto unknown news cannot easily be demonstrated (Lk 4.43; 8.1; 20.1; Matt 4.43; 9.35),³⁶ the larger eschatological context just referred to makes clear that εὐαγγελ- for the synoptists connotes news disclosed to the world with the arrival of the Messiah. The eschatological perspective is captured well in Luke 16.16: ‘Ὁ νόμος καὶ οἱ προφῆται μέχρι Ἰωάννου· ἀπὸ τότε ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ εὐαγγελίζεται.’ Although Jesus is the principal herald of the gospel in the synoptic traditions, numerous others also take part in this act of eschatological disclosure: angels (Luke 1.19; 2.10), the Baptist (Luke 3.19), the disciples (Lk 9.6; Matt 24.14), and even the narrator himself (Mark 1.1). In all of these texts ‘gospel’ connotes news.

It remains now to demonstrate that Paul’s usage of εὐαγγελ- wholly conforms to the pattern observed in all of the above traditions.

³² Dickson, *Mission-Commitment*, 80–3.

³³ 1QHodayot^a 22.10–15; 11Q13; 4Q521; Tg. Isa 53.1; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 35.161a.

³⁴ See Dickson, *Mission-Commitment*, 153–77.

³⁵ All three synoptic Gospels employ the Isaianic gospel herald tradition programmatically and at decisive points in their works (Mark 1.14–15; Matt 11.2–6/Luke 7.18–23; Luke 4.17–18). A review of scholarship and presentation of evidence may be found in Dickson, *Mission-Commitment*, 159–65.

³⁶ The familiar description of Jesus as ‘teaching (διδάσκων) and preaching the gospel’ (Luke 20.1; Matt 4.23; 9.35) might be taken as evidence that εὐαγγελ- terminology is synonymous with the Christian activity of ongoing congregational ‘teaching’. However, while the *mode* of Jesus’ proclamation no doubt conformed to that of any other Jewish rabbi offering instruction in the synagogue or temple courts, the *content* of that proclamation was different. It disclosed to hearers the advent of the kingdom; this was eschatological news.

3. Gospel as 'news' in Paul

The foregoing discussion sets a significant context within which the contentions of G. Friedrich, P. Bowers and P. T. O'Brien in relation to the Pauline material may be assessed.

3.1. *Gospel and Paul's vocation*

Bowers and O'Brien begin by correctly noting the importance of the terminology for Paul's understanding of his apostleship (Gal 1.16; 1 Cor 1.17; Rom 1.1). They then turn to other passages describing Paul's apostolic concerns and, again, rightly observe that this commission involved far more than primary proclamation: Bowers stresses the importance for Paul of 'founding communities';³⁷ O'Brien focuses on Paul's concern for 'intensive teaching in pastoral situations'.³⁸ Both authors then conclude that since Paul's apostolic duty involved more than primary proclamation, the terminology by which he chose to sum up his apostleship – εὐαγγελίζομαι – must properly include the 'broad range' of apostolic activities.

Both authors rely heavily on statements in Col 1.28ff.³⁹ There the writer explicitly refers to his apostolic commission (οἰκονομία) in the rather unusual phrase διάκονος τῆς ἐκκλησίας, a description that accords with the pastoral and community orientation of the exhortation which follows. Then, following a brief account of the salvation-historical significance of his commission (vv. 26–7), he states: ἡμεῖς καταγγέλλομεν νουθετοῦντες πάντα ἄνθρωπον καὶ διδάσκοντες πάντα ἄνθρωπον ἐν πάσῃ σοφίᾳ. O'Brien and Bowers correctly note that the verbs νουθετέω and διδάσκω explicate καταγγέλλω, and, further, that in this context both words refer to ongoing teaching activities directed toward the 'completion' (τέλειος, v. 28b) of the believing community, rather than 'missionary' activities. From this, Bowers and O'Brien conclude that Paul's missionary vocation – and, therefore, his use of εὐαγγελ- language – concerns not simply primary proclamation but the whole process of building Christians towards this goal.

