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# Post-Holocaust Interpretations of ἸΕΡΑΗΛ in Romans 9:6–9 and 11:25–27

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POST-HOLOCAUST INTERPRETATIONS OF ἸΣΡΑΗΛ IN ROMANS 9:6–9 AND 11:25–27

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Presented to the Faculty of  
Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,  
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in Partial Fulfillment of the  
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## ABBREVIATIONS

AYBC	Anchor Yale Bible Commentary
ACCS	Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
BCS	Biblical Commentary Series
BNTC	Black's New Testament Commentaries
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CB	The Church's Bible
EKKNT	Evangelisch-katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
HNT	Handbuch zum Neuen Testament
HThKNT	Herders theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
ICC	International Critical Commentary
<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
NCB	New Century Bible
<i>NIB</i>	<i>The New Interpreter's Bible</i>
NTD	Das Neue Testament Deutsch
<i>PSB</i>	<i>Princeton Seminary Bulletin</i>
<i>RJ</i>	<i>The Reformed Journal</i>
RNT	Regensburger Neues Testament
SP	Sacra Pagina
ThHKNT	Theologischer Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament
TPINTC	TPI New Testament Commentaries

*TZ*            *Trierer theologische Zeitschrift*

WBC            World Biblical Commentary

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

Romans 9–11 is largely understood by scholars as the Apostle Paul’s most thorough treatment of Israel and the church. In these chapters, St. Paul defends the following thesis<sup>1</sup> that arises from the epistle’s theme in 1:16–17: even though the nation of Israel rejected God’s promise in Christ, the promise itself has not failed (Rom 9:6a). In 9:6b he explains that thesis with the following assertion: οὐ γὰρ πάντες οἱ ἐξ Ἰσραὴλ οὗτοι Ἰσραήλ. The distinction between these two occurrences of Ἰσραήλ in 9:6b is important to understanding the argument presented in Rom 9–11, which culminates in the statement that πᾶς Ἰσραὴλ σωθήσεται (11:26a).

Since the horrors of the Holocaust, it has become difficult for interpreters of Romans to read Rom 9–11 and interpret Paul’s concept of Ἰσραήλ without reflecting on the ways in which they relate.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, Joseph A. Fitzmyer rightly points out that since the Holocaust the modern reader of Rom 9–11 has had difficulty reading these chapters “without worrying about the ramifications that arise in the mind of the reader.”<sup>3</sup> Moreover, Lloyd Gaston admits from the outset of his book that he writes “in the context of the second half of the twentieth century in the

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<sup>1</sup> Romans 9:6a is often understood as the thesis of Rom 9–11; an issue that arises from the primary thesis in Rom 1:16–17 concerning the power of the gospel and the revealed righteousness of God. See C.E.B. Cranfield, *Romans 9–16* ICC (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1979), 475; James Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, WBC Vol. 38b (Dallas: Word, 1988), 518; Jonathon Grothe, *Justification of the Ungodly*, Vol. 2 (Self Published, 2005), 476; Robert Jewett, *Romans* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 573–74; Frank J. Matera, *Romans Paideia* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010), 222; N.T. Wright, “Romans,” in *Acts, Introduction to Pauline Letters, I Corinthians, II Corinthians, and Romans* NIB Vol. 10 (Nashville: Abingdon, 2002), 635.

<sup>2</sup> See Wright, “Romans,” 620–21. For instance, he admits that the so-called new perspective of the 1970s was a “self-consciously post-Holocaust project, aimed not least at reminding Paul’s readers of his essential Jewishness.”

<sup>3</sup> Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans* AYBC (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 542.



firm conviction that the things which happened in the first half must mean a radical and irrevocable change in the way Christians do theology.”<sup>4</sup> Regarding the question of a two-covenant theology by which Jews are saved by the Mosaic covenant and Gentiles by faith in Christ, Douglas Moo acknowledges that “such a view, allowing as it does for both the Jew and the Christian to affirm the integrity of each other’s religion, has proved quite attractive to our ‘post-Holocaust’ and pluralistic age.”<sup>5</sup>

Considering the conscious connection that scholars in the post-Holocaust era have made between the Holocaust event and biblical interpretation, the following questions can be raised concerning scholarly interpretations of Rom 9–11. Have interpretations of Rom 9:6–9 and 11:25–27 during the post-Holocaust era, particularly interpretations of Ἰσραήλ in those passages, gone in different directions not previously taken? If so, what are those directions?

### **The Thesis**

This thesis paper surveys various interpretations of Ἰσραήλ in Rom 9:6–9 and 11:25–27 during the post-Holocaust context of Jewish-Christian relations to determine the exegetical questions most frequently discussed within those passages.

### **The Current Status of the Question**

Interpretations of Ἰσραήλ in Rom 9:6–9 and 11:25–27 have generally gone in four directions in the Post-Holocaust era. *Sonderweg* interpretations suggesting that Paul in Rom 9–

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<sup>4</sup> Lloyd Gaston, *Paul and the Torah* (Vancouver: Univ. of British Columbia Press, 1987), 2. He goes on to say, “It is the task of exegesis after Auschwitz precisely to expose the explicit or implicit anti-Judaism inherent in the Christian tradition, including the New Testament itself.”

<sup>5</sup> Douglas Moo, *Epistle to the Romans* NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 725. He does not believe this is an exegetically sound position representative of Paul’s thought.

11 is charting two different paths, one for Israel and one for the church.<sup>6</sup> ‘Dispensational’ and ‘Zionist’ interpretations. Though they are distinguished from one another in terms of how they view God dealing with Israel and the church, ‘dispensational’ and ‘Christian Zionist’ interpreters of Rom 9–11 are similar in that they both hold that there is a future for the ethnic, national, and territorial Israel in God’s consummate plan of salvation.<sup>7</sup> ‘Traditional’ Christian interpretations from various Christian denominations. These interpretations follow a traditional reading of Rom 9–11, asserting that Paul has only one covenant in Jesus Christ both for Jews and Gentiles.<sup>8</sup> New perspective on Paul as well as ‘other’ perspective interpretations. Like ‘traditional’ Christian interpretations, these interpreters believe that Paul intends only one path of salvation in Jesus Christ for both Jews and Gentiles. However, these interpreters are sympathetic to new perspective views in that they read Paul closely in his first century Jewish context and question the centrality of imputed righteousness as the center of Pauline thought.<sup>9</sup> The various directions these interpreters have taken in the post-Holocaust era will comprise the body of this thesis.

In Rom 9:6–9 Paul makes primarily three distinctions: between ‘Israel’ and ‘those from Israel’; between ‘Abraham’s children’ and ‘Abraham’s seed’; and between ‘the children of the flesh’ and the ‘children of the promise.’ The challenge that these distinctions create is seen when Rom 9:6–9 is read in light of Rom 11:25–27, and vice versa.<sup>10</sup>

In 11:25–27 Paul says climactically, “‘All Israel’ will be saved” (11:26a). What then does

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<sup>6</sup> See Chapter Two below. The interpretations of Franz Mussner, Lloyd Gaston, and John Gager will be considered.

<sup>7</sup> See Chapter Three below. The interpretations of Woodrow Kroll, Craig Blaising, and David Rudolph will be considered.

<sup>8</sup> See Chapter Four below. The interpretations of C.E.B. Cranfield, Robert Jewett, and Andrew Das will be considered.

<sup>9</sup> See Chapter Five below. The interpretations of N.T. Wright, James Dunn, and Mark A. Nanos will be considered.

<sup>10</sup> Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 559.

Paul mean by ‘Israel’ in those sections? This question concerning the referent of Ἰσραήλ in 9:6–9 and 11:25–27 then raises several other questions. Which is the more restrictive term in 9:7, τέκνα or σπέρμα? What is meant by those terms? What is meant by τέκνα τῆς σαρκὸς and τέκνα τῆς ἐπαγγελίας in 9:8? What is the meaning of τὸ μυστήριον in 11:25a? What is meant by πύρωσις ἀπὸ μέρους τῷ Ἰσραὴλ γέγονεν in 11:25b? What is the meaning of the phrase, ἄχρι οὗ τὸ πλήρωμα τῶν ἐθνῶν εισέλθῃ in 11:25b? In that phrase, ‘from where’ and ‘to where’ are the Gentiles expected to come and go? How should καὶ οὕτως be translated in 11:26a? What is the referent of ‘all Israel’ in 11:26a? What does it mean that “‘all Israel’ will be saved” in 11:26a? How and when will such salvation take place? What is the function of the quotations from the prophet Isaiah in 11:26b–27?

In answering these many questions raised in even a casual reading of Rom 9:6–9 and 11:25–27, the interpreter must chiefly wrestle with the meaning of Ἰσραήλ. Interpretive questions in those passages appear to be tied to the referent question concerning the identity of Ἰσραήλ in 9:6b and 11:26a.

The term Ἰσραήλ is found eleven times in the epistle to the Romans, all within chapters 9–11. Although the term Ἰσραηλιῖται occurs in 9:4, the first occurrence of Ἰσραήλ within those chapters is in 9:6b, where it occurs twice in a single clause. In the clause that makes up Rom 9:6b, οὐ γὰρ πάντες οἱ ἐξ Ἰσραὴλ οὗτοι Ἰσραήλ, scholars are largely in agreement that Paul’s intended referent for the first Ἰσραήλ is the nation of Israel and the ethnic Jews that comprise it. In this way, the intended referent is associated with Ἰσραηλιῖται in 9:4.<sup>11</sup> However, a brief survey

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<sup>11</sup> See, for instance, Brendan Byrne, *Romans* SP Vol. 6 (Collegeville: Liturgical Press), 291; Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 539; Cranfield, *Romans 9–16*, 471; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 559; Grothe, *Justification of the Ungodly* Vol. 2, 476–77; Jewett, *Romans*, 571–72; Ernst Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans* ed. and trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 262; Colin G. Kruse, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 375; David P. Kuske, *A Commentary on Romans 9–16* (Milwaukee: Northwestern, 2014), 29; Hans K.

of scholarship in the post-Holocaust era concerning the referent of the second Ἰσραήλ, discloses a divide.

Some understand Paul to be describing a subset within ethnic Israel made up essentially of ethnic Jews who have faith in Christ.<sup>12</sup> Others understand Paul to reference, in the second occurrence, a group that overlaps with,<sup>13</sup> but is not exclusive to ethnic Israel.<sup>14</sup> This group then would include not just ethnic Jews but also non-Jews, or Gentiles, who have faith in Christ.<sup>15</sup> This ‘Jewish and Gentile Christian’ group is often understood by scholars as synonymous with the church, or τὸν Ἰσραήλ τοῦ θεοῦ in Gal 6:16.<sup>16</sup>

Those who understand Paul to imply in the second Ἰσραήλ a subset of ethnic Israel often define their position *over and against* those who read in that second Ἰσραήλ Jewish and Gentile

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LaRondelle, *The Israel of God in Prophecy* (Berrien Springs: Andrew Univ. Press, 1983), 129; Martin Luther, *Library of Christian Classics: Lecture on Romans* ed. and trans. Wilhelm Pauck (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1961), 265; Matera, *Romans*, 222; Moo, *Romans*, 570–71; Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 353; Anders Nygren, *Commentary on Romans* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1949), 361–62; Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans* BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 493; Chase P. Sears, *Heirs of Promise: The Church as the New Israel in Romans* (Bellingham: Lexham, 2015), 42, 77.

<sup>12</sup> For instance, Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 547; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 560; Jewett, *Romans*, 571: “It seems, rather, that ‘Israel’ in the second instance refers to Jewish Christians, to those of ethnic Israel who have put faith in Christ. Having made this distinction, Paul discusses ethnic Israel, seeking to refine its relation to God’s election.” See also Moo, *Romans*, 574; John Piper, *The Justification of God: An Exegetical and Theological Study of Romans 9:1–23* 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 30; Witherington, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 252.

<sup>13</sup> See Michael Middendorf, *Romans 9–16* (St Louis: Concordia, 2016). He says, “The key point here is that Paul utilizes Ἰσραήλ with two different, but overlapping referents” (852).

<sup>14</sup> Grothe, *Justification of the Ungodly 2:476–77*; Jewett, *Romans*, 571; Käsemann, *Romans*, 262; Wright, “Romans,” 635–36.

<sup>15</sup> For instance, Brian Abasciano, *Paul’s Use of the Old Testament in Romans 9:1–9* (London: T&T Clark, 2005), 36; Grothe, *Justification of the Ungodly*, 2:476–77; N.T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 238.

<sup>16</sup> See Abasciano, *Paul’s Use of the Old Testament*, 36; Matthew Black, *Romans* 2nd ed. NCB (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 127, and Moo, *Romans*, 573. A curious case is Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 538 and 547. In the second Ἰσραήλ Dunn does not believe that Paul is pitting believers over against national Israel “as if the blessings and name of ethnic Israel has been transferred to the church” (539). However, he does equate the second occurrence of Ἰσραήλ with τὸν Ἰσραήλ τοῦ θεοῦ (Gal 6:16), “Both Jews and Gentile God worshipers who have come to believe in ‘the good news of God promised beforehand in the holy scriptures’ (1:1–2)” (547).

Christians. Scholars who define the second Ἰσραήλ in this way may give an interpretation of the intended referent in the negative—who Israel is *not*.<sup>17</sup>

Concerning 11:25–27 and specifically the question of the identity of ‘all Israel,’ in 11:26a, the phrase, ‘all Israel,’ occurs 148 times in the Old Testament and always designates historic, ethnic Israel, usually in the sense of the generations of Israel contemporary with the author. In Mal 3:22 it has the sense of every generation.<sup>18</sup> For Paul, we have already seen in 9:6b that he uses ‘Israel’ in two different ways. The question for us now is, what does he mean by ‘all Israel’ as it is used in the words that culminate his argument in 9:1–11:36, “‘All Israel’ will be saved” (11:26a)?

Kruse gives six interpretations of the expression ‘all Israel’: (i) All Israelites from every age; (ii) All the elect of Israel of all time; (iii) All Israelites alive at the end of the age; (iv) Israel as a whole alive at the end of the age, but not including every individual Israelite; (v) A large number of Israelites at the end of the age; (vi) Israel redefined to include all Jews and Gentiles who believe in Jesus Christ.<sup>19</sup> He notes that few have supported (i), but there is at least some support for views (ii)–(vi), with the majority of interpreters adopting view (iv).

Cranfield gives four different interpretations of ‘all Israel.’ He acknowledges that the meaning has been much disputed over the centuries but that four main interpretations have been proposed: (i) All the elect, both Jews and Gentiles; (ii) All the elect of the nation Israel; (iii) The

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<sup>17</sup>See especially Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 539 and Witherington, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, 252, n. 31. Dunn says, “Paul does not mean believers over against national Israel. Hence the inadequacy of any talk of a transfer of the name and blessings of ‘Israel’ to ‘the church,’ as though Paul saw them as distinct entities” (539). Witherington adds, “That some Israelites are not ‘Israel’ in the select or true sense does not mean that Paul has redefined Israel to mean the church” (252, n. 31).

<sup>18</sup> Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 623.

<sup>19</sup> Kruse, *Romans*, 448.

whole nation Israel, including every individual member; (iv) The nation Israel as a whole, but not necessarily including every individual member.<sup>20</sup>

In considering the two sets of categories, Middendorf sees Kruse's as the more thorough. He believes that Kruse takes into consideration the temporal distinctions inherent in the phrase "All Israel will be saved" (11:26a), whereas Cranfield does not. Middendorf observes correctly that there are diachronic and synchronic dimensions of the expression that need to be considered.<sup>21</sup>

After a survey of the wide-ranging interpretations of the expression 'all Israel,' one might expect to find an equally diverse number of interpretations of Paul's assertion regarding its salvation (11:26a). There are generally five ways that this expression has been understood:<sup>22</sup> (i) 'All Israel' will be saved by a 'special path' or *Sonderweg*; (ii) 'All Israel' will be saved through the 'remnant' of Jewish and Gentile believers; (iii) 'All Israel' will be saved through the 'remnant' of Jewish believers; (iv) 'All Israel' will be saved by converting to the gospel throughout time; (v) 'All Israel' will be saved by converting to the gospel at the *Parousia*. Among these different interpretations many nuanced positions have been developed by various interpreters regarding the temporality and the precise nature of the question. When will 'all Israel' be saved? How will 'all Israel' be saved?

As previously stated, there are many interpretive and theological questions that arise from a reading of Rom 9:6–9 and 11:25–27 as they relate to the question of the identity of Ἰσραήλ. Our survey of various interpretations from the four orientations of *Sonderweg*,

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<sup>20</sup> Cranfield, *Romans 9–16*, 576.

<sup>21</sup> Middendorf, *Romans 9–16*, 1154, n. 94.

<sup>22</sup> See Schreiner, *Romans*, 615–20 and Middendorf, *Romans 9–16*, 1159–62 for a helpful discussion regarding the question of Israel's salvation in 11:26a and possible answers.

dispensational/Christian Zionist, ‘traditional’ Christian, and New Perspective/‘other’ perspective will reveal the different ways that these questions have been addressed in the post-Holocaust era.

### **The Thesis in the Context of Current Scholarship**

This thesis supplements current history of interpretation approaches to the reading of Romans. Chapter One will begin with a thesis statement, a review of the current status of the question, and the employed methodological procedure. Also, included in this chapter is the thesis' anticipated outcomes, and the research areas to be pursued. Chapters Two through Five will be a review of four major interpretive orientations in the post-Holocaust era of Ἰσραήλ in 9:6–9 and 11:25–27. Each chapter will consider how the various interpreters within each group have handled the questions that arise from those passages, with attention given to how the answers relate to Paul’s understanding of Ἰσραήλ. Chapter Two will cover *Sonderweg* interpretations. Chapter Three will consider ‘dispensational’ and ‘Christian Zionist’ interpretations. Chapter Four will be a review of ‘traditional’ Christian interpretations. Chapter Five will look at new perspective and ‘other’ perspective interpretations. Chapter Six will offer summary and reflection on the various strands of interpretations, including suggested areas for further research.

### **The Methodological Procedure to Be Employed**

A history of interpretation approach will be the primary method employed to establish this thesis. This methodology is also referred to as *Wirkungsgeschichte*.<sup>23</sup> The approach is primarily

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<sup>23</sup> “The history of a text’s effect or impact on faith and practice. The term encompasses the double dimension of the effective history and the effected history of texts” (emphasis, original). See Richard N. Soulen and Kendall R. Soulen, *Handbook of Biblical Criticism* 4th ed. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2011), 177.

concerned with the ‘world in front of the text’ and the readers who encompass that world. The method falls under the category of reader-response critical methods.<sup>24</sup> A history of interpretation is then understood as the history of how readers (e.g. exegetes and scholars) respond to the text.<sup>25</sup> The approach rests upon two primary concepts. First, a text becomes a literary work as readers encounter it through interpretation and appropriation. Second, the appropriation of the text can take shape in literary, artistic, and theological ways, among others.<sup>26</sup>

The history of interpretation approach was developed in literary studies between 1960 and 1970, largely a result of Hans-Georg Gadamer’s work, *Truth and Method (Wahrheit und Methode)*.<sup>27</sup> The method arose at a time of increasing interest in the relation between a text and its readers.

Closely related to the history of interpretation methodology, or *Wirkungsgeschichte*, is reception theory. This theory is part of literary theory that examines the way readers interpret a literary work considering changes and effects of history. It first emerged in the 1960s in Germany and Czechoslovakia, and was spearheaded by Hans Robert Jauss, a contemporary of Gadamer. Reception theory focuses on the reception or interpretation of a work rather than on the historical factors that gave rise to it (as in historical criticism) or on the text itself as a self-contained unity (as in structuralism).<sup>28</sup> Reception theory was a precursor to reader-response

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<sup>24</sup> Edgar V. McKnight “Reader-Response Criticism” in *An Introduction to Biblical Criticisms and their Application: To Each Its Own Meaning* eds. Steven L. McKenzie and Stephen R. Haynes (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1999), 230–52.

<sup>25</sup> John F.A. Sawyer, *The Fifth Gospel: Isaiah In the History of Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1996), 11.

<sup>26</sup> Pontifical Biblical Commission, *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church* (Washington DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2005), 13.

<sup>27</sup> Sawyer, *Fifth Gospel*, 12.