The logic is not compelling. It does not follow that the central vocabulary of Paul's commission must necessarily embrace or connote the broad range of activities contained in that commission. There ought to be no difficulty in accepting that Paul chose to crystallise the nature of his vocation in language that properly connoted only the core of that commission, especially since Paul believed the preaching of the gospel to be the foundation stone of a community's existence and the measure of all subsequent 'pastoral' teaching.

To illustrate this point, in 2 Cor 12.12 Paul refers to the 'wonders' and 'mighty deeds' which he performed among the Corinthians. He explicitly calls these τὰ

³⁷ Bowers, *Paul's Understanding of his Mission*, 85.

³⁸ O'Brien, *Gospel and Mission*, 64.

³⁹ Ibid.; Bowers, *Paul's Understanding of his Mission*, 93–7.

σημεῖα τοῦ ἀποστόλου, suggesting that he considered such ‘miracles’ part and parcel of the discharge of his commission. However, this should not for a moment imply that when the apostle summed up his Corinthian mission in the words εὐαγγέλιον εὐηγγελισάμεν ὑμῖν just a chapter before (11.7), he intended the vocabulary to include a reference to miracles as well as to gospel preaching.

In addition, O’Brien proposes that the verb καταγγέλλω, which Paul uses to sum up his ministry in Col 1.28, is ‘almost a technical term for missionary preaching’ and, therefore, provides a clear analogy for the related verb εὐαγγελίζομαι.⁴⁰ However, it is not clear that the word is part of Paul’s technical missionary vocabulary. Unlike εὐαγγελίζομαι, which very often stands alone, the content of καταγγέλλω is never left unexplained,⁴¹ suggesting that the word did not carry a ‘technical’ sense at all. Furthermore, in three of the seven occurrences the verb clearly does not refer to missionary preaching.⁴²

Nevertheless, the verb καταγγέλλω in Col 1.28 is a ‘weighty’ one, as O’Brien rightly notes.⁴³ As such it is perfectly suited to connote an apostolic announcement of admonition and teaching to the Christian community. In this context, however, καταγγέλλω is best understood as a reference to the ‘proclamation’ going on in the letter itself.⁴⁴ This would explain the shift from aorist and perfect tense verbs in vv. 25–7 to the present tense verbs of v. 28. The many verbal and thematic parallels between this verse and the rest of the letter⁴⁵ also suggest that καταγγέλλω here refers to Paul’s apostolic proclamation within the epistle itself and is not analogous to εὐαγγελίζομαι at all. The fact that Paul has already used εὐαγγελ- twice in this opening chapter – both times in relation to the foundational proclamation of the message⁴⁶ – makes gospel-terminology in Col 1.28 conspicuous by its absence.

In addition, O’Brien argues:

[B]elievers do not leave the gospel behind or progress beyond it as they grow mature in their faith. They stand fast in this kerygma and are being saved through it if they hold firmly to it (1 Cor 15.1–2), for it is in this authoritative announcement that true hope is held out to them (Col 1.5, 23).⁴⁷

This is surely correct. However, it is difficult to see how this observation supports the contention that εὐαγγελίζομαι connotes a broad range of apostolic teaching

40 O’Brien, *Gospel and Mission*, 64.

41 ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν, Rom 1.8; τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ θεοῦ, 1 Cor 2.1; τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, 9.14; τὸν θάνατον τοῦ κυρίου, 11.26; τὸν Χριστόν, Phil 1.17; Χριστόν, 18; ὄν, Col 1.28.

42 Rom 1.8; 1 Cor 11.26; Col 1.28.

43 O’Brien, *Gospel and Mission*, 64.

44 Acts 3.24 contains a similar use of this verb in relation to a *written* announcement.

45 Col 1.9; 2.3, 20; 3.1, 3; 2.23; 3.16; 4.12.

46 προηκούσατε . . . τοῦ εὐαγγελίου, 1.5; τοῦ εὐαγγελίου οὗ ἠκούσατε, 1.23.

47 O’Brien, *Gospel and Mission*, 63.

activities. The fact that believers are to hold fast to the gospel first proclaimed to them says nothing about the appropriate language used for the process by which they are subsequently encouraged to remain faithful to that gospel. In this regard it is worth noting that the text to which O'Brien points (1 Cor 15.1–5) speaks of Paul's reminder of the gospel not as an 'evangelisation' or 're-evangelisation' but as just that, a 'reminder' (γῶριζω, v. 1) of what was previously 'evangelised'.

It is not enough to say that Paul was committed to intensive pastoral teaching and the founding of settled Christian communities. This seems clear enough. To sustain their case O'Brien, Bowers and Friedrich must offer explicit examples of Paul's use of εὐαγγελ- which clearly connect the terminology to the ongoing instruction of believers. With εὐαγγέλιον and cognates appearing 84 times in the Pauline corpus, this should not be too difficult a task. However, only two texts are offered by these scholars as positive evidence of their position. The first requires only a brief comment, leaving just one that may seriously be presented as an example of a 'broad-ranging' usage of εὐαγγελ- in Paul.

3.2. Eph 3.8

In Eph 3.8, the writer states that his commission consists in 'evangelising the fathomless riches of Christ'. O'Brien suggests that since the object of εὐαγγελίζεσθαι in this verse is τὸ ἀνεξιχνίαστον πλοῦτος τοῦ Χριστοῦ, Paul must be referring to a 'wide-ranging' form of instruction which could not possibly be presented in a 'brief or summary fashion'.⁴⁸ The suggestion is unconvincing. The adjective ἀνεξιχνίαστος ('inscrutable' or 'fathomless') qualifies πλοῦτος and carries no adverbial force with respect to εὐαγγελίζεσθαι. The writer is not saying that the 'evangelising' task is inexhaustible, only that the message disclosed in the gospel concerns the 'riches' of Christ, riches which are in themselves 'fathomless'.

4. Rom 1.15: the *locus classicus*

Rom 1.15 is the *locus classicus* for Friedrich's, O'Brien's and Bowers's contention that εὐαγγελ- can connote a broad range of teaching activities for Paul. The text, therefore, requires some discussion.

At the conclusion of his introductory thanksgiving (Rom 1.8–12), Paul discloses his long-term, though unsuccessful, plan (προτίθημι) to visit the imperial capital. The purpose (ἵνα) of such a visit, Paul explains, was to 'reap a harvest' (τινὰ καρπὸν σχῶ) among the Romans just as he had been doing among τοῖς λοιποῖς ἔθνεσιν. Then follows a slogan-like pronouncement (v. 15a) concerning the socio-cultural breadth of his apostolic obligation. Although grammatically unconnected (no doubt for dramatic effect), the slogan plainly serves to explain or justify

48 Ibid.

(οὕτως, v. 15) the aforementioned plan, which in v. 15b is described further as an 'eagerness' (πρόθυμος⁴⁹) ὑμῖν τοῖς ἐν Ῥώμῃ εὐαγγελίσασθαι. Clearly, Paul's 'plan to reap a harvest' and his 'eagerness to preach the gospel' refer to one and the same activity. The question is: Whom does Paul consider to be the indirect object of this activity, believers or unbelievers?

O'Brien states emphatically:

Paul's eagerness was not simply to preach the gospel *in the city* of Rome and its environs . . . His precise wording is 'to you also who are in Rome', that is, *to the recipients* of the letter who have already been described as believers.⁵⁰

A majority of commentators argue similarly,⁵¹ and it must be admitted that, viewed on its own, this is a natural reading of the construction εὐαγγελίζομαι + ὑμῖν. However, several considerations must first be taken into account.

4.1 A retrospective reading of Rom 1.15?

P. Stuhlmacher⁵² and others⁵³ have argued that v. 15 does not describe Paul's present desire to preach the gospel in Rome but his past intention to have been 'erster Missionszeuge' in Rome.⁵⁴ Stuhlmacher rightly notes that v. 15 is the conclusion of vv. 13–15 and that the phrase ἐμὲ πρόθυμον . . . εὐαγγελίσασθαι