<sup>28</sup> Soulen and Soulen, *Handbook of Biblical Criticism*, 177.



criticism.<sup>29</sup>

Jauss speaks of aesthetics of reception that cause a reader to come to a certain ‘horizon of expectation,’ or what the reader believes will happen based on the reader’s own horizon or historical background. The reader’s horizon of expectation, he asserts, makes it impossible for readers to step outside their own historical praxis and view a reading objectively.<sup>30</sup> He then encourages a reader to read while prioritizing the issues of reception and impact.<sup>31</sup> For Jauss, the author, work, and reader form a fundamental ‘triangle of interpretation’ in the literary process. Previous methodologies, he felt, did not give enough attention to the reader and the way history influences the reader. For Jauss, the reader is a formative part of history, and the literary work has no historical life without the active participation of its audiences.<sup>32</sup>

Jauss offers seven theses that govern his work. His work is based on the triangle of interpretation: the author has an interpretation of the text, the text holds the possibility of several interpretations, and the audience can create many interpretations.<sup>33</sup>

His theses are as follows. First, he mentions the problem of objectivity in reading a literary work. As a reader engages a text, preconceived ideas are present in either the reader’s conscious or unconscious.

Second, one’s horizon of expectation is continually evolving. A reader’s understanding of a text depends on the reader’s horizon of expectation, which builds on all previous works and

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<sup>29</sup> Soulen and Soulen, *Handbook of Biblical Criticism*, 177.

<sup>30</sup> Randolph W. Tate, *Handbook for Biblical Interpretation: An Essential Guide to Methods, Terms, and Concepts* 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012), 376.

<sup>31</sup> Tate, *Handbook for Biblical Interpretation*, 377.

<sup>32</sup> Tate, *Handbook for Biblical Interpretation*, 377.

<sup>33</sup> Tate, *Handbook for Biblical Interpretation*. The following seven theses are listed on 377–78.

experiences. So, what a reader expects a text to do will change as the reader reads other texts and accumulates more life experiences. This even applies to the rereading of a text. When certain understandings are established in the first reading, a later reading allows for new questions to be raised and old, lingering questions to be answered.<sup>34</sup>

Third, the horizon of expectation affects many different audiences over an extended period of time. Since readers and the conditions within which readers engage a text change, the text will have different effects at any historical moment. A work that is intended for a specific society at a specific time will not mean the same to that society twenty years later.

Fourth, the reconstruction of the horizon of expectation and the production of a literary work enables the contemporary reader to discover how the work should be viewed and understood. It points out the past and current understanding of the text. The reader who is not part of the author's original audience must learn what the horizon of expectation might have been for the original audience by considering their many influences.

Fifth, the horizon of expectation evolves as questions generated by old texts are answered and new texts pose other questions.

Sixth, a work changes over time for a reader. It takes on new meaning with each new generation. One generation passes down its understanding of the text, with the next generation beginning where the preceding one ended.

Seventh, social influences modify interpretations. The many influencing factors make it difficult to predict the way a reader will interpret a text at any given moment.

Jauss' seven theses that comprise his reception theory is of particular importance for this study. As commentators of Romans have engaged the text, what preconceived ideas are present

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<sup>34</sup> Tate, *Handbook for Biblical Interpretation*, 377.

that prevent them from reading objectively? How has the text changed over time for the reader? What new meaning has it taken on with each new generation? What social and historical influences, such as the Holocaust, have modified interpretations of Romans, particularly Rom 9:6–9, 11:25–27, and the understanding of Ἰσραήλ?

It is important to assert that all interpreters of Romans, or any given text, are impacted by their social setting. The goal then in employing an history of interpretation methodology for this thesis is to show that a post-Holocaust history of interpretation of Rom 9:6–9 and 11:25–27 reveals that specifically the post-Holocaust context of Jewish-Christian relations has influenced the reading of 9:6–9, 11:25–27, and Ἰσραήλ in those passages.

### **The Outcome(s) Anticipated**

A greater understanding of Paul's meaning of Ἰσραήλ is anticipated. Specifically, his meaning(s) of Ἰσραήλ and the surrounding questions in 9:6–9, 11:25–27, and how that shapes the reading of Rom 9–11 and the rest of the epistle. Finally, it is anticipated that the impact an interpreter's external influences (particularly the post-Holocaust context of Jewish-Christian relations) have on the reading of Rom 9:6–9, 11:25–27, and the concept of Israel in Romans, will receive greater clarity.

### **The Research Areas to Be Pursued**

Research areas to be pursued for the completion of this thesis are the history of interpretation (*Wirkungsgeschichte*) critical methodology, reception theory, Jewish-Christian relations and its relationship to biblical criticism of Paul and his epistles in the post-Holocaust era, a study of Ἰσραήλ in St. Paul's letters, and a review of critical interpretations of Rom 9:6–9 and 11:25–27 in the post-Holocaust era.

## CHAPTER TWO

### *SONDERWEG* INTERPRETATIONS

#### Introduction

During the post-Holocaust era, some interpreters of Rom 9–11 believe that in those chapters St. Paul is describing a separate path of salvation, or *Sonderweg*, for the people of Israel as a whole. The most notable *Sonderweg* proponents include Lloyd Gaston and John Gager. One exception to those two that needs to be discussed is the position of Franz Mussner. While Mussner speaks of a *Sonderweg* for ethnic Israel in Rom 9–11, he believes that such a path will occur at the *Parousia* and is grounded in the Scriptural principle of grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone.<sup>1</sup>

#### Lloyd Gaston

In his book, *Paul and the Torah*, Lloyd Gaston employs an “experimental hermeneutic” that sees Paul preaching exclusively to the Gentiles and understanding himself as an apostate from Israel’s covenant.<sup>2</sup> Relating this hermeneutic to Rom 9–11, he believes that Paul’s goal then is to have a Gentile church *alongside* of Israel. He contends that this is the reason for silence in these chapters on the Jerusalem church and Jewish Christians.<sup>3</sup> For, he suspects that Paul’s

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<sup>1</sup> Kruse provides helpful clarification of the differences between Mussner’s *Sonderweg* and others when he cites Reidar Hvalvik, “A ‘*Sonderweg*’ for Israel: A Critical Examination of a Current Interpretation of Romans 11:25–27,” *JSNT* 38 (1990): 88. See Kruse, *Romans*, 454.

<sup>2</sup> Gaston, *Paul and the Torah*, 7–8.

<sup>3</sup> Gaston, *Paul and the Torah*, 150.

quarrel with his fellow Jews is never about Judaism but a Jewish understanding of Gentiles.<sup>4</sup> He does not believe that Rom 9–11 is about the unbelief or lack of faith or works-righteousness on the part of Israel. For Gaston, Jewish Christianity is never on Paul’s horizon in Rom 9–11. He speaks of Israel as a whole and how Roman, Gentile Christians should see themselves in relation to Israel.<sup>5</sup>

Concerning the flow of thought throughout Rom 9–11, he suggests that Rom 9 speaks of God’s election of Israel and Rom 10 refers to the new expression of God’s righteousness in which he calls the Gentiles into the people of God. He argues that Rom 9–10 are not to be seen dialectically but successively.<sup>6</sup> In chapter 11 Paul then demonstrates that God has not rejected his people, Israel (11:1). His belief concerning Rom 9–11 as a whole then bears weight on his reading of Rom 9:6–9 and 11:25–27.

In 9:6–9, according to Gaston, Paul shows that God’s grace toward Israel, Abraham’s seed, stands even if God’s election also involves the Gentiles, those not originally chosen.<sup>7</sup> It appears that Gaston justifies his understanding of 9:6–9 by interpreting ἐξ in 9:6b (οὐ γὰρ πάντες οἱ ἐξ Ἰσραὴλ οὗτοι Ἰσραήλ) as a reference to Gentiles, those “called out of” Israel as in, “not originally chosen” to be part of Israel.<sup>8</sup> Thus, his understanding of God’s election includes those not chosen. The Gentiles are the “non-chosen” ones but they are, nonetheless, a part of God’s election. Being part of God’s election means that they are children of Abraham’s universal fatherhood even if they are not chosen.

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<sup>4</sup> Gaston, *Paul and the Torah*, 13.

<sup>5</sup> Gaston, *Paul and the Torah*, 13.

<sup>6</sup> Gaston, *Paul and the Torah*, 99.

<sup>7</sup> Gaston, *Paul and the Torah*, 94.

<sup>8</sup> Gaston, *Paul and the Torah*, 94.

In chapter 11 of his book, Gaston suggests that Paul lays out his salvation of the Gentiles, the non-chosen ones, alongside of Israel, the chosen ones. He believes that 11:26a is the culmination of his argument.

Gaston understands ‘all Israel’ as a reference to ethnic Israel.<sup>9</sup> He delivers a five-part answer to the question, “Why ‘all Israel’ will be saved?” First, God will save ‘all Israel’ because he is faithful to his covenant and forgives. He looks to the Isaianic texts in 11:26b–27 for support of this notion.<sup>10</sup> He sees 11:29 and the irrevocability of God’s gifts and calling stated there as essentially saying the same thing.

The second reason he gives to the question of why ‘all Israel’ will be saved is because there will come from Zion the Redeemer. Gaston speaks of God as the one referred to in the Isaianic texts in 11:26b–27 rather than Christ.<sup>11</sup> This understanding allows Gaston to pave the way for a *Sonderweg* interpretation that does not involve an end time conversion. If Christ is meant at all in 11:26–27, he claims, it is Christ as agent of *Sonderweg* of Israel’s salvation.<sup>12</sup> As he explains it, God’s righteousness for salvation for both Jews and Gentiles, takes place in two different ways without one changing into the other.<sup>13</sup>

Third, Gaston believes ‘all Israel’ will be saved because Paul (and Jewish co-workers), as a remnant of the Jews, responded to the missionary task to take the gospel to the Gentiles. Because of such work, God will be gracious to ‘all Israel.’ He supports this view by appealing to the

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<sup>9</sup> Gaston, *Paul and the Torah*, 149. He says, “Paul needs to say ‘all Israel,’ without differentiation. This line of thought makes no use of the idea of the remnant and certainly not of ‘Jewish Christianity.’”

<sup>10</sup> Gaston, *Paul and the Torah*, 147. For Gaston *nomos* functions in primarily two ways: as the Torah, Israel’s law joined to the covenant, and as the law of Sinai given to the nations apart from the covenant and resulting in a curse.

<sup>11</sup> Gaston, *Paul and the Torah*, 143.

<sup>12</sup> Gaston, *Paul and the Torah*, 148.

<sup>13</sup> Gaston, *Paul and the Torah*, 148.

concept of representative righteousness given first in the Old Testament, in passages like Gen 18 and even carried forth in later Jewish concepts.<sup>14</sup>

Fourth, Gaston maintains God will be gracious to ‘all Israel’ because he will make them jealous of salvation that has come to Gentiles. Although, he clarifies that Paul does not say he will provoke them to faith in Christ. He believes such jealousy will lead them to be more faithful to the Torah rather than to abandon the Torah or become like Gentiles.<sup>15</sup>

Finally, Gaston suggests that ‘all Israel’ will be saved although they stumbled on the stone of Christ. He does not believe they will be saved by individual Jews converting to the gospel. On the contrary, he maintains that Paul and the preaching of the gospel to the circumcised by the Jerusalem church is the exception and is nowhere present in chapter 11.<sup>16</sup> For this reason, Gaston does not believe that Paul can be read as blaming the Jews for refusing to believe in Christ.

Gaston also address the question concerning the fullness of the Gentiles. He believes that the fullness of the Gentiles will come in first by the preaching of Paul and by the remnant according to the election of grace. Second, because Israel stumbled, though not to fall, then salvation will come to the Gentiles. He also sees the remnant in 9:27 and ‘fullness’ in 11:12 as the same as “‘all Israel’ will be saved” in 11:26a.<sup>17</sup> As for ἀπὸ μέρους in 11:25b, Gaston interprets it adverbially rather than adjectivally and renders πώρωσις as ‘blindness’ rather than ‘hardening.’ So, he refers to ‘a partial blindness’ coming upon Israel until the fullness of the

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<sup>14</sup> Gaston, *Paul and the Torah*, 148. He cites the Jewish concept of *Lamedvoniks* for support of representative righteousness. He says, “In the end, this is what Paul finds wrong with other Jews: that they did not share his revelation in Damascus” (139–40).

<sup>15</sup> Gaston, *Paul and the Torah*, 148.

<sup>16</sup> Gaston, *Paul and the Torah*, 148.

<sup>17</sup> Gaston, *Paul and the Torah*, 140.

Gentiles has come in. For Gaston ‘blindness’ is understood as a lack of full understanding.<sup>18</sup> Therefore, he does not believe their blindness is a punishment and does not see πῶρωσις as a synonym for unbelief.

By reading Paul as an apostate apostle from Israel’s covenant and apostle to the Gentiles, Gaston establishes that in Rom 9–11 he is arguing for a Gentile church alongside of Israel, with two different paths of salvation. One path for the Gentiles through Christ and faith in the gospel. Another for the Jews through God’s faithfulness to his covenant bound to Torah observance.

Gaston’s approach to Rom 9–11 seems to rely on the assumption that God is operating with two covenants, one for Israel and one for the Gentiles.<sup>19</sup> He believes that Paul’s goal is to have a Gentile church *alongside* of Israel. Moreover, he seems to be reading Paul as an apostate from Israel’s covenant (which he believes is still valid). In his mind, Paul is also to be viewed as a preacher exclusively to the Gentiles, and not at all to the Jews. Therefore, he dismisses any idea that works-righteousness or Jewish unbelief is a part of Paul’s thinking not only in Rom 9–11, but in the whole of Paul’s thought. Also, Gaston claims that Paul’s quarrel with the Jews was not with Judaism but only with a Jewish understanding of the Gentiles. How exactly is Gaston distinguishing the two and how does such a distinction hold up when considering Paul’s discussion concerning Jew and circumcision in Rom 2, Abraham in Rom 4, as well as the historical occasion of the ‘Judaizers’ that led to the writing of the epistle to the Galatians? One might wonder if his is a correct reading of Paul or simply an “experimental hermeneutical”<sup>20</sup> that

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<sup>18</sup> Gaston, *Paul and the Torah*, 143. He says, “Since Israel stumbled but did not fall, and since there were only some things that Israel did not understand, it seems best to understand *apo merous* to refer to a partial hardening rather than to a division between the majority and the minority.”

<sup>19</sup> For a thorough response to such a view see David E. Holwerda, *Jesus and Israel—One Covenant or Two?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995).

<sup>20</sup> Gaston, *Paul and the Torah*, 7–8. In Gaston’s own words he admits that his approach is a tentative one.



fails to hold up to the exegetical evidence?

One specific example concerning exegesis is his interpretation of ἐξ in οὐ γὰρ πάντες οἱ ἐξ Ἰσραὴλ οὗτοι Ἰσραήλ (9:6b). Gaston translates ἐξ as “called out of.” He believes it refers there to Gentiles “called out of” and “not originally chosen” to be part of Israel but are, nonetheless, a part of God’s election. Based on this interpretation, he sets forth his idea that Paul advocates a Gentile church *alongside* of Israel. Yet, does the grammar allow for such an interpretation? Moreover, does this fit with Pauline thought?

Another example is Gaston’s understanding of πώρωσις in 11:25 as ‘blindness’ rather than ‘hardening.’ He maintains that Paul is not speaking of Israel’s unbelief by using this term but rather a lack of understanding. However, does this fit with the context of 9–11 or even the broader context of Romans?<sup>21</sup> Does πώρωσις carry Gaston’s meaning anywhere else in the New Testament?

A final exegetical example concerns Gaston’s suggestion that one of the reasons God will save ‘all Israel’ is because he has made them jealous of the salvation that has come to Gentiles. He does not believe, contrary to many interpreters, that God will provoke them to faith in Christ but that they will become more faithful Jews, more observant of the Torah. Yet, is this what Paul means when he uses the ‘jealousy’ motif in Rom 9–11 (e.g. 11:14)?<sup>22</sup> How does this fit with the rest of Paul’s theology?

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<sup>21</sup> See, for instance, chapters 2 and 4 where Jewish unbelief seems to be an issue for Paul. Such unbelief seems to be reinforced by the Apostle in chapters 9–11, even explicitly stated in 11:20.

<sup>22</sup> See Richard H. Bell, *Provoked to Jealousy: The Origin and Purpose of the Jealousy Motif in Romans 9–11* (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1994). Bell believes that the ‘jealousy’ occurs at a crucial point in the argument of Rom 9–11. He believes that the motif is a bridge between the failure of Israel to believe the gospel and the issue of her salvation (3). In Rom 10:19 he believes that the ‘jealousy’ is something that produces pain so that Israel is provoked to jealous anger. In 11:11, 14 Bell sees a shift in meaning to ‘provoke to jealousy.’ He believes this ‘jealousy’ is meant in the positive sense of ‘emulation of the Gentiles’ (43).

## John Gager

John Gager, in his book, *Reinventing Paul*, attempts to present a ‘new Paul’ over and against what he calls the ‘old paradigm’ of Paul. He describes the old paradigm as one in which Paul is seen primarily as a convert from Judaism to Christianity who preached against the law and Israel.<sup>23</sup> He believes that this old paradigm has been heavily influenced by anti-Semitism and that ‘traditionalists’ have interpreted the Apostle as if he were writing “to the church of Augustine in the fourth century, or to the Protestant Reformers of the sixteenth century, or to post-Holocaust Christians in the twentieth century.”<sup>24</sup> He calls for a rereading of Paul in his first century setting among Jews, Judaism, and Gentiles. Such a fresh reading, he maintains, “will reveal God’s unshakable commitment to Israel and to the holiness of the law (=Judaism); and, two, the redemption of the Gentiles through Jesus Christ (=Christianity).”<sup>25</sup>

Gager relies heavily on the work of Gaston as well as Krister Stendahl.<sup>26</sup> Like Gaston, he believes that Paul is writing in his epistles to the Gentiles, even against apostles within the Gentile-Christian church. He suggests that the opponents of Paul are “anti-Pauline apostles within the Jesus-movement.”<sup>27</sup>

As for his reading of Romans, Gager believes that Paul is correcting a misreading of his position of basic problems such as the Law of Moses and Israel, the Law and Gentiles, and

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<sup>23</sup> John Gager, *Reinventing Paul* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2000), 18–19.

<sup>24</sup> Gager, *Reinventing Paul*, 66.

<sup>25</sup> Gager, *Reinventing Paul*, 152.

<sup>26</sup> Krister Stendahl, *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976). He believes that the chief issue in Romans is the relationship between Jews and Gentiles, not justification by faith. In this way, Stendahl embraces New Perspective on Paul assumptions. He believes that justification in Romans is used by Paul as an argument to develop his chief concern regarding Jewish and Gentile relations (3). In Rom 9–11 Stendahl claims that Paul is maintaining Jewish and Gentile relations by disclosing two different paths of salvation, a *Sonderweg* for Israel (28).

<sup>27</sup> Gager, *Reinventing Paul*, 146–47.

Christ and Israel. He labels this misreading the “anti-Israel reading.”<sup>28</sup> He believes that one of the primary reasons Paul wrote Romans was to refute the rumors that the apostle had rejected the Law and his people.<sup>29</sup> According to Gager, his own reading of Romans shows that Paul is clarifying for Gentile Christians their relation to the Law, Jews, and Judaism, as well as the standing of both Jews and Gentiles in God’s plan of salvation through Christ.<sup>30</sup>

In his section on Rom 9–11, Gager believes that Paul speaks as a Jew (11:1) to Gentiles about Jews. He sees Paul warning Gentiles against arrogance toward the Jews as well as laying out a view that Israel’s temporary disobedience is part of God’s plan to save the Gentiles. Thus, he reads *πώρωσις ἀπὸ μέρους τῷ Ἰσραὴλ γέγονεν ἄχρι* as a temporary hardening or unbelief that has come upon *part of Israel* to bring about salvation for the Gentiles. Finally, he maintains that God will save ‘all Israel’ (Jews).<sup>31</sup>

Gager endeavors to present a fresh reading of Rom 9–11 based on his ‘new view.’ He reads Paul as claiming that God has not rejected his people, Israel. He believes that Israel’s salvation, though related to the redemption of Gentiles through Christ, does not take the form of embracing Christ. Concerning the interpretation of 11:26a, like Stendhal, Gager believes that when the time of God’s kingdom comes Israel will accept Jesus as the Messiah.<sup>32</sup> This will be their salvation. Yet, he does not believe Paul claims that Israel will ultimately believe in Jesus as the Christ. Like

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<sup>28</sup> Gager, *Reinventing Paul*, 105. He lays out four principles that guide his discussion of Romans: (1) That Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, remains concerned fundamentally with Gentiles believers and Gentile issues (2) Paul’s experiences in Galatia lie in the background (3) Rom 2:1–16 addresses an imaginary Gentile and 2:17–29 addresses an imaginary Jew (4) There is a concentration of passages that have traditionally been used to support the ‘old Paul’ (108).