49 The adjective πρόθυμος may mean either 'willing' or 'eager'. In light of Paul's statement concerning his repeated attempts to visit Rome (v. 14), the latter is probably the more appropriate rendering. It may be of some significance that of the six instances of the term in the LXX, three are associated with 'willingness/eagerness' to offer temple service (1 Chron 28.21; 29.31; 2 Macc 4.14). The last of these connects the term with the service of the priests in particular (ὅσπερ μηκέτι περὶ τὰς τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου λειτουργίας προθύμους εἶναι τοὺς ἱερεῖς), providing an intriguing parallel with Paul's statements about his priestly service for the gospel in Rom 1.9 (ὁ θεός, ᾧ λατρεύω ἐν τῷ πνεύματί μου ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ) and 15.16 (εἰς τὸ εἶναι με λειτουργὸν Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ εἰς τὰ ἔθνη, ἱερουργούντα τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ).

50 O'Brien, *Gospel and Mission*, 62.

51 D. J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (NICNT; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996) 63; T. R. Schreiner, *Romans* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1998) 52–3; J. D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8* (WBC; Texas: Word, 1988) 33–4; C. E. B. Cranfield, *Romans 1* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1975) 86; J. A. Fitzmyer, *Romans* (AB 33; New York: Doubleday, 1993) 251. So also W. P. Bowers, 'Church and Mission in Paul', *JSNT* 44 (1991) 98–100; J. A. D. Weima, 'Preaching the Gospel in Rome: A Study of the Epistolary Framework of Romans', *Gospel in Paul: Studies on Corinthians, Galatians and Romans for Richard N. Longenecker* (ed. L. Ann Jervis & Peter Richardson: Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1994) 337–66.

52 P. Stuhlmacher, *Der Brief an die Römer* (NTD 6; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998) 27–30; P. Stuhlmacher, 'The Purpose of Romans', *The Romans Debate* (ed. K. P. Donfried; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clarke, 1991) 231–42, 236–7.

53 E. Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1980) 20; B. Byrne, *Romans* (Sacra Pagina 6; Minneapolis, MN: Liturgical, 1996) 50–1.

54 Stuhlmacher, *Der Brief an die Römer*, 29.

simply refers back to v.13 and explains Paul's original, though unsuccessful, plan to reap a harvest in Rome. The pronoun ὑμῖν, therefore, is general and retrospective.⁵⁵

Schreiner⁵⁶ has objected to Stuhlmacher's reading, noting that the aorist infinitive εὐαγγελίσασθαι cannot be forced to imply a past tense since aorist infinitives rarely imply anything about the time of the action expressed in the verb. This is true but it only strengthens Stuhlmacher's case since his point is that v. 15 is without any temporal marker and finds its time reference only in the aorist indicatives of v. 13, which clearly express a past (and unsuccessful) condition.

Schreiner (also Moo⁵⁷) further contends that the present tense εἰμί in v. 14 draws v. 15 into the present. This is surely incorrect. It makes perfect sense for Paul to have said, 'I *wanted* to reap a harvest and preach the gospel to you Romans because I *am* obligated to all.'⁵⁸ He uses the present tense in v. 14 for the simple reason that he could use no other tense without implying that his apostolic obligation was inoperative at the time of writing. Paul's πρόθυμον εὐαγγελίσασθαι gains its temporal sense not from v. 14 but from v. 13, of which it is a deliberate explication.

Whether Paul's statements in vv. 13–15 can be equated precisely with a desire to have been 'the first missionary witness in Rome' is not clear; they may simply recount a more general wish to have preached the gospel in the imperial capital. However, that the statements pertain to Paul's missionary intentions in the period before the writing of Romans is likely in my opinion. In any case, the following discussion will demonstrate that the difficulties with the 'majority' view are such that an alternative reading such as Stuhlmacher's strictly retrospective reading, or perhaps a more generally retrospective reading, ought to be adopted.

55 Ibid., 27–8. L. Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1988) 65, interprets v. 15 as Paul's present desire, but he takes the pronoun ὑμεῖς as a general reference to the recipients *as Roman residents* rather than *as Christians*. In other words, the phrase καὶ ὑμῖν τοῖς ἐν Ῥώμῃ is to be rendered something like 'also to you Romans'. So also, F. Watson, *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles: A Sociological Approach* (SNTSMS 56; Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1986) 103. This seems a perfectly appropriate use of the pronoun in this context. Perhaps the referent of the more indirect ἐν ὑμῖν in v. 13 (i.e. 'among you Romans') is meant to carry over into the ὑμῖν of the parallel clause. In other words, perhaps having said that he had planned to reap a harvest among Romans, Paul thought it obvious that ὑμῖν τοῖς ἐν Ῥώμῃ would be understood as 'you Romans'. The presence of ἐν ὑμῖν in v. 15 in the Western textual tradition (D* b vg^{ms}) is no doubt secondary, but it does show that an early Western copyist understood the phrase ὑμῖν εὐαγγελίσασθαι to mean something similar to what Paul said in v. 13.

56 Schreiner, *Romans*, 53.

57 Moo, *Romans*, 63.

58 In conclusion, Schreiner, *Romans*, 53, writes: 'If Stuhlmacher were correct, Paul would have made it clearer in Rom. 1 that he no longer desired to preach the gospel in Rome.'

4.2. *Paul's intentions toward the Romans: Rom 1.11–12 and 1.13–15*

If Paul in Rom 1.15 were stating that he currently wanted to 'preach the gospel' to the Roman Christians, it creates some tension between this paragraph (vv. 13–15) and the previous one (vv. 11–12), in which he had already described the kind of ministry he was 'longing' (ἐπιποθέω, v. 11 – note the present tense) to perform among them. To begin with, the latter section would become redundant. Furthermore, if vv. 13–15 were something of a reiteration of the previous paragraph, it makes the presence of the adversative conjunction δέ⁵⁹ and the epistolary disclosure formula⁶⁰ introducing the section (v. 13a) very difficult to account for, since together these surely imply a new theme or direction in the discourse. A comment from the apostle about his desire already to have preached the gospel in Rome would suit this context well.

The tension between the two paragraphs (if they are both interpreted as Paul's current intentions toward the Christians of Rome) is felt more acutely when one compares the description and tone of vv. 11–12 with that of vv. 13–15. Most commentators note that Paul proceeds in an unusually coy manner in v. 11.⁶¹ There he describes his desired ministry to the Romans simply as 'sharing⁶² some spiritual gift with you'.⁶³ Even then, the description is immediately softened by the cum-

59 The conjunction γάρ would be more appropriate if vv. 13–15 were a continuation or extension of vv. 11–12.

60 οὐ θέλω δὲ ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν = γινώσκειν σε θέλω (BAGD, 355). Noted also by Käsemann, *Romans*, 20.

61 Käsemann, *Romans*, 19; Byrne, *Romans*, 50; Stuhlmacher, *Der Brief an die Römer*, 28; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 248–9; Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 35; Barrett, *Romans*, 25. Other commentators prefer to describe the paragraph as an expression of Paul's real humility: so Cranfield, *Romans* 1:80. Obviously, we have no access to Paul's internal motivations in a particular clause. For the present purpose, it appears clear that Paul is explaining himself in deliberately mild terms.

62 Although it is true that the verb μεταδίδωμι is once used in Paul of 'sharing the gospel' (1 Thess 2.8), the hesitant τι χάρισμα shows that he is not thinking of the gospel at this point.

63 The mutuality of Paul's intended ministry amongst the Roman Christians appears to be embodied in the epistle itself. Paul's desire to share some spiritual gift with the Romans and, thus, to 'strengthen' them (1.11–12) appears again in the doxological conclusion of the epistle: τῷ δὲ δυναμένῳ ὑμᾶς στηρίξαι κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιόν μου. For the authenticity of the doxology, see Stuhlmacher, *Der Brief an die Römer*, 215–16; Schreiner, *Romans*, 816–17; and, more recently, I. H. Marshall, 'Romans 16:25–27 – An Apt Conclusion', *Romans and the People of God: Essays in Honor of Gordon D. Fee on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday* (ed. S. K. Soderlund & N. T. Wright; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999) 170–84. Marshall provides a detailed analysis of the passage's structure, themes and relation to the Pauline corpus. Paul's letter apparently functions to fulfill (in part) his longing to strengthen the Romans (in passing it should be said that στηρίξαι κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιόν is not the same as εὐαγγελίξασθαι). But what will the Romans do for Paul? Whatever else Paul expected to receive from the Roman Christians, it is clear from 15.24 that he hoped to be 'helped on his way' (προπέμπω) to preach the gospel in Spain. This too may well have been one of Paul's epistolary aims.