<sup>29</sup> Gager, *Reinventing Paul*, 103.

<sup>30</sup> Gager, *Reinventing Paul*, 107.

<sup>31</sup> Gager, *Reinventing Paul*, 108.

<sup>32</sup> Gager, *Reinventing Paul*, 141–42; Stendahl, *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles*, 4.

Gaston, he sees the Deliver in 11:26b as God rather than Christ.<sup>33</sup> Gager finally arrives at a *Sonderweg* interpretation of Rom 9–11. Yet, he believes that this *Sonderweg* is not for Israel but rather for the Gentiles.<sup>34</sup>

Gager, along with Gaston, believes that Jesus is neither a new Moses nor Messiah but is the climax of God’s dealings with Israel, the fulfillment of God’s promises concerning Gentiles.<sup>35</sup> He also agrees with Gaston that Rom 9–11 is not ultimately about Israel’s unbelief. He does not believe Paul is describing Israel as the enemy of God in those chapters. Echoing Gaston, he says, “Israel’s stumble is neither fatal nor of her own doing—God caused it.”<sup>36</sup> For Gager, God caused Israel’s stumbling so that the redemption of the Gentiles could take place. For, their redemption and Israel’s salvation are intimately intertwined. Yet, it will take place in two different ways even as the apostle to the Gentiles’ commitment to Israel, to the holiness of the Law, and to the redemption of the Gentiles through Jesus Christ remains.

Gager’s reading of Paul is largely in reaction to what he believes to be a misreading of Paul. He reacts to an ‘old paradigm’ that he thinks reduces Paul to a convert from Judaism to Christianity who preaches against the law and Israel. He believes that this ‘old paradigm’ does not situate Paul in his first century setting among Jews, Judaism, and Gentiles, but is rather read through interpreters of Romans from other centuries.

It is certainly the case that one’s own social and historical context affects one’s reading of Romans. In that vein, one wonders if Gager is somewhat unconscious of the degree that his context might be affecting his reading of Paul? Furthermore, is Gager’s portrayal of the ‘old

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<sup>33</sup> Gager, *Reinventing Paul*, 141–42; Gaston, *Paul and the Torah*, 143.

<sup>34</sup> Gager, *Reinventing Paul*, 146. He says, “For Paul, Israel’s salvation was never in doubt. What he taught and preached was instead a special path, a *Sonderweg*, for Gentiles.”

<sup>35</sup> Gager, *Reinventing Paul*, 142. See Gaston, *Paul and the Torah*, 33.

<sup>36</sup> Gaston, *Reinventing Paul*, 135.

paradigm’ as presenting a Paul that is anti-Law and anti-Israel fully accurate or a caricature? For instance, when speaking of an anti-Law view, is Gager fully acknowledging the apparent nuances of Paul’s use of *nomos* and recognition of this even by those of the ‘old paradigm’? The same question can be raised regarding his views of ‘Israel.’ Finally, regarding a path of salvation for Israel that involves obedience to the Torah (*Sonderweg*), one must ask if this is consistent with Pauline thought not only in Romans but in his other epistles as well?

### **Franz Mussner**

In *Tractate on the Jews*, Franz Mussner suggests that the Holocaust calls Christians to develop a fresh “theology of Judaism.”<sup>37</sup> The time has come, he concludes, for Christians to make amends for all the “tractates against the Jews” by writing a “tractate for the Jews.”<sup>38</sup>

Mussner presents an “Outline of a Christian Theology of Judaism” that includes central biblical elements of the Jewish tradition such as election, Israel as God’s people, land, covenant, Torah, salvation, and servanthood. He seeks to find common ground by demonstrating that the New Testament do not repudiate these teachings.<sup>39</sup> The church has not replaced Israel, he believes, but shares in its privileges. The church is “the extended people of God who together with Israel form the one people of God.”<sup>40</sup> For, Jesus himself, he asserts, never stepped outside of the framework of Judaism, even if he was ‘un-Jewish’ in certain respects.<sup>41</sup> Moreover, he shows that much of the anti-Jewish sentiment is not found in the writings of Paul but in post-Pauline

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<sup>37</sup> Franz Mussner, *Tractate on the Jews: The Significance of Judaism for Christian Faith* trans. Leonard Swidler; (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 1.

<sup>38</sup> Mussner, *Tractate on the Jews*, 4.

<sup>39</sup> Mussner, *Tractate on the Jews*, 4–51.

<sup>40</sup> Mussner, *Tractate on the Jews*, 9.

<sup>41</sup> Mussner, *Tractate on the Jews*, 74.

theology. He contends that, for Paul, Israel remained the people of Abraham.

In the opening chapter of his book, Mussner spends some time addressing 11:26a, “‘All Israel’ will be saved.” Based on passages like Acts 3:25 and Rom 11:26b–27, he maintains that God’s covenant made with Israel continues despite their hardness toward the gospel. For Mussner, God’s merciful character and commitment to his covenant promise is what drives Paul’s statement that “‘all Israel’ will be saved” (11:26a).

Mussner addresses five questions raised by this phrase: (1) Who is meant by ‘all Israel’? (2) In what manner will ‘all Israel’ be saved? (3) Why will ‘all Israel’ be saved? (4) Why does Paul confess ‘the mystery’ of the salvation of ‘all Israel’? (5) Finally, is the notion of the salvation of Israel at the end of time found anywhere else in the New Testament?<sup>42</sup>

He asserts that in Rom 9–11 ‘Israel’ refers to the Jewish people. He suggests that “Israel is from the beginning a sacral concept; it refers to the entirety of those chosen by Yahweh.”<sup>43</sup> He believes it is a “spiritual self-designation” that refers to the Jewish people and is used that way by Paul.<sup>44</sup> Yet, he does acknowledge that Paul intends two different meanings for Israel in 9:6b. He believes that in that verse Paul is distinguishing between the Jewish people as a whole and those Jews who have been obedient to the gospel.<sup>45</sup> He does not believe that Paul is including Gentile Christians in his concept of Israel in Rom 9–11.

He expounds on his understanding of Israel in 9:6b as ‘Jews obedient to the gospel’ by looking to 9:8 in which the children of the promise, as opposed to the children of the flesh, are

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<sup>42</sup> Mussner, *Tractate on the Jews*, 28.

<sup>43</sup> Mussner, *Tractate on the Jews*, 28.

<sup>44</sup> Mussner, *Tractate on the Jews*, 28.

<sup>45</sup> Mussner, *Tractate on the Jews*, 28–29.

called the children of God. This is likened to 9:7 in which Abraham's 'seed' ('offspring') is contrasted with 'children of Abraham.' He seems to be saying that 'children of Abraham' is the more restrictive term and 'seed' the less restrictive, with both terms applying to those ultimately of ethnic Israel.<sup>46</sup> Thus, based on this understanding, Mussner seems to be making the argument that the second 'Israel' in 9:6b must include only those of ethnic Israel.

He refers to this 'Israel' as the children of the 'choice' and suggests that the distinction in 9:6b is made by this notion of 'choice.'<sup>47</sup> For Mussner, the 'choice' refers to a remnant of the people of Israel (11:5) chosen by God who listened to the gospel while others, 'the rest' (11:7b), were hardened and did not listen to the gospel. He believes this then points forward to the hardening in 11:25.<sup>48</sup>

Outside of 9:6b, Mussner believes Paul is using the term 'Israel' with one general meaning. When surveying the diachronic use of the phrase 'all Israel' in the Septuagint, Mussner observes that it is proper for the phrase to be understood as an expression for the entirety of Israel.<sup>49</sup>

He believes that 'all Israel' in 11:26a consists of both the remnant who by the grace of God have accepted the gospel and the rest who were hardened (11:5–7). He holds that the attributive 'all' before 'Israel' does not allow for a limitation of the term as in 9:6b.<sup>50</sup> For support of his position Mussner looks to 10:16. He believes that 'not all' in 10:16 means a portion of Israel, those who remained 'hardened.' Thus, he maintains, 'all Israel' is the sum of an addition.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Mussner, *Tractate on the Jews*, 29. Also Bell, *Provoked to Jealousy*, 180; Cranfield, *Romans 9–16*, 473; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 560. Opposite Wright, "Romans," 636; Jewett, *Romans*, 575; Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 540.

<sup>47</sup> Mussner, *Tractate on the Jews*, 29.

<sup>48</sup> Mussner, *Tractate on the Jews*, 29.

<sup>49</sup> Mussner, *Tractate on the Jews*, 29. Also Bell, *Provoked to Jealousy*, 141.

<sup>50</sup> Mussner, *Tractate on the Jews*, 30.

<sup>51</sup> Mussner, *Tractate on the Jews*, 30.

Based on this ‘sum of an addition’ argument, Mussner says καὶ οὕτως means “and thus—in the end—the apostle states prophetically— “‘all Israel’ will be saved.” He maintains that the emphasis lies on the attributive ‘all.’<sup>52</sup>

Concerning the question of whether ‘all Israel’ is to be understood synchronically or diachronically, Mussner looks to the language of Rom 9–11. Particularly, he points to ‘seed of Israel’ (9:6), ‘Jacob’ (11:26b), the reference to ‘fathers’ in 9:5 and 11:28 to conclude that the ‘with them’ language in 11:27a extends to ‘all Israel’ in its diachronic expansion and not merely to a part of it. Otherwise, he suggests, ‘All Israel will be saved’ is a farce. Rather, he claims, when Paul spoke of ‘all Israel,’ he was thinking of the entire Jewish people and affirming their salvation at the end of time.<sup>53</sup>

Concerning the way ‘all Israel’ will be saved, Mussner looks at the Isaianic texts in 11:26b–27 to arrive at a *Parousia* context for the salvation act. He does not believe that a mass conversion prior to the *Parousia* will take place. Rather, he suggests that God will save Israel by a ‘special path’ in which, at the *Parousia*, Christ, the ‘Deliverer from Zion’ (11:26b) will save ‘all Israel.’ He insists that such salvation still rests on the principle of grace alone and faith alone, preserving the Pauline doctrine of justification.<sup>54</sup> For further support of this salvation of ‘all

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<sup>52</sup> Mussner, *Tractate on the Jews*, 30. See also Bell, *Provoked to Jealousy*, 139–45 who takes ‘all Israel’ to refer to every Jew diachronically who will be saved through an experience with the risen Christ at the *Parousia*.

<sup>53</sup> Mussner, *Tractate on the Jews*, 32.

<sup>54</sup> Mussner, *Tractate on the Jews*, 34. He believes that this corresponds to the statement in Matt 23:39, “For I tell you, you will not see me again, until you say, ‘Blessed be he who comes in the name of the Lord.’” See also Bell, *Provoked to Jealousy*, 144. Similar to Mussner, Bell believes that ‘all Israel’ will come to faith as “Paul himself came to faith: through a direct meeting with the risen Christ” (144). Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness: Paul’s Theology of Justification* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 166–67 describes his understanding of 11:26a in the following way: “The eschatological Israel, which will be created by the fulfillment of promise, will believe in the crucified and risen Christ. Like the Apostle Paul and the doubting Thomas before him, this Israel will believe not because it hears the gospel, but because it sees the risen Lord at his coming. Nevertheless, it will believe. It will come to share in the faith by which the ‘Gentile branches’ now stand, and by this means be engrafted into its ‘own olive tree’ (11:19–24).” See also Das, *Solving Romans*, 259–60; and Jewett, *Romans*, 702, whose view is in line with Mussner’s own. It should be noted that Bell, Das, and Seifrid do not follow Mussner in supposing a



Israel' at the *Parousia*, Mussner cites Acts 1:6–8 and Acts 3:19–21 and the “reestablishment of Israel” and “times of refreshing” language respectively.<sup>55</sup>

Based on his understanding of 11:26a and the future salvation of Israel at the *Parousia* by a ‘special path’ through the coming of Christ, resting on the principle of grace alone and faith alone, Mussner pushes forward with *Tractate on the Jews* and advocates a ‘tractate for the Jews.’

Concerning Mussner’s interpretation of Israel as it relates to 9:6–9 and 11:25–27, some questions can be raised. Mussner’s understanding of ‘all Israel’ in 11:26a as ‘all Jews’ is predicated on his understanding that the ‘children’ encompassed in the promise of God in 9:6–9 includes all the people of Israel, believing and unbelieving. Is this a correct reading of Paul here? Also, Mussner argues that ‘all Israel’ in 11:26a refers to ‘all Jews throughout time.’ Is this a necessary reading of 11:26a?<sup>56</sup> Is it necessary for ‘all Israel’ to carry this diachronic sense? Also, if God is going to save Israel at the *Parousia* by a principle of grace alone and faith alone, is evangelism of Jews unnecessary or inappropriate?<sup>57</sup> How is such a view to be reconciled with Rom 1:16 and Paul’s statement that the gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, *to the Jew first* and also the Greek? Also, how does such a view fit with Paul’s own missionary strategy laid out in the Book of Acts in which, traveling to a city, he goes first to a

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universal salvation of every individual Israelite throughout all time.

<sup>55</sup> Mussner, *Tractate on the Jews*, 36–38.

<sup>56</sup> See also Jewett, *Romans*, 702. In opposition to Mussner (and Jewett), many post-Holocaust commentators believe that ‘all Israel’ in 11:26a refers to ‘Israel as a whole but not necessarily every individual.’ See Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 691; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 623; Käsemann, *Romans*, 313; Morris, *Romans*, 420; Bruce, *Romans*, 221–22; Sears, *Heirs of the Promise*, 97–98; Barrett, *Romans*, 223–24; Cranfield, *Romans 9–16*, 577, and Byrne, *Romans*, 354.

<sup>57</sup> Mussner, *Tractate on the Jews*, 34. He raises the question himself: “And if all Israel will be saved at one time by a special act of God, is not then the ‘mission to the Jews’ really a questionable enterprise?” See also Wayne Gritter, “Two Faiths—One Covenant: A Post-Holocaust Reading of Romans 9–11,” *RJ* 29 no. 2 (1979): 20–24. He maintains that Jewish evangelism is not the purpose for Rom 9–11 and can lead to anti-Judaism. In making his case for this position he also cites Karl Barth, Krister Stendahl, and Franklin Littell.

Jewish synagogue to evangelize?<sup>58</sup> Finally, concerning the idea that ‘all Israel’ will be saved through a personal experience with the Christ at the *Parousia* apart from hearing the gospel, how does such a view compare with the immediate context of Rom 9–11, particularly with 10:9–17? In those verses, after Paul says that there is no distinction between Jew and Gentile (10:12), he speaks of calling on the name of the Lord to be saved (10:13). A ‘calling’ that is clarified in the verses that follow when Paul says that faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ (10:17).

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<sup>58</sup> Acts 9:20; 13:5, 14; 14:1; 17:1; 18:4 and 28:17 in which he addresses “local leaders of the Jews.”

## CHAPTER THREE

### DISPENSATIONAL AND CHRISTIAN ZIONIST INTERPRETATIONS

#### Introduction

Dispensationalist interpreters are alike in the sense that they understand God to be working in different ways for Israel and the church in the different eras or dispensations in human history.<sup>1</sup> This being said, there are generally three different types of dispensationalists. Even though all dispensationalists assert that God has a plan for ethnic, national, and territorial Israel<sup>2</sup> that he will bring to consummation during a literal thousand-year reign of Christ and Christians on earth, they disagree on the details.

Postmillennial dispensationalists believe the Scriptures confirm a literal thousand-year reign of Christ and Christians on earth that will occur prior to Christ's return to earth and a rapture of Christians.<sup>3</sup> Premillennial dispensationalists assert that a literal thousand-year reign of Christ and Christians on earth will take place after Christ's return to earth and a rapture of Christians. Progressive dispensationalists tend to be premillennialists but they reject a strict bifurcation held by traditional premillennial and postmillennial dispensationalists.<sup>4</sup> Progressive

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<sup>1</sup> Gerald R. McDermott, "Introduction: What is the New Christian Zionism?" in *The New Christian Zionism: Fresh Perspectives on Israel & the Land* ed. Gerald R. McDermott (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2016), 14.

<sup>2</sup> Contra Bell, *Provoked to Jealousy*, 179–80. Bell argues that the second use of Ἰσραήλ in 9:6b cannot refer to the election of the nation Israel because this ignores the individual and their eternal destinies. He believes that a position that emphasizes national Israel's election fails to explain Paul's train of thought in Rom 9:1–13 that emphasizes the individual Israelites being cut off from the whole (9:1–5). Furthermore, he believes such a position undermines Paul's thesis in 9:6a that God's word has not failed. The reason it has not failed is that God does not guarantee that every descendant of Abraham is part of the children of God.

<sup>3</sup> The postmillennial view has largely fallen out of favor in the post-Holocaust era since the events of the first half of the twentieth century largely disproved the theory.

<sup>4</sup> For more on progressive dispensationalism and the difference between various dispensational views, see

dispensationalists also separate themselves from many traditional dispensationalists in that they are less concerned with date setting and matching biblical prophecy to current events in order to predict the plot sequence or chronology of end-time events.<sup>5</sup> In this chapter we will review an interpretation of Israel in Rom 9:6–9 and 11:25–27 by the classic dispensationalist Woodrow Kroll and the progressive dispensationalist Craig Blaising.

Similar to dispensationalist interpreters are those that call themselves Christian Zionists. These interpreters see a future in the salvation plan of God for ethnic, national, and territorial Israel, but they distinguish themselves from dispensationalists. Christian Zionists believe that the people and land of Israel are central to the story of the Bible. They believe that the return of Jews from all over the world to their land, and their efforts to establish a nation-state is part of the fulfillment of biblical prophecy. They are like progressive dispensationalists in that they too distance themselves from a strict bifurcation between God’s work with Israel and the church and also are not concerned with date setting and connecting biblical prophecy to current events and politics. Yet, they are distinct from even progressive dispensationalists in that Christian Zionists do not claim to have knowledge of a schedule of events leading up to and including the eschaton.<sup>6</sup> In this chapter we will review an interpretation of Israel in Rom 9:6–9 and 11:25–27 by the Christian Zionist David Rudolph.

### **Woodrow Kroll**

In his commentary on Romans, the classic premillennial dispensationalist Woodrow Kroll

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Craig A. Blaising and Darrell L. Bock, *Progressive Dispensationalism* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000).

<sup>5</sup> McDermott, “Introduction,” 14.

<sup>6</sup> McDermott, “Introduction,” 11–15.

maintains that Rom 9–11 is about Israel and its future.<sup>7</sup> He believes that Paul writes these chapters to reassure the Jewish people (believers and unbelievers) of their place in the kingdom of God since the Christian congregation in Rome was mostly a Gentile congregation in Paul’s day. Also, he believes that the Jewish people needed to know that God would honor promises that he made to them. Kroll reconciles God’s promises with Jewish unbelief in those promises by understanding God’s sovereignty undergirding all human history. Since God is sovereign, not even unbelief can disrupt his plan and promise. Indeed, Kroll sees the sovereignty of God as the key theme in Rom 9–11.<sup>8</sup>

In his interpretation of Rom 9:6–9, consistent with classic premillennial dispensationalist views, he believes Paul is referring only to Jews. The distinction of Israel in 9:6b is between true Jews who believe in the God of Abraham and have their faith imputed to them for righteousness and those who reject God and the gospel.<sup>9</sup> He makes a distinction between those Jews who are descendants of Abraham and those who exhibit the faith of Abraham. Thus, for Kroll τέκνα is the more restrictive term in 9:7.<sup>10</sup>

Concerning 11:25–27, Kroll believes that ‘mystery’ in 11:25 refers to a divine truth previously unknown but now revealed in the verses that follow. That divine truth to be revealed is that Israel has been partially hardened, understanding ἀπὸ μέρους adverbially rather than adjectivally. Furthermore, he sees this hardening as a temporal, spiritual blindness, or hardness of heart.<sup>11</sup> He understands the ‘fullness of the Gentiles coming in’ as the second part of this

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<sup>7</sup> Woodrow Kroll, *Romans: Righteousness in Christ* 21st century BCS (Chattanooga: AMG, 2002), 153.