bersome (though rhetorically effective) qualification of v. 12: τοῦτο δὲ ἐστὶν συμπαρακληθῆναι ἐν ὑμῖν διὰ τῆς ἐν ἀλλήλοις πίστεως ὑμῶν τε καὶ ἐμοῦ.⁶⁴ Vv. 13–15, on the other hand, describe Paul's intended ministry in Rome in rather forthright terms. After solemnly introducing the paragraph (οὐ θέλω δὲ ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν), Paul talks of 'reaping a harvest' and 'announcing the gospel', and all this as an outworking of his apostolic 'obligation' to all. Such statements are hardly consonant with the tone or content of the previous paragraph. As Käsemann remarks, 'if Paul is speaking emphatically of "evangelizing" [in v. 15] all the reservations in vv.10–12 seem to be pointless'.⁶⁵ It is, of course, possible that Paul, having treaded softly at first, now wishes to restate his point in stronger, more 'apostolic' terms, but this would seem to be an unnecessarily convoluted explanation.

4.3. *The tension between Rom 1.13–15 and 15.20–4*

Furthermore, if in Rom 1.13–15 Paul were articulating a desire to 'preach the gospel' to the Christians of Rome, it brings the paragraph into sharp tension with his statements in 15.20–4, where he states quite emphatically that his determination is εὐαγγελίξεισθαι οὐχ ὅπου ὠνομάσθη Χριστός (v. 20). The reason for this strategy is given as ἵνα μὴ ἐπ' ἀλλότριον θεμέλιον οἰκοδομῶ. The subsequent appeal to the salvation-historically charged LXX Isa 52.15 in v. 21 serves to underline the seriousness of this principle for Paul's self-understanding.⁶⁶ This is not a whimsical notion for the apostle but one that is basic to his sense of place within salvation history.⁶⁷

It is true that a great deal of complex argumentation has taken place between 1.13–15 and 15.20–4, and the texts clearly serve different functions within the letter. Nevertheless, the tension between the two passages cannot be explained merely by pointing to the epistolary or rhetorical distance between them.⁶⁸ In any case, in

64 Käsemann is right to say that this paragraph 'allows only the conclusion that Paul feels very insecure in relation to the unmet recipients of his letter and is thus forced into an apologetic defensive' (*Romans*, 19).

65 *Ibid.*, 20.

66 This section of Isaiah appears to be of some significance for the Pauline tradition: see Dickson, *Mission-Commitment*, 165–74. The importance of Isa 52.7 can be seen in Rom 10.14; Eph 2.17; 6.15. The clause following Isa 52.15 is 53.1, to which Paul makes reference in Rom 10.16.

67 Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 251, suggests that in 15.20 Paul refers to 'a sort of principle . . . which he really intends to implement in Spain'. However, Paul states that it is this very principle (derived as it is from scripture) that has hindered him thus far from making it to Rome and so on to Spain (Διὸ καὶ ἐνεκοπτόμην τὰ πολλὰ τοῦ ἐλθεῖν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, 15.22).

68 For Schreiner, the 'divergent emphases' between the two passages 'are best explained by where these themes occur in the letter. The longing to win converts in Rome is found in Rom. 1 because it communicates Paul's concern for the Romans' (Schreiner, *Romans*, 55).