<sup>8</sup> Kroll, *Romans*, 154.

<sup>9</sup> Kroll, *Romans*, 155.

<sup>10</sup> Kroll, *Romans*, 156.

<sup>11</sup> Kroll, *Romans*, 182.

mystery being revealed. He believes that, consistent with Acts 15:14 and the ‘program for Gentiles,’ God is visiting them to call out a people for his name. The fullness of the Gentiles then describes for Kroll the present age, consistent with traditional premillennial dispensationalist assumptions.<sup>12</sup> Continuing with the dispensationalist thought, Kroll believes that the nation of Israel will remain hardened until God’s plan with the Gentiles is complete with the fullness of the Gentiles. Then the New Testament saints will be raptured to heaven at the close of the present age. In the tribulation period to follow God will then focus his attention on Israel to restore the Jewish people to their place of blessing with God and in accordance with his covenantal promise.<sup>13</sup>

Regarding 11:26a and the phrase “‘all Israel’ will be saved,” he believes that καὶ οὕτως indicates a sequence of events that connects the relationship of what has preceded to what follows. Kroll believes it is best to translate it ‘and accordingly.’<sup>14</sup> ‘All Israel’ for Kroll then refers to the remnant of Israel combined with the elect Gentiles saved out of those nations. He does not believe Paul is referring to the salvation of the nation of Israel in 11:26a but that such salvation will follow the present age.<sup>15</sup> He also believes that ‘all’ is referring to Israel as a whole and not necessarily every individual Israelite.

By ‘saved’ he understands Paul to be referring to a large evangelistic movement among the Jews in the future. Yet, such salvation for the Jews will be by faith in Christ and they will be numbered among God’s elect. After the fullness of the Gentiles God will shift his focus to the Jews. Then God will rapture the church and the period of tribulation will take place. At this point

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<sup>12</sup> Kroll, *Romans*, 182.

<sup>13</sup> Kroll, *Romans*, 183.

<sup>14</sup> Kroll, *Romans*, 184.

<sup>15</sup> Kroll, *Romans*, 184.

in history, attempts will be made to destroy Israel. Yet, the surviving remnant of Jewish people alive at the end of the tribulation will constitute the entire nation of Israel. Then, at the coming of Christ, when he delivers the earth from the Antichrist's rule, the Messiah will restore Israel to favor with God. At that time a massive number of elect Jews will worship Jesus as Lord. The Isaianic quotations in 11:26b–27 are a reference then to the *Parousia* and the coming of Christ, the 'Deliverer.'<sup>16</sup>

Kroll adopts a traditional premillennial dispensationalist interpretation of Israel in Rom 9:6–9 and 11:25–27. The 'fullness of the Gentiles' is descriptive of the present age. Once God's plan with the Gentiles is complete the close of the present age will commence. The New Testament saints will be raptured into heaven and the tribulation period will begin. At this point, Kroll believes that God will focus his attention on Israel. He believes that 'all Israel' refers to the remnant of believing Jews combined with the elect Gentiles but that salvation for each will take place in different dispensations. Nonetheless, he contends that its salvation will be consistent with Paul's understanding of justification by grace through faith alone. He maintains that the surviving remnant of Jewish people in the period of tribulation following the rapture of the New Testament saints will constitute the entire nation of Israel. At Jesus' visible return (*Parousia*) then Israel will be restored to favor with God and a mass conversion of Jews will take place.

Considering Kroll's interpretation, one does wonder if his literal interpretation of the millennium is a correct understanding of the concept as it occurs in the Scriptures. Does such an interpretation consider the historical, grammatical, and literary context? Furthermore, is his understanding that God is working in different ways according to the different dispensations of History account for the unity of the Scriptures? His dispensational reading seems to be based on

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<sup>16</sup> Kroll, *Romans*, 184.

a certain sequence of events. Is this sequence clearly represented in the Scriptures or is it read into the Scriptures?

### **Craig Blaising**

Craig Blaising identifies as a progressive dispensationalist. Governing his interpretation of Israel in Rom 9:6–9 and 11:25–27 is the assumption that the New Testament is consistent with the Tanak in that the latter presents ethnic, national, and territorial Israel as part of the consummate plan of God.<sup>17</sup> He then sees that contemporary events are a realization of this plan.

Blaising believes that the story line of the Tanak concerning Israel is completely intact for Paul in Rom 9–11. With this assumption Blaising does not believe Paul is intending to replace Israel with the church in those chapters. He believes that a partial hardening has come upon Israel (11:25), indicating that many Jews have failed to believe the gospel. Through this hardening a mystery has been revealed in that many the Gentiles have come to faith. The mystery, says Blaising, is not a mystery of the identity of Israel but only of order and timing.<sup>18</sup>

The full inclusion of Gentiles in Israel means that they are wholly in Christ. For Blaising, even though most Jews have rejected the gospel the ‘whole’ remains holy. It remains holy even though only a small part of Israel believes. Blaising maintains that the small part is regarded as the firstfruits of the greater harvest in which the whole of Israel will be presented to God.<sup>19</sup> This interpretation is possible for Blaising because he believes that Israel in the Tanak and the New Testament is primarily a corporate reality. The unbelief of the majority does not contradict the

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<sup>17</sup> Craig Blaising, “Biblical Hermeneutics: How are we to Interpret the Relation between the Tanak and the New Testament on this Question?” in *The New Christian Zionism: Fresh Perspectives on Israel & the Land* ed. Gerald R. McDermott (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2016), 79–105.

<sup>18</sup> Blaising, “Biblical Hermeneutics,” 94.

<sup>19</sup> Blaising, “Biblical Hermeneutics,” 94.



holiness of this corporate whole. Rather, Blaising maintains that because of Israel's present holiness as a corporate reality, God will continue to deal with Jews corporately as well as personally until the plan and purpose of God for the future whole is accomplished.<sup>20</sup> He believes this consummate plan is revealed in the Tanak and reaffirmed in the New Testament, especially in Rom 11:26a. Thus, a whole Israel will be wholly saved.

Based on these assumptions, Blaising believes that 'all Israel' in 11:26a means the whole, the fullness of Israel. The 'all Israel' that is fully saved in Rom 11:26a is the same Israel that is partially hardened in 11:25. The difference is that in 11:25 Paul envisions a present ethnic, national Israel and in 11:26 a future ethnic, national Israel. Yet, this future salvation for ethnic, national Israel will occur through justification and sanctification by and through faith in Jesus.<sup>21</sup> For Blaising, the Isaianic quotations are supporting evidence of this view. Therefore, he believes it is most accurate to see the New Testament in continuity with the Tanak in presenting a narrative of the divine plan that includes an ethnic, national, and territorial Israel within all other kingdoms of nations, all whose inhabitants have received forgiveness of sins through the salvation provided by Jesus. As a 'progressive dispensationalist,' Blaising locates the salvation of 'all Israel' in a millennial period, following a seven-year tribulation period and visible return of Christ.<sup>22</sup>

Regarding Blaising's interpretation, some questions can be raised. Is Blaising right in saying that 'Israel' in the Tanak and the New Testament is primarily a corporate reality? In saying as much does he dismiss the individual dimension of Israel? Moreover, is it accurate to say that Paul would have viewed ethnic, national Israel as a presently holy people? Is this

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<sup>20</sup> Blaising, "Biblical Hermeneutics," 95.

<sup>21</sup> Blaising, "Biblical Hermeneutics," 96.

<sup>22</sup> Blaising and Bock, *Progressive Dispensationalism*, 54–56, 317.

understanding of ‘holy’ consistent with the rest of the Scriptures? Does it make sense that God will continue to deal with the Jews corporately as well as personally simply because some of the Jews believe the gospel? Finally, is the preservation of the national identity, ethnicity, and territory of Israel God’s primary concern when it comes to the fulfillment of his plan of salvation?

### **David Rudolph**

David Rudolph self identifies as a Christian Zionist. As such he attempts to make the case that Zionism is present in Pauline literature.<sup>23</sup> He believes that Paul upholds a particularity for Israel and the land in his portrayal of salvation available for the whole world. For Rudolph, this is especially the case in Rom 9:6–9 and 11:25–27.

Rudolph refutes arguments against a particularity for Israel and the land. He attempts to show that the Promised Land has not been universalized in Christ, as those who argue that Israel has been spiritualized, transferred, or redefined through the church might suggest.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, he endeavors to show that such transfer theologians are wrong when they try to demonstrate that Jewish identity for Paul is a matter of indifference in Christ.<sup>25</sup> He also argues against the notion that there is no longer Jew or Gentile in Christ.<sup>26</sup>

Rudolph then sets forth his case for particularity in Paul, especially in Rom 9–11. He presents his case with the acronym GUCCI: the *gifts* of Israel, the *uniqueness* of Israel, the

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<sup>23</sup> David Rudolph, “Zionism in Pauline Literature: Does Paul Eliminate Particularity for Israel and the Land in his Portrayal of Salvation Available for all the World?” in *The New Christian Zionism: Fresh Perspectives on Israel & the Land* ed. Gerald R. McDermott (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2016), 167–94.

<sup>24</sup> Rudolph, “Zionism,” 171–77.

<sup>25</sup> Rudolph, “Zionism,” 177–80.

<sup>26</sup> Rudolph, “Zionism,” 180–82.

*calling* of Israel, the *confirmation* of Israel's promises, and the *irrevocability* of Israel's election.<sup>27</sup>

He believes that in Rom 9:3–5 Paul lays out the gifts of Israel. He believes that these gifts to Israel made them unique. For Rudolph, Paul communicates this uniqueness of Israel throughout Rom 9–11. He believes that Jesus then does not bring about an opposition between an old and new Israel but rather highlights the non-divisive difference between Israel and Gentiles in the election of Israel. On the basis of Israel's election he believes that Jews and Gentiles then share in God's promises but in different ways.<sup>28</sup>

Part of the uniqueness of Israel also includes not only the fact that they receive the gifts of God, but also that they were called by God (Rom 11:29). Rudolph also maintains that Paul confirms Israel's promises in passages like Rom 15:8 in which he speaks of Jesus becoming a servant of the circumcised so that he might confirm the promises given to the patriarchs.<sup>29</sup>

Moreover, he suggests that in the surrounding context of 15:8 Paul includes the fulfillment of the land in the 'promises given to the patriarchs'. Rudolph points especially to Paul's use of Isa 11:10 in Rom 15:12 to demonstrate that, for Paul, Israel's return to the land is part of the 'promise given to the patriarchs'. Since the context of Isa 11 includes fulfillment of the land in the promise for Israel (see especially 11:11–12), Rudolph reasons that Paul would have been aware of that territorial context and assumes it as part of Christ's realization of the promises given to the patriarchs.<sup>30</sup> Such promise of the land, he believes, is part of Paul's claim that Israel

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<sup>27</sup> Rudolph, "Zionism," 182 (emphasis, original). Rudolph presents his acronym in a chart on 182. He then devotes 182–94 to explaining the acronym.

<sup>28</sup> Rudolph, "Zionism," 185.

<sup>29</sup> Rudolph, "Zionism," 189.

<sup>30</sup> Rudolph, "Zionism," 189–90. He also finds further evidence of a territorial view for Paul in Rom 9:25–26 and Gal 4:26–30 (191–92).

will be saved in 11:26a. He sees Paul describing the future kingdom in Zionist terms in Rom 11:26, especially with the Isaianic quotation in that verse. For Rudolph, Jesus, ‘the Deliverer,’ will realize the promises given to the patriarchs by coming to Jerusalem (Zion) to save ‘all Israel’ and restore them to their land. Such promises to ‘all Israel’ he believes are irrevocable.<sup>31</sup> This then leads Rudolph to his final argument for particularity of Israel and the land, the irrevocability of God’s election.

Based on 11:29, Rudolph asserts that Paul’s point is that Israel’s general state of unbelief does not compromise its election, gifts or calling.<sup>32</sup> He finds further support for such a notion in Rom 3:3–4. In those verses, Paul answers in the negative his own question regarding the faithlessness of the Jews nullifying the faithfulness of God. He sees Paul asking a similar question and giving a similar negative answer in 11:1. He believes that those verses then have the catalog of blessings in Rom 9:1–5 as their referent, sealing the irrevocability of Israel’s election and setting forth a future salvation for national, ethnic, and territorial Israel.<sup>33</sup>

Concerning Rudolph’s interpretation, one wonders if his understanding of the particularity of Israel is completely necessary for God to remain faithful to the people of Israel. Does God necessarily need a Zionist plan for ethnic, national, and territorial Israel to remain faithful to Israel as a whole? This raises the question concerning God’s purpose for calling Israel in the first place? According to the Scriptures, what was God hoping to accomplish by calling and choosing Israel and setting them apart as a holy people? Is there a distinction between ‘selection’ and ‘election’ that needs to be made when speaking of Israel? Just because God has worked in a

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<sup>31</sup> Rudolph, “Zionism,” 190-91.

<sup>32</sup> Rudolph, “Zionism,” 193.

<sup>33</sup> Rudolph, “Zionism,” 194.

particular way by ‘selecting’ Israel to play a role in fulfilling his promise of salvation for all people, does that necessarily mean that the ethnic, national, and territorial Israel is ‘elected’ unto salvation?<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> See Grothe, *Justification for the Ungodly*. 2: 478–80. He makes a distinction between ‘selection’ and ‘election’ in the unfolding of God’s plan of salvation.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **‘TRADITIONAL’ CHRISTIAN INTERPRETATIONS**

#### **Introduction**

This group of ‘traditional’ Christian interpreters differs from the group of *Sonderweg* interpreters given in Chapter Two in that they believe Paul is referring in 11:26a to a salvation for Israel by way of conversion to Christ and the gospel that comes by hearing with faith, as described in Rom 10:13. They believe that such salvation is either occurring now as individuals believe in the gospel or as a one-time conversion at the *Parousia*. They do not believe Paul has in mind a separate path for Israel void of faith in Christ and the gospel. Unlike New Perspective or ‘other’ perspective interpretations, they maintain ‘traditional’ Christian assumptions regarding Paul and his teachings of justification, righteousness, and works of the law.

#### **C.E.B Cranfield**

There are four important points that influence Cranfield’s interpretation of Rom 9–11. First, he sees Rom 9–11 as an integral part of Paul’s epistle to the Romans and reads the three chapters collectively as a unit, not divorcing the thought of one chapter from another. Second, he is convinced that ‘mercy’ (occurring seven times in Rom 9–11) is the key word of these chapters, shedding light particularly on 11:26a and the understanding of the salvation of Israel. Third, he is emphatic that in Rom 9–11 it is not Paul’s intention to replace Israel with the church. Finally, and most crucial to his interpretation of these chapters, is his understanding of the doctrine of

election and the role such an understanding plays in his interpretation.<sup>1</sup>

Cranfield relies heavily upon Karl Barth's understanding of the doctrine of election for much of his interpretation of Rom 9–11. For Barth, claims Cranfield, Jesus is both the electing God and the elected man. Election is then unfolded in a three-fold scheme: the election of Christ, the election of the community, and the election of the individual.<sup>2</sup> The community of faith in Christ, the electing and the elected one, then exists as Israel within Israel and the believing church made of both Jews and Gentiles as well as the bulk of Israel or unbelieving Jews.<sup>3</sup> This view of election is important for Cranfield especially as we consider Paul's understanding of Israel in these chapters. And especially as such an understanding relates to 9:6–9 and 11:25–27.

Regarding 9:6–9, Cranfield supports his interpretation of 9:6b based on 9:1–5.<sup>4</sup> He reasons that, since Paul calls Israel his brethren, then the second Israel cannot refer to Gentile Christians. He relies further upon 9:1–5, along with 9:6a, to support his claim that the people of Israel as a whole are God's elect and will therefore be shown mercy in the end. For Cranfield, 9:1–5 helps to establish the election of Israel and 9:6a is evidence that God will not 'write off' his elect people but will instead show them mercy, despite their unbelief.<sup>5</sup> These ideas, of course, are

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<sup>1</sup> Cranfield, *Romans 9–16*, 447–49.

<sup>2</sup> Cranfield, *Romans 9–16*, 449–50. His high praise for Barth is observed in the following comment, "Mention must be made here of the magnificent section on God's election of grace in Barth's *CD II/2*, pp. 1–506, which, it may be confidently affirmed, would have been enough by itself to place its author among the greatest theologians of the Church, even if he had written nothing else. It includes a valuable exposition of these chapters of Romans" (449).

<sup>3</sup> Cranfield, *Romans 9–16*, 450.

<sup>4</sup> Also Bell, *Provoked to Jealousy*, 179. He argues that in order to understand Rom 9:6–13 it is necessary to keep firmly in mind the problem posed in Rom 9:1–5.

<sup>5</sup> Cranfield, *Romans 9–16*, 473. In his commentary on 9:6a he says, "for the declared purpose of God, which Paul has in mind, is clearly God's gracious purpose of election which has been declared in the bestowal on Israel of the privileges listed in vv. 4 and 5, and the divine election is indeed, as Barth has rightly stressed, 'the sum of the gospel.' What Paul has said in vv. 1–5 is certainly not to be understood as implying that the present unbelief of the great majority of Jews has succeeded in making the word of God ineffectual, in frustrating God's declared purpose of grace. This half-verse is the sign under which the whole section 9:6–29 stands—in fact, the sign and theme of the

crucial to his interpretation of 11:25–27, particularly 11:26a.

Concerning the two understandings of Israel in 9:6b, Cranfield sees ‘an Israel within Israel,’ an inner circle of elect, believing Jews<sup>6</sup> while the majority stand outside of it as unbelievers. He uses the phrases, ‘comprehensive Israel’ and ‘selective’ or ‘special’ Israel. Using these terms, he categorizes the Pauline distinctions made in 9:6b–8.<sup>7</sup> In 9:6b–7a he sees a distinction between Israel and the seed (σπέρμα) of Abraham in a comprehensive sense, and Israel and the children (τέκνα) of Abraham in a selective or special sense.<sup>8</sup> Yet, in 9:7b he sees σπέρμα selectively along with Abraham’s children (τέκνα) and Children of the promise (τέκνα τῆς ἐπαγγελίας) in 9:8. The phrase, children of the flesh in 9:8, however, is understood in a comprehensive sense, similar to the first Israel and the seed in 9:6b–7a. In making these distinctions, Cranfield still maintains that there is hope for the comprehensive Israel since they are still God’s elect. He will show mercy to them.<sup>9</sup> He insists that the distinctions do not mean that only part of the Jewish people are the elect.

As mentioned above, the concepts of election and mercy are crucial for Cranfield’s understanding of Israel and its fate in chapters 9–11. This is doubly so for his interpretation of 11:25–27.

He describes three stages of the fulfillment of God’s plan of salvation given by Paul in 11:25b–26a: the unbelief of the greater part of Israel—human disobedience combined with

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whole of chapters 9–11.”

<sup>6</sup> Also Bell, *Provoked to Jealousy*, 179. “The second use of Ἰσραήλ most likely refers to Jews who are Christians.”

<sup>7</sup> Cranfield, *Romans 9–16*, 473–74. He goes on to describe the second Israel in 9:6b as “those who are willing, obedient, grateful witnesses to grace and truth.”

<sup>8</sup> Cranfield, *Romans 9–16*, 473.

<sup>9</sup> Cranfield, *Romans 9–16*, 474.



divine hardening, the completion of the coming of the Gentiles, and the salvation of all Israel.<sup>10</sup> Though, for Cranfield, 11:25–27 signals an inversion of the ‘order of the gospel’ given in 1:16, in which God is apparently giving preference to the Gentile over the Jew.<sup>11</sup> He interprets ἀπὸ μέρους adjectivally. Thus, for Cranfield, not all Jews were hardened, just a part of Israel.<sup>12</sup>

He believes that the hardening will last *until* the fullness of the Gentiles comes in, interpreting ἄχρι as ‘until’ considering the aorist subjunctive εἰσέλθῃ.<sup>13</sup> The entry of the fullness of the Gentiles is the event that marks the end of Israel’s hardening. He believes that τὸ πλήρωμα τῶν ἐθνῶν refers to the full number of elect from among the Gentiles, even the added number needed to make up the full total. Considering πλήρωμα in 11:12, Cranfield suggests that it could refer to the “Gentile world as a whole,” in comparison with 11:26a and ‘all Israel.’<sup>14</sup> As for εἰσέλθῃ, Cranfield points to the teaching of Jesus on entrance into the kingdom of God or to new life as a possible meaning.<sup>15</sup>

Regarding 11:26a, Cranfield suggests that καὶ οὕτως is used emphatically, “it will be in this way and only in this way.”<sup>16</sup> He gives four different interpretations of the meaning of ‘all Israel.’

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<sup>10</sup> Cranfield, *Romans 9–16*, 572. He sees here an inversion of the plan given by Paul in 1:16, to the Jews first and then to the Gentiles.

<sup>11</sup> Cranfield, *Romans 9–16*, 572, 576. Contra Mark A. Nanos, *The Mystery of Romans: The Jewish Context of Paul’s Letter* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 277–78. Nanos believes that Paul keeps his two-step pattern, ‘first for the Jew and then for the Gentile’ intact even in Rom 9–11 where it appears he is doing the opposite.

<sup>12</sup> Cranfield, *Romans 9–16*, 575. See Bell, *Provoked to Jealousy* who believes that ἀπὸ μέρους most naturally modifies πύρωσις rather than γέγονεν or Ἰσραήλ. Yet, he acknowledges that because of ambiguity with the grammar the question must remain open as to whether Paul is saying that the hardening has come upon a part of Israel or that the hardening is temporary (128–29).

<sup>13</sup> Cranfield, *Romans 9–16*, 575.

<sup>14</sup> Cranfield, *Romans 9–16*, 576.

<sup>15</sup> Cranfield, *Romans 9–16*, 576. He cites Mark 9:43, 45, 49; 10:15, 23, 24, 25; Matt 5:20.

<sup>16</sup> Cranfield, *Romans 9–16*, 576. He also points to καὶ οὕτως as indicating the inversion of the order given in 1:16. Bell, *Provoked to Jealousy*, 136 believes that καὶ οὕτως ought to be understood in a logical meaning but will inevitably carry a temporal sense.

He acknowledges that the meaning has been much disputed over the centuries but that four main interpretations have been proposed: (i) All the elect, both Jews and Gentiles; (ii) All the elect of the nation Israel; (iii) The whole nation Israel, including every individual member; (iv) The nation Israel as a whole, but not necessarily including every individual member.<sup>17</sup> He suggests that (iv) is the most likely.

Concerning σωθήσεται, Cranfield speaks of the restoration of Israel as taking place at the *Parousia*, describing it as an eschatological event.<sup>18</sup> He believes that the Isaianic quotations in 11:26b–27 confirm the *Parousia* of Christ. He is careful to point out, contra dispensational views, that the restoration of Israel does not involve a reestablishment of the national state of Israel in independence and power. Paul does not have in mind a modern state in 11:26a.<sup>19</sup> Thus, for Cranfield, in the end God will show mercy to his elect, showing restoration to the nation of Israel as a whole and bringing about its conversion at the *Parousia*.

Cranfield relies heavily on Barth's understanding of election when it comes to the interpretation of Rom 9–11. He believes that the understanding of Jesus as both the electing God and the elected man is crucial to understanding Paul's three-fold scheme of election in Rom 9–11—the election of Christ, the election of the community, and the election of the individual. Although an interpreter cannot fully escape bringing certain theological presuppositions to the task of interpreting, in framing Rom 9–11 at the outset with the election language, can Cranfield be understood as starting first with a theological framework and then attempting to read Paul

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<sup>17</sup> Cranfield, *Romans 9–16*, 576. See also this exact list in Bell, *Provoked to Jealousy*, 136–39. Bell believes that on linguistic grounds (iv) is quite possible and admits that it is a popular answer to the question. However, on theological grounds he contends that there are strong reasons for believing every Jew will be saved. Thus, he adopts solution (iii).

<sup>18</sup> Cranfield, *Romans 9–16*, 577.

<sup>19</sup> Cranfield, *Romans 9–16*, 578.

through it? If so, one then wonders what other theological presuppositions (e.g. the sovereignty of God?) attached to such a theological framework might also be influencing the reading of the text? One then must ask whether such theological presuppositions are also Paul's own?

Much of Cranfield's justification for taking the second Israel in 9:6b to exclude Gentile Christians rests in Paul's reference to Israel as his brethren in 9:1–5. Does this necessarily mean that Israel in 9–11 must mean 'Jews only'? He also believes that in 9:1–5 Paul is establishing Israel's election, setting up his statement in 11:26a that 'all Israel will be saved.' Yet, Paul doesn't use the noun ἐκλογή until 9:11.<sup>20</sup> Is election synonymous with salvation for Paul?<sup>21</sup> For that matter, Cranfield's interpretation of Rom 9–11 is largely based on the idea that the key word of these chapters is 'mercy.' He believes that Paul will ultimately save 'all Israel' because he is a God of mercy and will show mercy to his elect. Is Paul tying together election, mercy, and salvation as it pertains to ethnic Israel the way Cranfield seems to be suggesting?

### **Andrew A. Das**

In his book, *Solving the Romans Debate*, Andrew Das presents his thesis that Paul is writing to an all Gentile audience in his epistle to the Romans.<sup>22</sup> In Rom 9–11, especially in 11:26a, he believes that Paul is confronting Gentile arrogance against the Jews.<sup>23</sup> According to Das, it is Paul's intention to use 'all Israel' as a corporate expression referring to the nation of Israel that does not mean every Israelite. He understands Israel's salvation in 11:26a as the

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<sup>20</sup> See also 11:5, 7, 28.

<sup>21</sup> See for instance, Bell, *Provoked to Jealousy*, 180. He maintains that Paul holds a clear distinction between the election of the nation Israel and individuals.

<sup>22</sup> Andrew A. Das, *Solving the Romans Debate* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 264.

<sup>23</sup> Compare with Bell, *Provoked to Jealousy*. He believes that in Rom 9–11 Paul is casting the Gentiles in more of a positive light so that the Gentiles are used to move the Jews from jealous anger to a jealous emulation (43).

“moment for ethnic Israel’s affirmation of the Jewish Messiah.”<sup>24</sup> He formulates his position in reaction to the positions of both N.T. Wright<sup>25</sup> and Ben Merkle.<sup>26</sup> Wright argues that ‘all Israel’ in 11:26a includes believing Jews and Gentiles. Merkle believes that ‘all Israel’ is another term for the believing Jewish remnant. For a full review of particularly Wright’s position, see Chapter Four below.

In supporting his view that ‘Israel’ in Rom 9–11 cannot include Gentiles, Das demonstrates that every usage of Israel in those chapters refers to either the Jewish people as an ethnic group or to a believing remnant within that people.<sup>27</sup> He insists that Paul applies the term ‘Israel’ with different senses throughout Rom 9–11 but never includes Gentiles in Israel.<sup>28</sup>

Das also believes that Paul is using different pronouns to refer to Jews and Gentiles in Rom 9–11, especially in passages like 11:13. In that passage Paul distinguishes between ‘you Gentiles’ and the Israelites for whom he uses third person pronouns.<sup>29</sup> For instance, in 11:25 and 11:28 he points out that Paul is referring to ethnic Israel with pronouns and assumes the same subject in 11:28 as in 11:26–27.<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, Das suggests that 11:11–32 holds a distinction that Paul held in Rom 9–10. In 10:1 he mentions brothers and sisters and in 10:1–3 he refers to Israel in the third person. He then concludes that nothing in 11:26 signals a change from Paul’s pattern of distinguishing “you Gentiles and them (Israel).”<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Das, *Solving Romans*, 264.

<sup>25</sup> N.T. Wright, “Romans,” 395–770.

<sup>26</sup> Ben Merkle, “Romans 11 and the Future of Ethnic Israel,” *JETS* 43 (2000): 709–21.

<sup>27</sup> Das, *Solving Romans*, 238. He cites 9:4–5; 9:30–31, and 11:28 for support.

<sup>28</sup> Das, *Solving Romans*, 238.

<sup>29</sup> Das, *Solving Romans*, 238.

<sup>30</sup> Das, *Solving Romans*, 238.

<sup>31</sup> Das, *Solving Romans*, 239.

Das further supports his claim of Jew-Gentile distinctions in Rom 9–11 by saying that the logic of the olive tree imagery in Rom 11 requires that ‘Israel’ remain exclusive of Gentiles. Israel represents the natural branches while the wild, Gentile branches were engrafted. He suggests that 11:25–26 builds on that imagery and maintains the same progression.<sup>32</sup>

Das also maintains that ‘all Israel’ usage in Hebrew and the Greek Septuagint support taking the phrase as a referent to the bulk of ethnic Israel. He also believes that the ‘now’ word present in some manuscripts of 11:30–31 does not refer to present salvation but to a future event.<sup>33</sup>

Finally, Das does not believe Paul is giving a ‘polemical redefinition’<sup>34</sup> of Israel in 11:26 to include Gentiles in a way analogous to Jew in 2:29, circumcision in 2:29 and Phil 3:3 or of ‘seed of Abraham’ in Rom 4, Gal 3, and Rom 9:6–9. Neither does he believe that Paul refers to the church in Gal 6:16. He believes that if ‘Israel of God’ referred to the church then Paul would have omitted the second *καί* in that verse. He also claims that no early Christian writer applied the phrase to the church until Justin Martyr’s Dialogue in AD 160.<sup>35</sup>

Thus, Das maintains that both believing Israel and Gentile branches are on the same tree. Consistent with his claim that Rom 9–11 confronts Gentile arrogance, he suggests here that Gentiles are dependent on ethnic Israel’s heritage but are still wild branches benefiting as Gentiles. In conclusion, ‘all Israel’ does not then include Gentiles.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Das, *Solving Romans*, 239.

<sup>33</sup> Das, *Solving Romans*, 240.

<sup>34</sup> Das, *Solving Romans*, 242. His position is contra Wright, “Romans,” 690. See below for a full review of Wright.

<sup>35</sup> Das, *Solving Romans*, 244.

<sup>36</sup> Das, *Solving Romans*, 245.

Das also defines his own interpretation over and against that of Ben Merkle. According to Merkle, ‘all Israel’ is another term for the believing Jewish remnant referred to in Rom 9:1–23 and 11:1–10. He believes that only the elect within Israel would be saved based on faith in Christ as an ongoing present reality. For Merkle, this means that a mass, future conversion of Israel would contradict God’s will to save a remnant.<sup>37</sup>

Das believes that the contradiction present in a mass future conversion concept is only apparent. He maintains that God’s saving of a remnant in the present does not rule out the salvation of ‘all Israel’ in the future. For Das, the existence of a remnant provides hope for the people *as a whole*.<sup>38</sup> The ‘remnant’ motif used by Paul in Rom 11, he asserts, shows that the remnant serves as a seed for a reconstituted people in the future. He then interprets the remnant diachronically as that which is “collected from every point in history and gives an enduring sign of hope pointing *beyond* itself to the *whole* of Israel at some future point.”<sup>39</sup>

Das sees Paul’s use of remnant in chapter 11 as consistent with the use and meaning in the Old Testament. He cites the work of Gerhard F. Hasel, among others, to explain that the remnant motif functions both negatively and positively in the Scriptures.<sup>40</sup> Negatively, in the sense that the existence or complete lack of a remnant attests to the destruction of the majority or entirety of a people usually designed to bring about repentance (Amos 1:6–8; 4:1–3; 5:1–3; 6:9–10; 9:1–4; Isa 10:22–23; 30:15–17). Positively, in the sense that the existence of a remnant provides hope for the survival and restoration of the people as a whole, as shown with Noah and his family

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<sup>37</sup> Merkle, “Romans 11,” 711–12.

<sup>38</sup> Das, *Solving Romans*, 246 (emphasis, original).

<sup>39</sup> Das, *Solving Romans*, 249 (emphasis, original).

<sup>40</sup> See Gerhard F. Hasel, *The Remnant: The History and Theology of the Remnant Idea from Genesis to Isaiah* (Berrien Springs: Andrews Univ. Press, 1972).

(Gen 7:23b) as well as Joseph's role in Egypt to preserve for his family a remnant (Gen 45:7). Applying Hasel's work to Rom 9–11, Das suggests that Paul is using the remnant motif negatively and positively in those chapters. Negatively in Rom 9–10 to bring the nation of Israel to repentance to positively in Rom 11 as a hope for the future of 'all Israel.'<sup>41</sup> The remnant is never an end in itself, he asserts. The remnant always provides the means for the preservation and restoration of the whole of Israel.<sup>42</sup>

Das believes that the remnant functions in the present and does not replace the people as a whole. The future of Israel will be a time of fullness in contrast to the present (11:12). Paul anticipates Israel's future acceptance in 11:15. The hardening of Israel then takes place in the present until the fullness of the Gentiles comes in at some future event. And then all Israel will be saved.<sup>43</sup>

Das suggests that if 'all Israel will be saved' means 'the remnant who believes in Christ,' then this would hardly constitute a 'mystery' for Paul. The Apostle would then be saying nothing more in 11:26 than what he said in 11:25.<sup>44</sup> Rather, he contends that even though Paul has been bifurcating Israel into an elect, believing minority and an unbelieving, hardened majority (11:7) since 9:6b, Paul unites believing and unbelieving Jews in 11:26a with his use of the phrase, 'all Israel.'<sup>45</sup> In 11:8–24 Paul is anticipating the resolution of Israel's bifurcation into a future, united whole. Yet, in his mind, hardened Israel should comprise a significant portion of 'all Israel' in 11:26 since throughout Rom 9–11 Paul is struggling to show that God is faithful to all Israel

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<sup>41</sup> Hasel, *Remnant*, 250.

<sup>42</sup> Das, *Solving Romans*, 246.

<sup>43</sup> Das, *Solving Romans*, 251.

<sup>44</sup> Das, *Solving Romans*, 253.

<sup>45</sup> Das, *Solving Romans*, 254.

despite the truth that some are now hardened.<sup>46</sup>

So, if in 11:26a Paul is claiming that a bifurcated Israel will soon be united, restored, and saved, who will make up ‘all Israel’ and when will this salvation take place? First, Das believes that ‘all Israel’ is not a mere collection of believing individuals through time as the remnant reading supposes. This diachronic view of all Israel puts too much emphasis on Israel being a collection of individuals and not enough on the corporate entity.<sup>47</sup> For Das it is best then to take ‘all Israel’ in the synchronic sense.<sup>48</sup> Second, concerning the salvation of ‘all Israel,’ Das maintains that the Isaianic texts in 11:26–27 conform to the larger pattern throughout Isaiah of Israel’s future deliverance from its imminent judgment.<sup>49</sup> This points to the time of the *Parousia*.

For Das the above stated reading of ‘all Israel’ and its salvation in Rom 11:25–27 has implications for an all Gentile readership. They have learned in Rom 9–11 that their share as elected ones in Israel’s privilege, is itself a great privilege. Their status as God’s chosen ones then leads Paul to address the status of the Jews, his own kinsmen. God has not rejected them (11:1). He will remain faithful to his promises to them. Therefore, the Gentiles must guard against arrogance and any notion that they have replaced ethnic Israel. The nation of Israel will be grafted back into its own tree (11:23–24).<sup>50</sup> And “‘all Israel’ will be saved.”

According to Das, in Rom 9–11 Paul is confronting Gentile arrogance against the Jews and,

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<sup>46</sup> Das, *Solving Romans*, 255.

<sup>47</sup> Das, *Solving Romans*, 257. See Bell, *Provoked to Jealousy*, 180 for the opposite view of Ἰσραήλ in Rom 9–11. He believes too much attention is often placed on the corporate or national dimension of the term. He also understands the salvation of ‘all Israel’ in 11:26a diachronically rather than synchronically (141).

<sup>48</sup> Das, *Solving Romans*, 257. Opposite Bell, *Provoked to Jealousy*, 141. He argues that in the literature of Second Temple Judaism (Sanh 10:1; Test Ben 10:11) ‘all Israel’ is used diachronically. Also he believes the diachronic understanding makes the most sense of Paul’s claim in 11:29 that the gifts and call of God are irrevocable.

<sup>49</sup> Das, *Solving Romans*, 258.

<sup>50</sup> Das, *Solving Romans*, 259–60.



in so doing, includes only ethnic Jews (either believing, unbelieving, or both) in all eleven references to Israel. He maintains that Paul is making a clear distinction between Jews and Gentiles throughout Rom 9–11. Concerning the remnant concept, he shows that the remnant always points to a preservation of the whole of Israel, which he believes consists of both believing and unbelieving Jews. For these reasons, he maintains that ‘all Israel’ in 11:26a refers not only to Jews only, but to both believing and unbelieving Jews. Yet, since by Das’ own admission, Paul is including Jews and Gentiles in his understanding of ‘the circumcision’ in 2:29 and ‘seed of Abraham’ in Rom 4:9–12,<sup>51</sup> why is the same not possible with ‘Israel’ in 11:26a (or 9:6b for that matter)? Why is ‘Israel’ a special case for Paul, seemingly exempt from any sort of redefinition? Furthermore, weren’t Gentiles such as Rahab (Josh 2) and Ruth (chapter 4) included in ‘Israel’ even in the Old Testament, as confirmed by the genealogy of Matthew in Matt 1:5? Does Paul’s concept of Israel in Rom 9–11 necessarily preclude Gentiles?

### **Robert Jewett**

Robert Jewett takes a rhetorical approach to the reading of Romans and sees 9:1–11:36 as the third proof in Paul’s rhetorical letter. He claims that in this proof Paul is showing “the triumph of divine righteousness in the gospel’s mission to Israel and the Gentiles.”<sup>52</sup> He believes that the thesis in 9:6a is a direct expression of the main thesis of Rom 1:16–17, concerning the gospel as the power of God. Within this understanding, 9:6–9 shows that in the face of accusations to the contrary, God’s word has been successful. In these verses, Paul is explaining

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<sup>51</sup> Das, *Solving Romans*, 242. He says, “No one would dispute Wright’s contention that Paul has redefined ‘circumcision’ and ‘Jew’ in Rom 2:29 or Abraham’s descendants in 4:9–12 to include reference to uncircumcised, obedient Gentiles.”

<sup>52</sup> Jewett, *Romans*, 557.

why it has been successful. Jewett appeals to the midrashic discourse style in 9:6–9 in which Gen 21:12 and Gen 18:10 are the supporting texts that provide logical proof of the thesis in 9:6a.<sup>53</sup>

To the question of the identity of Ἰσραήλ in 9:6b, Jewett suggests that Paul sees the first Israel as ethnic Israel, with a strong link between ‘Israelites’ of 9:4 and ‘Israel’ in 9:6 and between ‘flesh’ in 9:3 and 9:8.<sup>54</sup> He also speaks of the second Israel as an elected, true Israel in 9:6b. Jewett does not believe that Paul is claiming here a replacement or a redefinition of the Israel. Yet, neither does he believe that the distinction in 9:6b refers just to Jewish Christians as a subset of ethnic Israel. Rather, he believes that since all believers in Christ are part of the true Israel, the distinction is finally “between believing and physical Israel” as determined by their response to the word of God.<sup>55</sup>

This distinction is reinforced by the clarifications in 9:7–9. In 9:7 Jewett sees σπέρμα as the more restrictive and τέκνα the broader term.<sup>56</sup> He sees that this understanding corresponds with the two distinctions of Ἰσραήλ in 9:6b. Also, he believes that the quotation of Gen 21:12 confirms that σπέρμα in 9:7a is the restricted category while extending the principle of distinction between ‘Israel’ and ‘true Israel’ from 9:6b, advancing further the thesis in 9:6a.<sup>57</sup> In 9:8–9 Jewett sees Paul continuing to extend this distinction with his midrashic style and introduction of ἐπαγγελία and the contrast between ‘children of the flesh’ and ‘children of the promise.’<sup>58</sup> Thus, for Jewett 9:6–9 establishes the thesis that God’s Word has not failed (9:6a) by

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<sup>53</sup> Jewett, *Romans*, 571.