15.22 Paul bridges whatever ‘distance’ may have existed between the passages by explicitly referring back to his comments of 1.13–15 in order to clarify why he did not visit Rome earlier: διὸ καὶ ἐνεκοπήθη τὰ πολλὰ τοῦ ἐλθεῖν πρὸς ὑμᾶς. The unnamed circumstance which had ‘hindered’ (κωλύω, 1.13) Paul from visiting Rome turns out to be nothing other than his salvation-historical commission to preach the gospel only where Christ had not yet been named. Thus, on the ‘majority’ reading of 1.13–15, Paul ends up saying to the Roman church something to the effect of: ‘I have been eager to “evangelize” you but have thus far been hindered because of my policy of “evangelizing” only where Christ is not known.’ The tension here is real. Of course, if the statement ὑμῖν τοῖς ἐν Ῥώμῃ εὐαγγελί-σασθαι refers simply to Paul’s desire already to have engaged in missionary proclamation within the city, the tension between the passages dissolves.⁶⁹

4.4. *Who are the ‘barbarians’ and the ‘foolish’?*

Paul’s description of those to whom his apostolic commission makes him ‘obligated’ (1.14) suggests that his primary reference in 1.13–15 is to gentiles *outside of Christ*.⁷⁰ Although the terms Ἕλληνας and σοφός contain no derogatory or patronizing connotations, the words βάρβαρος and ἀνόητος certainly move in that direction.⁷¹

Furthermore, Schreiner also tries to resolve the ‘tension’ by arguing that Rom 15.20–4 refers only to a principle of not establishing a church where one had already been established, whereas Rom 1.15 refers to ad hoc evangelism while in Rome (Schreiner, *Romans*, 55). However, 15.20 is clearly concerned with where Paul ‘preaches the gospel’ (εὐαγγελίζομαι), not where he builds churches. Schreiner’s comments become confusing at this point, since on p. 53 he states that εὐαγγελίζομαι in Rom 1.15 concerns the teaching of Christians after conversion, yet on p. 55 (in order to relieve the tension with 15.20) he describes it as Paul’s ‘longing to win converts in Rome’. Bowers believes the ‘contradiction lies principally in the form of Paul’s expression rather than in the matter of his thinking’ (‘Church and Mission in Paul’, 100 n. 2).

69 If Rom 1.15 describes Paul’s desire to engage in missionary proclamation in Rome *since* the foundation of the church— rather than, as Stuhlmacher suggests, *as* the foundation of the church— the tension between 1.13–15 and 15.20–4 still exists but it is very small. With a population of approximately 1 million persons, the imperial capital was of sufficient size for the apostle to have considered (quite reasonably) that one could ‘preach the gospel’ in such a city without building on the foundation of another. On Rome’s demographics in the first century CE, see A. D. Clarke, ‘Rome and Italy’, *The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting* (ed. B. W. Winter; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994) 455–81.

70 A similarly slogan-like statement which relatives all such sociocultural divides ‘in Christ’ is found in Col 3.11 – ὅπου οὐκ ἔτι Ἕλληνας καὶ Ἰουδαίους, περιτομῆ καὶ ἀκροβυστία, βάρβαρος, Σκύθης, δοῦλος, ἐλεύθερος, ἀλλὰ [τὰ] πάντα καὶ ἐν πᾶσιν Χριστός. H. Windisch concludes his article on βάρβαρος with a comment about Paul: ‘The new thing is his desire to lead the βάρβαροι to the εὐαγγέλιον θεοῦ, and the doctrine that Greeks, Jews, Scythians and barbarians are all fashioned into a totality in Christ’ (H. Windisch, ‘βάρβαρος’, *TDNT* 1:546–53, 553).

71 Pace Cranfield, *Romans* 1:83–4.

While βάρβαρος in Greek literature often means little more than ‘non-Greek’, H. Windisch notes that it did frequently carry derogatory connotations (used synonymously with μανικός, ἄπιστος and ἀνόητος).⁷² Moreover, the fact that contemporary Jewish writers such as Philo and Josephus avoided including the Ἰουδαῖοι among the βάρβαροι⁷³ makes clear that they also attached a certain stigma to the term. The syntax of Paul’s slogan also suggests that his use of βάρβαρος in v. 14 moves in an unflattering direction, since the absence of a connective between the two pairs implies a parallelism between Ἑλλήν and σοφός and between βάρβαρος and ἀνόητος.⁷⁴ The word ἀνόητος is plainly unfavourable.⁷⁵

Since the slogan of Rom 1.14 functions precisely to explain or justify (οὕτως) the statement in v. 15, reading v. 15 as a reference to Paul’s eagerness to ‘evangelize’ the Roman church requires him to be saying something like: ‘I am eager to preach the gospel to you because it is my duty as an apostle to “evangelize” both the cultured Greek and the uncivilized; both the educated and the ignorant.’ This offers a description of the ‘saints at Rome’ radically different from that in v. 7, and it is difficult to see how such a statement would have been gratefully received by the Roman church. If vv. 11–12 are anything to go by, it seems quite clear that Paul was keen (at least here in the introduction) to be gratefully received by this church. On a retrospective reading, however, the slogan would carry no offense, since the phrase ὑμῖν τοῖς ἐν Ῥώμῃ would refer to Romans *outside of Christ*.