<sup>54</sup> Jewett, *Romans*, 570–71.

<sup>55</sup> Jewett, *Romans*, 575. See also Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 560 and Ulrich Wilckens, *Der Brief an die Römer* EKKNT 6 (Zurich: Benziger, 1982), 192.

<sup>56</sup> Jewett, *Romans*, 575. See also Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 540; Wright, “Romans,” 636.

<sup>57</sup> Jewett, *Romans*, 576.

<sup>58</sup> Jewett, *Romans*, 576–77.

laying out a clear distinction between ethnic Israel and believing Israel with a midrashic style of supportive Old Testament texts.

In 11:25–27 Jewett sees that Paul is disclosing his mystery also in a midrashic style, like 9:6–9. Given his rhetorical approach to the reading of Romans, he understands the argument in these verses to be connected very closely with the thesis in 9:6a and 1:16–17. Also, Jewett reads Paul as saying that his ‘mystery’ included all members of the house of Israel (11:26a), even though Paul has made a distinction between a physical and a believing Israel.<sup>59</sup>

Jewett believes that with his use of τὸ μυστήριον, Paul is drawing on mystery religions in Greco-Roman religion as well as apocalyptic Judaism.<sup>60</sup> Yet, he believes that Paul is disclosing a three-step mystery, overcoming the ‘insider bias’ of the concept and emphasizing instead a revelation of the mystery. The first step is to harden Israel. The second is to convert the Gentiles. The third step is the conversion of Jews.<sup>61</sup>

Regarding the first step, Jewett translates ἀπὸ μέρους τῷ Ἰσραήλ as ‘on a part of Israel.’ He does not take ἀπὸ μέρους in an adverbial manner with πῶρως to refer to a partial hardening. Rather, he maintains the premise that Paul always refers to Israel as a whole.<sup>62</sup>

The second step for Jewett begins with ἄχρι οὗ, a phrase that marks a continuous extent of time up to a point, to point forward to the goal of Gentile conversion. It refers to the period of Israel’s hardening until the fulfillment of God’s plan for Gentile conversion. He takes τὸ πλήρωμα τῶν ἐθνῶν to refer to the predestined number of the elect but does not believe Paul

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<sup>59</sup> Jewett, *Romans*, 701–2. See also John A. Ziesler, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans* TPINTC (Philadelphia: Trinity International, 1989), 285.

<sup>60</sup> Jewett, *Romans*, 697; Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 678.

<sup>61</sup> Jewett, *Romans*, 699.

<sup>62</sup> Jewett, *Romans*, 699. Contra Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 679.

intends to communicate a specific number. Although, Jewett conjectures, considering the missionary purpose of the letter (1:8–15; 15:22–33), that the ‘full number’ is meant to include Spanish converts.<sup>63</sup> Jewett takes εἰσέλθῃ to refer not to an eschatological pilgrimage or entering the church as the kingdom of God,<sup>64</sup> or the engrafting into the olive tree of Israel, but rather to refer to the eschatological church containing the predestined full number of Jews and Gentiles.<sup>65</sup>

Regarding the third step of Jewett’s proposed three-step revelation of Paul’s mystery, he acknowledges that there is a broad consensus among contemporary scholars for the view that ‘all Israel’ in 11:26a refers to Israel as a whole, as a people, “whose corporate identity and wholeness could not be lost even if in the event there were some (or indeed many) exceptions.”<sup>66</sup> Yet, he is not convinced that this is a correct reading of Paul but rather represents a “shrewd position that appears to protect Paul's reputation by paring back his prophecy to a more reasonable level, as viewed in light of subsequent experience.”<sup>67</sup> For support of his position he appeals to the common meaning of πᾶς and asserts that it does not lend itself to the expression of exceptions. He also suggests that there is nothing in the context that supports an interpretation of ‘most, with a few exceptions.’ He finds evidence in 11:27 and 11:32. In 11:27 the phrase ‘when I take away their sins’ occurs in the quotation of Is 59:20–21. Jewett assumes that Paul implies the word ‘all’ there and certainly would not have included exceptions. Furthermore, in 11:32 πᾶς occurs twice in the masculine accusative plural form and Paul says, ‘all were consigned to disobedience’ so

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<sup>63</sup> Jewett, *Romans*, 700.

<sup>64</sup> So Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 622.

<sup>65</sup> Jewett, *Romans*, 700–701.

<sup>66</sup> Jewett, *Romans*, 701–2. For a detailed discussion of this position and its proponents, see the section below entitled, “The Nation of Israel as a Whole: Not Necessarily Every Individual.”

<sup>67</sup> Jewett, *Romans*, 701–2.

that ‘he might have mercy on all.’ Jewett reasons that if ‘all’ does not include exceptions in 11:27, 32 then it makes good sense that Paul’s use in 11:26a also does not include exceptions.<sup>68</sup>

Concerning the “how?” question of ‘all Israel’s’ conversion to the gospel, Jewett says succinctly, “There is also little doubt that the verb σωθήσεται (‘they shall be saved’) refers to evangelical conversion, as in 5:9–10; 10:9–13, and 11:14.”<sup>69</sup> Although, since Jewett maintains that by ‘all Israel,’ Paul is referring to every individual Israelite throughout time, he believes that Paul’s ‘mystery’ includes the evangelical conversion of “all members of the house of Israel, who, without exception, would be saved.”<sup>70</sup> Even though this understanding of the salvation of ‘all Israel’ that including every individual Israelite diachronically seems to leave Jewett vulnerable to adopting a *Sonderweg*<sup>71</sup> for Israel that is similar to Gager and Gaston’s view, he maintains that there is no indication that Paul intended such a meaning and rejects it. Yet, he does acknowledge that *Sonderweg* has been a theological option put forth by some to consider post-Pauline developments.<sup>72</sup>

In 11:26b–27 Jewett believes Paul is continuing his midrashic style with the quotations of

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<sup>68</sup> Jewett, *Romans*, 701–2. Also Bell, *Provoked to Jealousy*, 139, 141. Based on his understanding of ‘all Israel’ he contends that Paul has in mind a salvation for every individual Israelite based on the principle of grace alone, faith alone at the *Parousia* (141–45).

<sup>69</sup> Jewett, *Romans*, 702.

<sup>70</sup> Jewett, *Romans*, 702.

<sup>71</sup> *Sonderweg* is understood here to mean ‘a separate path’ of salvation for Israel, separate from the church and faith in Christ. As discussed in Chapter Two above, *Sonderweg* has been used to refer to a path for Israel that includes faith in Christ at witnessing the presence of Christ at the *Parousia* (e.g. Mussner) as well as one that is not in any way Christological (e.g. Gaston and Gager). While Jewett rejects the position of Gaston and Gager, his understanding is very similar to that of Mussner (as noted above in Chapter Two, footnote 54) and his *Sonderweg* for Israel.

<sup>72</sup> Jewett, *Romans*, 702. It is unclear what he precisely he means by “post-Pauline developments.” Yet, he does clarify his view concerning ‘all Israel’ with the following: “The Pauline hope of a world-transforming mission is viewed as a fulfillment of biblical prophecy, that all nations will find in the Messiah a new and peaceful destiny, including solidarity with one another. To whittle back the details of Paul’s vision to more ‘reasonable’ levels, reflecting the fact of their nonfulfillment in the twenty centuries past, undercuts the magnificent scope of the ‘mystery’ that Paul believed he had been given.”

Isa 59:20 and Isa 27:9. For Jewett, these passages provide confirmation of Paul's three-part disclosure of the mystery of Israel's future salvation.<sup>73</sup> He believes that Paul is interpreting these passages in a Christological way and is showing his trust in the power of the gospel evident in the thesis of the whole letter in 1:16.<sup>74</sup> Thus, for Jewett, this is evidence of Paul's conviction in 9:6a that the Word of God has not failed. It is final proof of the triumph of divine righteousness in the gospel's mission to Israel and the Gentiles.

Jewett presents a rhetorical reading of Rom 9–11 and sees salvation for 'all Israel' ('believing' and 'physical') coming about in three steps—a hardening for part of Israel, a conversion for the Gentiles, and a conversion for the Jews. He believes that the conversion for 'all Israel' will be for every individual member of the house of Israel throughout time. He bases this reading primarily on his understanding of  $\pi\alpha\tilde{\nu}\varsigma$  as almost always meaning 'all, without exceptions.' Yet, does  $\pi\alpha\tilde{\nu}\varsigma$  necessarily mean 'all, without exceptions'? Does  $\pi\alpha\tilde{\nu}\varsigma$  always take on the literal meaning of 'all' to mean without any exceptions? Finally, assuming  $\pi\alpha\tilde{\nu}\varsigma$  does mean 'all, without exceptions,' could it be that his understanding of 'Israel' in 11:26a refers to a group other than ethnic Jews? If so, could Paul be speaking metaphorically when he uses the phrase, 'all Israel'?

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<sup>73</sup> Jewett, *Romans*, 702.

<sup>74</sup> Jewett, *Romans*, 706.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### NEW PERSPECTIVE AND ‘OTHER’ PERSPECTIVE INTERPRETATIONS

#### Introduction

New Perspective and ‘other’ perspective interpreters are like one another in that they are concerned primarily about reading Paul within his first century Jewish context. The interpreters surveyed here can be distinguished from *Sonderweg* interpreters reviewed above since they ultimately do not believe such an interpretation is exegetically sound. All those surveyed here speak of the salvation of ‘all Israel’ as occurring through faith in the gospel either at the *Parousia* or at some other time in history. These interpreters can be distinguished from ‘traditional’ Christian interpreters because they tend to challenge ‘traditional’ readings of Paul concerning justification, righteousness, and works of the law. The following three interpreters’ exegesis of 9:6–9, 11:25–27, and their understandings of ‘Israel’ in those passages, is different in many ways.

#### N.T. Wright

For N.T. Wright, two questions dominate 9:1–11:36, the question of unbelieving Israel, and the question of God’s faithfulness.<sup>1</sup> The whole of Israel’s refusal to believe the gospel, implicit in 9:1–5, raises the question in 9:6a, of whether God has been faithful to his promises. Both questions are related to the identity of Ἰσραήλ in 9:6–9 and 11:25–27.

Wright interprets Paul’s understanding of Israel in chapters 9–11 within the narrative of

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<sup>1</sup> Wright, “Romans,” 621.

God's plan of salvation. He claims that to see what Paul is doing in passages like 9:6–9 and 11:25–27, the reader must recognize that he is telling a single story: “It is the story of Israel, from Abraham to the exile and beyond. It is the story of promise and fulfillment but also one of tragic failure in which Israel is being narrowed to a final ‘remnant.’”<sup>2</sup> Yet, this was not outside the purpose of God, but was what he had promised all along. Israel had failed to believe the gospel but it is not as though the Word of God had failed (9:6a). For Wright, God has always specified “one son and not the other, one twin and not the other, one small group while the rest fell away, one tiny remnant while the rest were lost to view, exiled apparently forever.”<sup>3</sup>

It is this distinction inherent within the narrative of the Old Testament that leads Wright to claim that Paul is giving a ‘polemical redefinition’ of Israel in Rom 9–11, beginning already in 9:6–9.<sup>4</sup> For Wright, in 9:6–9 Paul is laying out his redefinition of Israel in primarily three different ways.

First, in 9:6b he claims that Paul is distinguishing between two ‘Israels,’ just as there are two referents for Jew in 2:28–29 and two ‘I’s’ in chapter 7.<sup>5</sup> He believes that the first Ἰσραήλ is ‘Israel according to the flesh,’ set against the purposes of God. Whereas the second Ἰσραήλ is ‘Israel according to the Spirit.’<sup>6</sup> He does not believe that the second Ἰσραήλ in 9:6b is merely a subset of ethnic Israel, but that, just as Paul has already disclosed in 2:29, Israel has broadened out to include both Jews and Gentiles.<sup>7</sup> He believes this double meaning of Israel is important to

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<sup>2</sup> Wright, “Romans,” 634.

<sup>3</sup> Wright, “Romans,” 634.

<sup>4</sup> Contra Bell, *Provoked to Jealousy*, 179–80. He says, “The second use of Ἰσραήλ . . . certainly does not imply that the Church of the Jews and Gentiles is the ‘true Israel.’”

<sup>5</sup> Wright, “Romans,” 636.

<sup>6</sup> Wright, “Romans,” 635–36. Also, William Sanday and Arthur C. Headlam, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* 5th ed. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1985), 240.

<sup>7</sup> See also Middendorf, *Romans 9–16*, 823. He maintains that the second ‘Israel’ in 9:6b is a term for those



understanding the meaning of ‘all Israel’ in 11:25–26.<sup>8</sup>

Second, in 9:7, he refers to a distinction between Abraham’s ‘children’ and his ‘seed.’<sup>9</sup> In chapter 4 Paul referred to Abraham to make the point that the true offspring of Abraham, whether Jew or Gentile, are those who believe in the gospel of Jesus. Here he is referring to Abraham to make a distinction between his ‘children’ and his ‘offspring.’ The question is which terms in 9:7 correspond with which Ἰσραήλ in 9:6b? Some commentators believe that the ‘seed of Abraham’ refers to the larger category, all of Abraham’s physical offspring, and that ‘children’ refers to the smaller, the chosen ones.<sup>10</sup> Wright looks to the quotation of Gen 21:12, in which ‘seed’ is the positive, more limited category, to make the assertion that ‘seed of Abraham’ is the ‘chosen’ ones.<sup>11</sup> This means, according to Wright, that even though Abraham had two children, only Isaac was designated as the ‘seed.’ He sees further support for this view in 9:8 in which ‘reckoned as seed’ is likened to being a part of the elect group and not just physical descendants.<sup>12</sup>

Third, in 9:8–9 Wright claims that Paul is distinguishing the two groups in terms of ‘flesh’ and ‘promise.’<sup>13</sup> ‘Children of the flesh’ are those of the physical family and ‘children of the promise’ are those, as in 4:13–22, who believe in the gospel.<sup>14</sup>

Wright claims that the main point of 9:6–9 is that God has done what he has promised.

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who are united in Christ. It then encompasses all who believe, like what is expressed in 1:16 and 10:4. At the same time, contra Wright, he clarifies that there is no ‘new Israel’ here or elsewhere in the New Testament.

<sup>8</sup> Wright, “Romans,” 636.

<sup>9</sup> Wright, “Romans,” 636.

<sup>10</sup> See Cranfield, *Romans*, 473; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 559–60.

<sup>11</sup> Wright, “Romans,” 636. See also Douglas Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 575 and Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 540.

<sup>12</sup> Wright, “Romans,” 636.

<sup>13</sup> Wright, “Romans,” 636.

<sup>14</sup> Wright, “Romans,” 636.

Upholding the thesis of 9:6a, his Word has not failed even though Israel as a whole has not believed the gospel. His redefinition of Israel and the distinctions between Abraham's 'children' and 'seed,' as well as between the 'flesh' and the 'Spirit,' are part of the fulfillment of God's promise and show his faithfulness to his Word.

Wright's claim that Paul is redefining Israel in Rom 9–11 is also important when answering the questions of 11:25–27. He believes that the two categories of Abraham's children in 9:7–8 and the two categories of Israel in 9:6b help answer these questions.

As to the question of τὸ μυστήριον in 11:25a, Wright looks to Paul's use of the term in Ephesians and Colossians to suggest that it refers not to "a hidden truth open only to initiates, but to an aspect of the long-range plan and purpose of God that has now been unveiled through the gospel of Jesus the Messiah."<sup>15</sup> He suggests that Paul uses it to refer to part of God's previously hidden plan about Israel.

Concerning the hardening of Israel, Wright looks to 9:14–24 and 11:7 as evidence for the 'hardening' theme explicitly stated in 11:25b. Taking ἀπὸ μέρους adjectivally rather than adverbially,<sup>16</sup> Wright suggests that, following 11:7, there is a division between the Israel that is hardened and the Israel that has become 'the remnant.'<sup>17</sup> He asserts, "Paul probably means, then, that a 'hardening' has 'partly come' upon Israel, in other words, that while one part of 'Israel' now constitutes the 'remnant,' the other part of 'Israel according to the flesh'—the great majority—has been 'hardened.'"<sup>18</sup>

He sees that ἄχρι οὗ τὸ πλήρωμα τῶν ἐθνῶν εἰσέλθῃ is the second modifying phrase in

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<sup>15</sup> Wright, "Romans," 687. For a background on Paul's use of "mystery," he cites Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 621 and Moo, *Romans*, 714, among others.

<sup>16</sup> Also Jewett, *Romans*, 699. Contra Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 679.

<sup>17</sup> Wright, "Romans," 688.

<sup>18</sup> Wright, "Romans," 688.

11:25b, indicating how long this hardening will last. Wright does not believe Paul has in mind that all Gentiles will believe the gospel, but that once the gospel has been announced to all nations, then the partial hardening will be completed. He refers to this as the ‘mode of completion.’<sup>19</sup>

Since Wright believes that in 9:6b Paul has redefined Israel to include both Jews and Gentiles in Rom 9–11, he asserts that ‘all Israel’ does not have to mean ‘all Jews, or all living at the time of the end.’<sup>20</sup> On the contrary, he believes that the ‘all’ of 11:26 looks back to the ‘all’ of 10:13, and behind that to the ‘all’ of 4:16. For Wright, the ‘all’ in these verses establishes that salvation includes both Jews and Gentiles who believe in the gospel or “call upon the name of the Lord” (10:13).<sup>21</sup> Thus, Wright can conclude that the ‘mystery’ is not a new revelation for Paul. It has been revealed throughout his argument to the Romans. He believes that the phrase ‘all Israel’ is best taken as a ‘polemical redefinition,’ in line with Paul’s redefinition in 2:29 and Phil 3:3, and of “seed of Abraham” in Rom 4, Gal 3, and Rom 9:6–9; even being the correct reading of ‘the Israel of God’ in Gal 6:16.”<sup>22</sup>

Wright contends that since ‘all Israel’ is the ‘polemical redefinition’ of Israel as Jews and Gentile Christians, ‘they will be saved’ refers to the hardening that has come upon part of Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles comes in. He sees this as the process in which God will save ‘all Israel.’<sup>23</sup> He supports his position by taking οὕτως to refer back to the hardening in 11:25 and not

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<sup>19</sup> Wright, “Romans,” 688.

<sup>20</sup> Wright, “Romans,” 689. See Cranfield, *Romans 9–16*, 576. He insists that Israel in 11:26 cannot mean something different from what it means in 11:25.

<sup>21</sup> Contra Bell, *Provoked to Jealousy*, 139–40 who argues against an interpolation of Jews and Gentiles in 11:26a.

<sup>22</sup> Wright, “Romans,” 690.

<sup>23</sup> Wright, “Romans,” 691.

forward to what Paul is about to say in 11:26.

In 11:26b–27 Wright resists the tendency among many scholars to take the quotations by Isaiah as referring to a large-scale act of salvation at the *Parousia*.<sup>24</sup> Rather, he suggests that the quotations support the notion of a steady process of ‘jealousy,’ and consequent faith.<sup>25</sup> Wright forms his position around the context of the passages from Isaiah which demonstrate that Paul is once again describing the process of God’s dealing with Israel’s unbelief that he established in 9:24–26 and 10:6–13. He believes that when these texts are read from the perspective of a Second Temple Jew, “one sees disclosed the pattern of exile being undone and sins forgiven, of covenant renewed and the word of faith put in the heart by the Spirit.”<sup>26</sup> For Wright, the language of ‘covenant renewal’ in Paul’s quotation of Isa 27:9 serves to undergird rather than undermine Paul’s argument in chapters 9–11.

In summary, Wright believes that 11:25–27 fit into Paul’s flow of thought throughout Rom 9–11. God is saving ‘all Israel’ as promised long ago to Abraham. It appears, according to Wright, that God is doing it not by having “two tracks, a Jewish one and a Christian one.”<sup>27</sup> Paul speaks of the ultimate salvation of all God’s people, not only Gentiles, but also an increasing number of Jews. It is a salvation to be brought about through a halting of judgment and hardening of those Jews who do not believe so that the gospel might spread to the Gentiles. By these means ethnic Jews might become ‘jealous’ and so come to believe in their own Messiah.<sup>28</sup>

In suggesting that Paul intends a ‘polemical redefinition’ of Israel in Rom 9–11, Wright

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<sup>24</sup> See Cranfield, *Romans 9–16*, 578; Käsemann, *Romans*, 313–14.