While a reference in Rom 1.15 to the apostle’s present desire to ‘evangelize’ the Roman church remains a possibility, the above considerations cast significant doubt over such a reading. This, combined with the fact that an alternative reading commends itself, invites recourse to the Pauline pattern of usage (not to mention the wider ancient usage noted above) with respect to εὐαγγελ- terminology. That Paul so consistently uses gospel-language in relation only to his ‘missionary’ endeavours⁷⁶ means that, without clear indications to the contrary, Rom 1.15

72 Windisch, ‘Βάρβαρος’, 548.

73 Ibid., 550.

74 βάρβαρος and ἀνόητος are joined as synonyms in the near contemporary Dionysius Halicarnassus *Antiq. Rom.* V.4.3.15.

75 On this, see J. Behm, ‘Ανόητος’, *TDNT* 1:961–2. The term appears four more times in the Pauline corpus (Gal 3.1; 3.3; 1 Tim 6.9; Titus 3.3), and all of them contain unflattering connotations. In Titus 3.3 the word stands at the head of a list of terms describing the lives of those outside of Christ: ἡμεν γάρ ποτε καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀνόητοι, ἀπειθεῖς, πλανώμενοι, δουλεύοντες ἐπιθυμίαις καὶ ἡδοναῖς ποικίλαις, ἐν κακίᾳ καὶ φθόνῳ διάγοντες, στυγητοί, μισοῦντες ἀγγήλους.

76 For Paul, the activity marked out by εὐαγγελ- was a foundational one. Once a community of believers existed, the terminology of εὐαγγελ- became inappropriate as a designation for the activity and/or content of religious instruction within the church. For Christians, ‘gospel’ becomes retrospective language, recalling the message once delivered, a message that is now

should not be allowed to stand as the sole piece of evidence for a supposed 'broad-ranging' use of the terminology.⁷⁷

Conclusion

In ancient Greek literature – 'pagan' and Jewish – εὐαγγελ- terminology consistently connotes a message or an act of proclamation, whether royal or mundane, which is 'news' to the hearer. The scriptural use of ἄγγελος which, in the opinion of most scholars, provides a dominant background to NT gospel language, wholly conforms to this usage, referring exclusively to hitherto unknown announcements of (usually) good news. When one turns to the Pauline literature the same pattern is discernible. A 'broad-ranging' interpretation of the term remains a possibility in only one text, Rom 1.15. However, even there, another interpretation commends itself, leading this author to conclude that 'gospel' for Paul refers not to ongoing instruction within the church but to proclamation outside it.

to be 'remembered', 'held fast' and 'lived by' but never 'evangelized' (εὐαγγελιζέσθαι) within the church itself. On only two occasions does Paul use εὐαγγελ- of announcements which are clearly non-missionary. In 1 Thess 3.6 the verb is used of Timothy's report concerning the Thessalonians' faith and love in Christ. While the text may not contain a 'missionary' use of εὐαγγελίζομαι, it is still obviously a 'primary' announcement. The news Timothy brought to Paul was 'new'. The same can be said for the use of προεὐαγγελίζομαι ('preach the gospel beforehand') in Gal 3.8. The message preached to Abraham was not the 'missionary' message but it was clearly 'news' to the patriarch.

⁷⁷ After suggesting that 1.15 probably refers to the 'ongoing work of teaching', Moo remarks in *Romans*, 63 n. 62: 'It must be said, however, that this interpretation, while attractive, has against it Paul's normal use of εὐαγγελίζομαι which he rarely uses for anything except initial evangelistic preaching.'