<sup>25</sup> Wright, “Romans,” 691.

<sup>26</sup> Wright, “Romans,” 691.

<sup>27</sup> Wright, “Romans,” 693.

<sup>28</sup> Wright, “Romans,” 693.

seems to be relying on language in other parts of Romans (and in Paul's other writings) to support his view. For instance, he refers to 2:28–29, Rom 4, and Rom 7, Rom 8 as well as Gal 4 and Phil 3.<sup>29</sup> He does not seem to be relying heavily on the language of Rom 9–11 to support that understanding. One is left to ponder what internal evidence in those chapters would support Wright's 'polemical redefinition?' Moreover, if Paul is intending to include Gentiles into his understanding of Israel in Rom 9:6b and 11:26a, does it necessarily have to be considered a 'redefinition'? Does it necessarily have to be 'polemical'? What are the implications of such a 'polemical redefinition'? Can Wright's view be used in ways not intended by him to support a replacement theology or the idea that the church has superseded Israel? What negative consequences might such a 'polemical redefinition' then have on Jewish-Christian relations? If Gentiles are intended by Paul to be included in his concept of Israel in Rom 9:6b and 11:26a as Wright suggests, is it plausible that a concept like the olive tree in 11:11–24 could be a parallel one for Paul? In this way, could 11:25–27 be referring to and relying heavily upon what immediately precedes it in 11:11–24?<sup>30</sup>

### **James Dunn**

Contrary to Wright, Dunn does not believe that Paul is redefining Israel to mean the church in chapters 9–11. He does not believe that the church is a separate entity from Israel but is rather a subset of Israel, like branches grafted into a tree, just as Paul speaks in Rom 11:13–24.<sup>31</sup> He believes it is best to speak of the theme of these chapters as "Israel's destiny" or "God and

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<sup>29</sup> See Bell, *Provoked to Jealousy*, 168–91 in which he goes through the exegesis of some of these passages as well as others and answers in the negative the question, "Has the Church taken Israel's place?"

<sup>30</sup> For the idea that 'all Israel' equals the olive tree of Rom 11:16–24 see Middendorf, *Romans 9–16*, 1155.

<sup>31</sup> Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 520.

Israel.”<sup>32</sup> In these chapters he sees Paul as reflecting the two-sided nature of God’s purpose: election of mercy and purpose of wrath; Gentiles called too and only a remnant of Israel; righteousness from the law and righteousness from faith; a remnant according to grace and the rest hardened; Jewish failure—the reason and Gentile failure—a warning; Israel hardening—Gentile incoming and Gentile fullness—Israel salvation.<sup>33</sup>

In Rom 9:6–9 Dunn calls attention to the following chiastic structure: λόγος, Ἰσραήλ, κληθήσεταιί, σπέρμα, τέκνα (θεοῦ).<sup>34</sup> Along with this, Dunn understands 9:6a to be the thematic verse for all of chapters 9–11. The rest of 9:6–9 then serves to ground this thesis.

To the question of the identity of Ἰσραήλ in 9:6b, Dunn cautions against reading a transfer theology here in Paul. He does not believe that Paul is pitting believers over against the nation Israel. He says, “Hence, the inadequacy of any talk of a transfer of the name and blessings of ‘Israel’ to ‘the church,’ as though Paul saw them as distinct entities.”<sup>35</sup> Neither does Dunn believe that Paul is claiming that God always had in view only an elect part of Israel, but sees the Apostle explaining how the election of Israel operates. Thus, he states emphatically that “there are no grounds for anti-Semitism or anti-Judaism.”<sup>36</sup>

Concerning the question of σπέρμα and τέκνα in 9:7, Dunn believes σπέρμα is the more restricted category, opposite of 4:13–18 but consistent with its use in 9:7b and 9:8.<sup>37</sup> The central point then is that the true heirs of Abraham are to be reckoned in other than national terms. He

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<sup>32</sup> Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 520.

<sup>33</sup> Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 519.

<sup>34</sup> Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 537.

<sup>35</sup> Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 539.

<sup>36</sup> Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 540.

<sup>37</sup> Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 540.

insists that the mode and not the objective of the promise is key here.<sup>38</sup>

Dunn adds that Paul specifies ‘all Israel,’ by which he means ‘Israel as a whole.’ He suggests that since Israel references ‘ethnic Israel’ throughout chapters 9–11, it is unlikely that he is now offering a greater definition than that already expressed by the word ‘fullness’ (11:12, 25).<sup>39</sup>

In 9:8 Dunn sees a close connection with Paul’s argument in Rom 4. He believes that the two contrasting genitive formulations of τέκνα τῆς σαρκός and τέκνα τῆς ἐπαγγελίας define in a precise way the broader category, ‘children.’

Dunn sees 11:25–27 as having the character of denouement in which the introduction of the revealed mystery is the resolution to the problem of divine hardening that Paul introduced and emphasized in 9:18 and reasserts in 11:7. He believes that the hope of Israel’s salvation stated in 11:26 answers the thematic statement of the whole epistle given in 1:16.<sup>40</sup>

Dunn sees τὸ μυστήριον in 11:25 as a reference to the mystery cults. He suggests that Paul would have been familiar with these cults but the background that informs his use here is Jewish apocalyptic.<sup>41</sup> In Jewish apocalyptic language, he asserts, ‘mystery’ has the sense not of undisclosed secrets but rather of divine secrets revealed by divine agency.<sup>42</sup> He cites passages such as Dan 2:18–19, 27–30 for support. He believes that for Paul the mystery is that of God’s purpose and intention to include Gentiles with Jews as his people, given to Paul sometime prior to the writing of his letter. The mystery then gives an answer to his anguish expressed in 9:1–3

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<sup>38</sup> Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 540.

<sup>39</sup> Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 691.

<sup>40</sup> Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 677.

<sup>41</sup> Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 678.

<sup>42</sup> Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 678.

and 10:1.<sup>43</sup>

With the phrase ὅτι πώρωσις ἀπὸ μέρους τῶ Ἰσραὴλ γέγονεν in 11:25b, Dunn takes ἀπὸ μέρους adverbially with πώρωσις to communicate “a partial hardening.”<sup>44</sup>

To the question regarding the meaning of the fullness of the Gentiles, Dunn believes Paul intends a temporal sequence, “until the time when . . .” However, he does not believe that Paul had a clear idea of the final events as happening in strict sequence. Nor does he believe that Paul had a clear idea of how the *Parousia* of Christ was related to the final conversion mentioned in 11:26–27. Rather, he suggests that Paul’s conviction was that “the incoming of the Gentiles is the trigger for the end in which Israel’s conversion, Christ’s *Parousia*, and the final resurrection would all be involved.”<sup>45</sup> As far as the meaning of πλήρωμα in 11:25b, Dunn suggests that by using the same term again, as in 11:12, Paul intends to indicate that the incoming of the Gentiles would be equivalent to that of Israel. Though, he does not believe an exact numerical equivalence is in mind here.

Regarding Paul’s use of εἰσέλθῃ, Dunn believes that Paul is drawing on a tradition that stems from Jesus, since this term is used more frequently in the Gospels to speak of entering the ‘kingdom’ or into ‘life.’<sup>46</sup> Yet, he believes Paul is reshaping this tradition to transform the traditional Jewish expectation that the final acceptance of the Gentiles would be a physical pilgrimage to Jerusalem. For Paul, the Gentile ‘incoming’ does not establish Jewish superiority

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<sup>43</sup> Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 679.

<sup>44</sup> Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 679. Also Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 621. Contra Wright, “Romans,” 688 and Jewett, *Romans*, 699.

<sup>45</sup> Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 680.

<sup>46</sup> Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 680. See Mark 9:43, 45, 47; Matt 5:20; 7:21; John 3:5. See Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 622. He does not believe it is likely that Paul intends ‘the kingdom’ here since it is not an operative term for the Apostle.



but the character of God's election so that Israel's restoration is on the Gentiles' terms.<sup>47</sup>

To the question of 'all Israel' in 11:26a, Dunn sees that there is a strong consensus that *πᾶς Ἰσραήλ* means "Israel as a whole, as a people whose corporate identity and wholeness would not be lost even if in the event there were some (or indeed many) individual exceptions."<sup>48</sup> He looks to Old Testament texts such as 1 Sam 25:1 and 1 Kgs 12:1 as support for the idiom. He sees Paul's use of the term here consistent with his use of *πᾶς* in 1:5, 16 and 4:16.<sup>49</sup> He believes it functions in contrast to *λεῖμμα* (11:5), *τινες* (11:17), and *ἀπὸ μέρους* (11:25) but as parallel to *πλήρωμα* (11:12).<sup>50</sup>

Dunn believes that the restoration of Israel here is a consequence of the incoming of the Gentiles. Israel's restoration is then expressed through the term *σωθήσεται* in 11:26a. Dunn sees in view final salvation including the redemption of the body and the restoration of creation. He suggests that "Israel would be saved by being made jealous at the sight of Gentiles enjoying what had been their privileges (9:4–5), and so provoked into abandoning their unbelief in Jesus their Messiah and into acceptance of the gospel (1:16)."<sup>51</sup> He believes Paul is expressing his final hope for Israel in Jewish terms, thus the reason for the Old Testament quotations in 11:26b–27. This, he suggests, is support for the fact that "Paul is not thinking of a conversion of the Jews in what we normally call conversion, from one religion to another, but rather of the recognition by Jews of the final or true form of their own religion."<sup>52</sup> In the end, for Dunn, Paul is finally revealing Israel's destiny in 11:26a and reflecting the two-sided nature of God's purpose through his

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<sup>47</sup> Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 680–81.

<sup>48</sup> Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 681. Contra Jewett, *Romans*, 701–2.

<sup>49</sup> Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 681.

<sup>50</sup> Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 681.

<sup>51</sup> Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 681.

<sup>52</sup> Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 683.

actions toward both Jews and Gentiles.

Dunn describes Israel's destiny as finally recognizing the true or final form of its own religion after the fullness of the Gentiles has come into the kingdom of God and after a partial hardening has come upon Israel. He believes that 'all Israel' is ethnic Jews. This is based on his belief that 'children of the flesh' and 'children of the promise' in 9:8 are two precise definitions of the broader category, 'children.' Based on this view, 'promise' for Dunn seems to be referring to the promises given to Israel as listed in 9:1–5. Yet, one might wonder if, given the distinctions in 9:6–9, 'promise' might be referring to the gospel and the promise of God in Christ? If this is the case, then how might such a meaning affect the understanding of "All Israel will be saved"? Also, if a 'normal' conversion of the Jews at the *Parousia* is not in view for Dunn, what might this other kind of conversion look like?

### **Mark A. Nanos**

Nanos situates Rom 9–11 within his understanding of Paul's purpose for writing. First, he believes Paul wrote to remind those addressed in Rome of their obligation to the obedience of faith. Second, he believes Paul wrote to remind the Roman Christians of the irrevocable priority of Israel's restoration. He frames his understanding of Romans around Paul's 'two-step pattern' for ministry in which the gospel is revealed "first to the Jew and then to the Gentile" (cf. Rom 1:16; 2:10).<sup>53</sup> For Nanos, Paul's response to this two-step pattern motivates him to persuade his addressees to renew their own commitment to it, thereby doing their part to ensure the salvation of 'all Israel.'

Nanos acknowledges that, at first glance, it appears that this 'two-step pattern' is reversed

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<sup>53</sup> Nanos, *Mystery of Romans*, 16.

in Rom 9–11. But he shows that through the hardening/restoration of Israel and then the mission of the Gentiles to provoke the ‘hardened’ to jealousy, Paul is demonstrating that God’s plan for the eschatological restoration of ‘all Israel’ is still intact and, thus, still consistent with Paul’s ‘two-step pattern’ of the Jew first then the Gentile.

In 11:25–27 Nanos sees the ‘two-step pattern’ at work. In this passage, he believes Paul sees some of his brothers and sisters from the ‘part hardened’ coming back to join the ‘remnant’ of Christian Jews in restored Israel.<sup>54</sup> The first step of the ‘two-step pattern’ is the division of Israel evident when the part hardened denies Paul’s message. He then sees step two, the initiation of the Gentile mission (the fullness of the Gentiles). This occurs when the positive response of Gentiles to the gospel bears witness to the truth of Paul’s message of Israel’s present restoration, triggering a reconsideration of the good news (provoked by jealousy). Nanos then concludes that “and thus, in this way, all Israel will be saved.”<sup>55</sup>

Concerning τὸ μυστήριον τοῦτο in 11:25a, Nanos believes it is not so much *that* ‘all Israel’ will be saved but *how* they will be saved. Also, it is not *that* the Gentiles are saved first but *why* they are saved before the part of Israel that has been hardened.<sup>56</sup> Gentiles are participants in the process of Israel’s restoration. The part of Israel that does not believe has been broken off and hardened which serves as the initiation of the Gentile mission. Paul’s ministry to the Gentiles provokes the hardened to reconsider the gospel.

Concerning ὅτι πῶρως ἀπὸ μέρους τῶ Ἰσραὴλ γέγονεν Nanos maintains that the hardening referred to is equated to a type of discipline, used by God to strengthen his people. He

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<sup>54</sup> Nanos, *Mystery of Romans*, 276–77.

<sup>55</sup> Nanos, *Mystery of Romans*, 277–78.

<sup>56</sup> Nanos, *Mystery of Romans*, 259 (emphasis, original).

cites Josh 11:20 for further evidence. He takes ἀπὸ μέρους adjectivally to refer to Israel—a part of Israel has been hardened. He also makes an important distinction in that he does not understand the hardening as synonymous with unbelief or disobedience.<sup>57</sup> He believes that this hardening is the final phase of step one in Paul’s two-step pattern of ministry to the Jew first and then to the Gentile. It is not the conclusion of Israel’s history or a final punishment, but part of the division of Israel that sets up step two and the Gentile mission and restoration of ‘all Israel.’<sup>58</sup>

Concerning ἄχρι οὗ τὸ πλήρωμα τῶν ἐθνῶν εισέλθῃ, Nanos believes ἄχρι signals a future, temporal sequence, “until the time when.” This means that after or during the hardening of part of Israel, the fullness of the Gentiles takes place. He believes that πλήρωμα is best seen as playing off Rom 11:12 to describe how much the fulfillment of Israel will transcend their current riches as a result of Israel’s stumbling.<sup>59</sup> He does not believe that Paul is intending to refer to a numeral amount.<sup>60</sup> Rather, he cites Rom 15:19; 29, and the Apostle’s use of πλήρωμα to describe the completion of the preaching of the gospel and the fullness of the blessing of Christ.<sup>61</sup>

Regarding εισέλθῃ, Nanos looks to the context of future time. He believes Paul here is describing the eschatological process taking place in his own ministry, not necessarily a distant eschatological event like the *Parousia*.<sup>62</sup> It refers to what will occur after the hardening of part of Israel has completed its function.

In 11:26a and the phrase, καὶ οὕτως πᾶς Ἰσραὴλ σωθήσεται, Nanos believes that καὶ οὕτως

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<sup>57</sup> Nanos, *Mystery of Romans*, 263–64.

<sup>58</sup> Nanos, *Mystery of Romans*, 264.

<sup>59</sup> Nanos, *Mystery of Romans*, 266.

<sup>60</sup> Also Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 680.

<sup>61</sup> Nanos, *Mystery of Romans*, 266.

<sup>62</sup> Nanos, *Mystery of Romans*, 267.

communicates a descriptive process and is best translated, “and thus, in this manner,” carrying both the sense of process and of time. Paul is telling the reader *how* and *when* God is saving ‘all Israel.’<sup>63</sup>

As for the meaning of πᾶς Ἰσραήλ, Nanos argues that throughout Rom 9–11 Ἰσραήλ refers to ethnic Jews, the ‘part hardened’ joining the ‘remnant’ of believing Jews in restored Israel.<sup>64</sup> In this way, he believes that Paul’s two-step pattern is intact. He resists the idea that ‘all Israel’ means only the remnant of believing Jews<sup>65</sup> or a remnant that also includes believing Gentiles.<sup>66</sup> For Nanos, these readings are wrong for two reasons. First, they miss the point of the role of the remnant as a representative of the whole of Israel to save some of them. Second, such remnant readings of ‘all Israel’ reveal no mystery since it would not reveal anything new that has not already been revealed in Rom 9–11.<sup>67</sup> He does not believe Paul is arguing in Rom 9–11 that the church has supplanted Israel. Rather, for Nanos, the foundation of the church is built on the shoulders of ‘all Israel.’<sup>68</sup> Even in 9:6b he believes that the first Ἰσραήλ is ethnic Israel while the second is the remnant of believing Jews separate from the part hardened.<sup>69</sup>

This leaves a question regarding the nature of the salvation referred to in 11:26a. Nanos does not believe Paul is referring to a *Parousia* or apocalyptic event in the distant future. He speaks of a time other than the return of Christ. He talks of the salvation referred to in 11:26 in

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<sup>63</sup> Nanos, *Mystery of Romans*, 274.

<sup>64</sup> Nanos, *Mystery of Romans*, 276–77.

<sup>65</sup> Contra Merkle, “Romans 11,” 709–21.

<sup>66</sup> Contra Wright, “Romans,” 690.

<sup>67</sup> Nanos, *Mystery of Romans*, 276.

<sup>68</sup> Nanos, *Mystery of Romans*, 276.

<sup>69</sup> Nanos, *Mystery of Romans*, 276

terms of the ‘eschatological restoration of all Israel.’<sup>70</sup> He says that Paul believes this is being brought about through the restoration and division of Israel (the remnant and the hardening), as well as through the Gentile mission. Nanos suggests that Paul understands ‘all Israel will be saved’ as the time when Paul reaches Rome to bring the gospel from the East to the West, from Zion to Rome.<sup>71</sup> Then, he asserts, “They will respectfully commit themselves to demonstrating love for those ‘for whom Christ died’ by confessing the Shema of faith in ‘one accord’ with ‘one voice’ in the One God, ‘the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ’ . . .’ And thus, in this way, all Israel will be saved.”<sup>72</sup> The ‘Deliverer’ then in 11:27 is not necessarily a Christological one for Nanos.<sup>73</sup> He believes it refers to God rather than Christ. Paul is citing Scripture to parallel the mystery he just described—the process God is employing to ensure the salvation of ‘all Israel.’

This, he believes, is a two-fold process, consistent with Paul’s ministry as described by St. Luke (Acts 28:14–17). The first part consists of the division of Israel, evident when some, the part hardened, deny Paul’s message, which indicates that the remnant of believing Jews are restored and thus it is time for step two. The second step involves the initiation of the Gentile mission, the fullness of the Gentiles, when the belief of the Gentiles bears witness to the truth of Paul’s message which triggers jealousy and thus, in this way, ‘all Israel’ will be saved.<sup>74</sup>

Nanos makes comparisons to Paul’s two-step process of Jews first and then Gentiles in the book of Acts, as well as what is stated in Rom 1:16. He believes that this two-step process is

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<sup>70</sup> Nanos, *Mystery of Romans*, 279.

<sup>71</sup> Bell, *Provoked to Jealousy*, 131 says something similar: “Paul most likely believed that once the Spanish mission was completed, the fullness of the Gentiles would have come in.”

<sup>72</sup> Nanos, *Mystery of Romans*, 279.

<sup>73</sup> So also Gaston and Gager above. Though, unlike those two, Nanos does not seem to suggest that God has a salvation for ‘all Israel’ apart from the gospel.

<sup>74</sup> Nanos, *Mystery of Romans*, 277–78.

intact in Rom 9–11. A division has been created within Israel so that a part of it has been hardened, setting up the Gentile mission. The Gentiles then receive the preaching of the gospel and the fullness of blessings in Christ. Finally, step two of the pattern reveals God’s priority for the Jews as ‘all Israel’ is restored through God’s saving act.

Considering Nanos’ interpretation, if the ‘Deliverer’ in 11:27 is not a Christological reference, is Paul then being somewhat inconsistent and contradictory? Does it not give the impression that in certain cases Paul’s two-step pattern involves the message of Christ and gospel to the Jews (Rom 1:16), but in other places, it does not? Also, what exactly does Nanos mean when he speaks of Israel confessing the ‘Shema of faith’? If such a confession is the substance of ‘all Israel’ will be saved, how does such a view of salvation fit with Paul’s understanding of that concept elsewhere in Romans and the rest of his epistles? With the exception that he sees Gentiles now included in Israel, does Nanos come close to the views of Gaston and Gager in his interpretation of 11:26a by presenting a *Sonderweg* for Israel that is apart from faith in Christ?

## CHAPTER SIX

### CONCLUSION

At the outset of our study we raised a couple of questions concerning the conscious connection that scholars in the post-Holocaust era have made between the Holocaust event and biblical interpretation. First, we asked whether interpretations of Rom 9:6–9 and 11:25–27 during the post-Holocaust era, particularly interpretations of Ἰσραήλ in those passages, have gone in different directions not previously taken? Second, we asked that if it is revealed that different interpretive directions have been taken with the exegesis of those passages, what are they?

To answer those questions, we employed a history of interpretation methodology (*Wirkungsgeschichte*) to examine various interpretations of Rom 9:6–9 and 11:25–27 in the post-Holocaust era with attention given to each interpreter's understanding of Paul's concept of Ἰσραήλ in those passages. In so doing we also employed various elements of reception theory, exploring the idea that an interpreter's own horizon of expectation (the sum of the given interpreter's historical background, personal, and social experiences) influences how the interpreter approaches a given text. One's horizon of expectation makes it impossible for the interpreter to read in a completely objective way.

After completing a brief history of interpretation of Rom 9:6–9 and 11:25–27 in the post-Holocaust context of Jewish-Christian relations, we determined that the social and historical factors present within this context have affected interpretations of these passages, especially the understanding of Ἰσραήλ. Our survey has revealed different interpretive directions not previously



taken.

In Chapter Two we encountered some interpreters who have suggested that in the phrase, “‘All Israel’ will be saved” (11:26a) Paul is referring to the salvation believing and unbelieving Jews by a separate path or *Sonderweg* that is distinct from the Pauline teaching of grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. Lloyd Gaston and John Gager are the notable interpreters in this category. By reading Paul as an apostate apostle from Israel’s covenant and apostle to the Gentiles, Gaston establishes that in Rom 9–11 he is arguing for a Gentile church alongside of Israel, with two different paths of salvation. One path for the Gentiles through Christ and the faith in the gospel. Another for the Jews, Israel as a whole, through God’s faithfulness to his covenant bound to Torah observance.

Gager’s reading of Paul is largely in reaction to what he believes to be a misreading of Paul. He attempts to present a ‘new Paul’ in reaction to what he calls an ‘old paradigm’ that he believes reduces Paul to a convert from Judaism to Christianity who preaches against the law and Israel. He believes that this ‘old paradigm’ does not situate Paul in his first century setting among Jews, Judaism, and Gentiles, but is rather read through interpreters of Romans from other centuries. He then attempts to reread Paul in his first century setting and believes that it reveals God’s commitment to Israel and to the holiness of the law through the religion of Judaism as well as to the Gentiles in Jesus Christ through the religion of Christianity. Thus, in Rom 9–11 he believes that Paul is presenting a *Sonderweg* for the Gentiles rather than for Israel. In Gager’s mind, Israel’s salvation was never in doubt, only the salvation of non-Jews. Israel will be saved through the Mosaic covenant, but he does believe that they will accept Jesus as Messiah, though not in the sense of saving faith and belief, which he deems unnecessary.

Also in Chapter Two we reviewed Franz Mussner’s interpretation. His interpretation fits

under the category of *Sonderweg* but is distinct from those of Gaston and Gager. Mussner believes that in 11:26a Paul is expressing a salvation for all Jews throughout time at the *Parousia*, but he believes it will come about through an experience with the coming Christ rather than through hearing the gospel. He bases his understanding of ‘all Israel’ as all Jews throughout time on his belief that ‘children of God’ and ‘children of promise’ in 9:8 is referring to all Jews of ethnic Israel. He does believe such salvation for ‘all Israel’ will be consistent with the Pauline teaching of grace alone and faith alone. Unlike Gaston and Gager, Mussner’s *Sonderweg* does not involve two different covenants, the Mosaic covenant for Israel and the new covenant in Christ for the Gentiles.

Concerning ‘dispensational’ and ‘Christian Zionist’ interpretations in Chapter Three, we reviewed one classic premillennial dispensationalist interpretation, one progressive premillennial dispensationalist interpretation, and one Christian Zionist interpretation of Israel in Rom 9:6-9 and 11:25-27. We saw that even though there are differences among the three, each was similar in the sense that they attempt to demonstrate that Paul maintains a future salvation for ethnic, national, and territorial Israel.

Woodrow Kroll adopts a traditional premillennial dispensationalist interpretation of Israel in Rom 9:6–9 and 11:25–27. According to Kroll, after the ‘fullness of the Gentiles’ part of God’s plan in this present age, the New Testament saints will be raptured into heaven and the tribulation period will begin. At this point, Kroll believes that God will focus his attention on Israel. He believes that ‘all Israel’ refers to the remnant of believing Jews combined with the elect Gentiles but that salvation for each will take place through conversion to the gospel and in different dispensations or eras. He maintains that the surviving remnant of Jewish people in the period of tribulation following the rapture of the New Testament saints will constitute the entire

nation of Israel. At Jesus' visible return (*Parousia*) then Israel will be restored to favor with God and a mass conversion of Jews will take place.

Craig Blaising considers himself a progressive premillennial dispensationalist and, as such, makes less of a strict bifurcation between Israel and the church and also is less concerned with date setting and connecting biblical prophecy to current social and political events and people. Yet, he does believe that God has a future for ethnic, national, and territorial Israel in his consummate plan of salvation. He believes that 11:26a is evidence of this consummate plan. To make his case he argues that the concept of Israel in the Tanak and the connections to the land and God's promises are consistent with how the New Testament writers present Israel and its future. He believes that Israel in the Tanak is primarily a corporate reality and that God will continue to deal with Israel corporately and as a whole even though many have rejected his promise in Christ and the gospel. The fact that some believe is enough for Blaising to suggest that Israel as a whole is still holy and so will have a future in God's consummate plan of salvation.

David Rudolph self identifies as a Christian Zionist. He separates himself from premillennial dispensationalist beliefs in every area with the exception that he, like traditional and progressive premillennial dispensationalists, argue that God has a future for ethnic, national, and territorial Israel in his plan of salvation. He finds support for his position in Rom 9–11. In those chapters, he believes that Paul is presenting a particularity for ethnic, national Israel and the land in his portrayal of salvation. Using the acronym GUCCI, he believes Paul affirms: the *gifts* of Israel, the *uniqueness* of Israel, the *calling* of Israel, the *confirmation* of Israel's promises, and the *irrevocability* of Israel's election.

Under the category of 'traditional' Christian interpretations in Chapter Four our survey

showed that those interpreters of 9:6–9 and 11:25–27 not only go in a different direction than *Sonderweg* interpreters in Chapter Two, but that there are also differences among each of the three interpreters reviewed.

C.E.B. Cranfield relies heavily on Barth's understanding of election when it comes to the interpretation of Rom 9–11. He believes that the understanding of Jesus as both the electing God and the elected man is crucial to understanding Paul's three-fold scheme of election in Rom 9–11—the election of Christ, the election of the community, and the election of the individual. He believes that in 9:1–5 Paul is establishing Israel's election, one that excludes Gentiles, particularly in 9:6–9. He believes that in 9:6–9 Paul is setting up his statement in 11:26a that 'all Israel will be saved.' He also believes that 'mercy' is a key concept for Paul in Rom 9–11. Paul will ultimately save 'all Israel' because he is a God of mercy and will show mercy to his elect.

According to Andrew Das, in Rom 9–11 Paul is confronting Gentile arrogance against the Jews and, in so doing, includes only ethnic Jews (either believing, unbelieving, or both) in all eleven references to Israel, including 'all Israel' in 11:26a. He believes that the remnant in Rom 11 points forward to the restoration and salvation of ethnic Israel at the *Parousia*. Their salvation will come about as a conversion to the gospel so that the nation of Israel will be grafted into its own tree and 'all Israel' will be saved.

Robert Jewett presents a rhetorical reading of Rom 9–11 and sees salvation for 'all Israel' ('believing' and 'physical') that has come about in three steps—a hardening for part of Israel, a conversion for the Gentiles, and a conversion for the Jews. He believes that the conversion for 'all Israel' will be for every individual member of the house of Israel throughout time. He bases this reading primarily on his understanding of  $\pi\alpha\varsigma$  as almost always meaning 'all, without exceptions.'

In the category of new perspective or ‘other’ perspective interpretations in Chapter Five, we considered the interpretations of N.T. Wright, James Dunn, and Mark A. Nanos. Wright speaks of a redefinition of Israel in Rom 9–11 to include both believing Jews and Gentiles. He understands the second Israel in 9:6b as ‘Israel according to the spirit,’ parallel to the ‘children of God’ and ‘children of the promise’ in 9:8. He also believes such Israel is synonymous with the church. Based on this understanding of Israel in 9:6b, Wright then sees the salvation of ‘all Israel’ in 11:26a as believing Jews and Gentiles throughout time who have faith in the gospel.

Dunn believes Rom 9–11 describes Israel’s destiny as finally recognizing the true or final form of its own religion after the fullness of the Gentiles has come into the kingdom of God and after a partial hardening has come upon Israel. In the context of 9:6–9 he sees ‘children of the flesh’ and ‘children of the promise’ in 9:8 as two precise definitions of the broader category, ‘children.’ He then extrapolates that ‘all Israel’ in 11:26a is ethnic Jews. For Dunn, the salvation of ‘all Israel’ takes place as they are provoked to jealousy, abandon their unbelief, and accept the gospel.

Nanos makes comparisons to Paul’s two-step process of Jews first and then Gentiles in the book of Acts, as well as what is stated in Rom 1:16. He believes that this two-step process is intact in Rom 9–11. A division has been created within Israel so that a part of it has been hardened, setting up the Gentile mission. The Gentiles then receive the preaching of the gospel and the fullness of blessings in Christ. Finally, step two of the pattern reveals God’s priority for the Jews as ‘all Israel’ is restored through God’s saving act. ‘All Israel’ in 11:26a refers to ethnic Jews for Nanos. Their salvation comes about in the fulfillment of Paul’s mission to the Gentiles at a time other than the *Parousia*.

Concerning the various interpretive directions of the meaning of Ἰσραήλ and the related

exegetical questions of 9:6–9 and 11:25–27 in the post-Holocaust era, one can see how a sensitivity to Jewish-Christian relations within this time period may have affected interpretations. Considering our survey, the important exegetical questions that need to be addressed in further study and research have come to the surface.

Foremost are questions regarding the meaning and identity of Ἰσραήλ in 9:6b and 11:26a. Who is the second Ἰσραήλ in 9:6b? Who is ‘all Israel’ in 11:26a? Is Paul intending to include only Jews or both Jews and Gentiles in his use of Ἰσραήλ in those passages? Based on the meaning and identity of Ἰσραήλ in 9:6b and 11:26a, what does it mean that ‘all Israel’ will be saved? What does this salvation entail? When and how does such salvation take place?

Connected to the meaning and identity of Ἰσραήλ and its salvation in 9:6b and 11:26a are other important exegetical questions that arise from 9:6–9 and 11:25–27. Who does Paul intend to include in his use of τέκνα or σπέρμα in Rom 9:7–8? Are just Jews intended or do the terms entail both Jews and Gentiles? What does Paul mean by his use of τὸ μυστήριον in 11:25a? What exactly is ‘the mystery’? What is meant by Paul’s use of πώρωσις in 11:25b? Is the ‘hardening’ synonymous with unbelief or not? Does the ‘hardening’ refer to a ‘partial hardening’ or a ‘hardening of part of Israel’? What is the meaning of the phrase, ἄχρι οὗ τὸ πλήρωμα τῶν ἐθνῶν εἰσέλθῃ in 11:25b? In that phrase, ‘from where’ and ‘to where’ are the Gentiles expected to come and go? What does ‘fullness’ mean as it is used in that verse? How should καὶ οὕτως be translated in 11:26a and is it referring to what precedes it or what follows it? Finally, to what are the Isaianic quotations in 11:26b–27 referring? Is the ‘deliverer’ mentioned in 11:26b a Christological reference or not? Is the time frame referred to in Paul’s use of the quotations the *Parousia* or some other time? Does διαθήκη in 11:27 refer to the new covenant in Christ or another Old Testament covenant like the Mosaic one? In the post-Holocaust context these

exegetical questions are the important ones related to a study of Ἰσραήλ in Rom 9:6–9 and 11:25–27.

## APPENDIX ONE

### ἸΣΡΑΗΛ IN ROMANS 9:6–9 AND 11:25–27 IN ORIGEN, CHRYSOSTOM, AND AUGUSTINE

#### Origen

In 9:6–9 Origen sees that Paul’s use of ‘Israel’ in Rom 9–11 signifies the Jews but that it also has a wider reference because of the inclusion of the Gentiles. In 9:6b he believes that the second Israel, or ‘true Israel,’ is composed of those “who see God” and are “Abraham’s spiritual progeny.”<sup>1</sup> It is clear for Origen that the unbelief of many Jews has not rendered invalid God’s promises. Rather, he sees that in chapter 11 Paul is making it very clear that God is using this unbelief to bring about salvation for Jews and Gentiles. In 11:25–27 Origen believes that Paul is speaking of an end of the age conversion for the Jews.<sup>2</sup>

#### Chrysostom

In 9:6–9 Chrysostom sees that the true people of Israel are Abraham’s sons who are constituted only by his line through Isaac. In turn, Isaac’s line is made up of those who are born not by natural process but by divine promise. He sees 9:9 as providing supporting evidence for this claim. For Chrysostom, the ‘true Israel’ is composed of those who respond in faith. Faith is the “badge of their status.”<sup>3</sup> The key to understanding Chrysostom’s interpretation of 11:25–27

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Gorday, *Principles of Patristic Exegesis: Romans 9–11 in Origen, John Chrysostom, and Augustine* (New York: Edwin Mellen, 1983), 76.

<sup>2</sup> Gorday, *Patristic Exegesis*, 80.

<sup>3</sup> Gorday, *Patristic Exegesis*, 122–23.



lies in his understanding of ‘true Israel’ as the remnant of believers. He believes that God will in the end save a remnant of Israel who has faith in the promise of God in Christ. Such salvation, he maintains, fulfills the promise. He believes that 11:25–27 then declares that part of the Jews have already been saved while still more will convert.<sup>4</sup>

### **Augustine**

Augustine frames 9:6–9 in terms of the question of election. He believes this theme of election is being carried over from Rom 8. He sees in 9:6b an Israel that is divided into two groups, “the wheat and the chaff, those saved by grace and those not.”<sup>5</sup> He sees in 9:6–8 a true Israel composed of those who believe in the promise of God by faith, including both Jews and Gentiles. He believes such a group is the remnant of the historical Israel, those elected to salvation and drawn from all people. In 11:25–27 Augustine maintains that the ‘all Israel’ to be saved in 11:26a are the predestined elect, composed of both Jews and Gentiles.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Gorday, *Patristic Exegesis*, 124–25.

<sup>5</sup> Gorday, *Patristic Exegesis*, 168.

<sup>6</sup> Gorday, *Patristic Exegesis*, 171.

## APPENDIX TWO

### ἸΣΡΑΗΛ IN ROMANS 9:6B: EARLY CHURCH THROUGH THE 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

In the early church the second Ἰσραήλ in Rom 9:6b is almost always understood as ‘a group overlapping ethnic Israel,’ consisting of both Jew and Gentile Christians, synonymous with the church. Chrysostom uses the phrase ‘real Israel’ and understands this Ἰσραήλ in terms of the ‘promise of God.’<sup>1</sup> Ambrosiaster also speaks in terms of God’s promise. He also speaks in terms of ‘seeing.’ He describes the second Ἰσραήλ as those among Jews and other nations who believe the promise and “truly see”<sup>2</sup> Origin uses similar terminology when he says, “Those who see Israel are called Israel. Israel’s name was given for seeing God, as Jacob himself says: ‘I have seen God face to face, and yet my life is preserved (Gen 32:30).’ The one who has not seen (Jn 14:9) God, cannot be called Israel.”<sup>3</sup> One might presume that, for Origin, a person ‘sees’ by faith. Irenaeus, Augustine, and Clement of Alexandria speak of a spiritual Israel, making faith in Christ its essential criterion for inclusion, not physical descent.<sup>4</sup> Pelagius speaks of faith as the criterion for inclusion in Ἰσραήλ by mentioning that “those who believe are ‘sons of Abraham.’”<sup>5</sup> Diodore puts emphasis on practicing the faith when he says, “Those who by their godliness showed that they were worthy to be Israelites who were called children of Abraham.”<sup>6</sup> They

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<sup>1</sup> Patout, *Romans Interpreted by Early Christian Commentators*, 221.

<sup>2</sup> Patout, *Romans Interpreted by Early Christian Commentators*, 221–22.

<sup>3</sup> Patout, *Romans Interpreted by Early Christian Commentators*, 221.

<sup>4</sup> Garroway, *Paul's Gentile-Jews*, 139.

<sup>5</sup> Bray, *Romans*, 248.

<sup>6</sup> Bray, *Romans*, 247.

include Gentiles to whom the promises had been transferred. Pseudo Constantinus also focuses on the practice of the faith: “Those who keep the faith of the patriarchs and are therefore reckoned to be of their seed.”<sup>7</sup> He goes on to clarify that Israel does not just consist of those according to the flesh.

In the Medieval Reading of Israel in Romans 9:6b Nicholas of Lyra speaks of the second Ἰσραήλ as a subset within ethnic Israel who has faith in the promise of God that is revealed in Christ. He says that “one truly belongs to Israel through imitation of Abraham’s faith—they are elect and true descendants.”<sup>8</sup> Others like John Colet, Peter Abelard, and William of St. Thierry understand the second Ἰσραήλ to be a group that overlaps with ethnic Israel. Colet speaks in terms of election and being chosen by God’s free will.<sup>9</sup> Abelard says that “those who remain in the worship of one God and imitate the faith of their Father, Jacob. Only they are sons of Israel.”<sup>10</sup> William of Thierry adds that “those who are sons of faith believing in the promise”<sup>11</sup>

In the Reformation era Luther seems to be suggesting that the second Ἰσραήλ in 9:6b is a subset within ethnic Israel. In his commentary on the passage he says, “The promise was given to others of the same blood because they were born of the Spirit.”<sup>12</sup>

In the 17th–19th centuries Sanday and Headlam and Godet both understand the second Ἰσραήλ as consisting of Jews. Sanday and Headlam are adamant that Paul is not trying to replace

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<sup>7</sup> Bray, *Romans*, 247–48.

<sup>8</sup> Levy, Krey, and Ryan, *Romans*, 222.

<sup>9</sup> John Colet, *Exposition of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans* trans. J.H. Lupton (Ridgewood: Gregg, 1873), 39.

<sup>10</sup> Peter Abelard, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* Fathers of the Church Medieval Continuation 12 trans. Steven Cartwright (Washington DC: Catholic Univ. of American Press, 2011), 288.

<sup>11</sup> William of St. Thierry, *Exposition on the Epistle to the Romans* Cistercian Fathers Series 27 trans. John Baptist Hasbrouck (Kalamazoo: Cistercian, 1980), 185.

<sup>12</sup> Luther, *Romans*, 137.

Israel with the church but at the same time speak of a “spiritual Israel as seen in Gal 6:16.”<sup>13</sup>

Godet speaks of the elect of Israel and uses the remnant language used in Rom 9–11.<sup>14</sup> Haldane believes the second Ἰσραήλ is a group that overlaps ethnic Israel. He puts a great deal of emphasis on the sovereignty of God and sees a one-to-one comparison in 9:6b with the phrase ‘children of promise’ in 9:8.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, 240.

<sup>14</sup> Frederic Godet, *Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans* ed. T.W. Chambers (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1977), 145.

<sup>15</sup> Robert Haldane, *Expositions of the Epistle to the Romans: With Remarks on the Commentaries of Dr. MacKnight, Moses Stuart, and Professor Tholuck* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1988), 457.

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