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THE PARENTHESIS OF PAUL ON THE STATUS OF ISRAEL
IN ROMANS NINE TO ELEVEN

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of New Testament Theology
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Sacred Theology

by
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CHAPTER I

NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

During the past few years and months, especially during the time the new Zionist state of Israel was being formed, much discussion has arisen regarding an age-old problem of an age-old people. Where do these people who have been the modern heirs of a tradition some thousands of years old fit into present-day civilization? However, for the Church, these external and secular happenings have served as a reminder of an even greater problem, namely, where does this people fit in spiritually? What is to happen to this tribe from which the Redeemer Himself stemmed? And this is no new problem, but one which goes back centuries, to the time of Christ Himself, of whom the apostle John wrote, "He came unto His own and His own received Him not."

It was a problem which plagued the apostle Paul, perhaps more than any other New Testament writer, since he had to face it more personally and directly than any of the other early apostles. And being a man of deep personal sentiment, it was something which cut into his heart deeply. This thesis will attempt to deal with this problem on the

basis of Romans 9-11, where the apostle expresses himself most fully concerning it.

Only a quick glance is needed to see that with chapter nine Paul begins a new major section of his letter to the Romans. For although he ended the previous chapter in a blaze of confidence in Christ, spoken from a heart bursting with joy, the tone of chapter nine is one of deep sorrow. Two questions pose themselves as we look at this section as a whole. What is its relation to the rest of the book? And, what do these chapters mean in themselves? As Nygren puts it: Beside the difficulty of seeing the place of this part in the total message of the letter has been the difficulty in deciding what these chapters are.¹

To take up the first question in regard to the relation of Chapters 9-11 to the rest of the book, we find several opinions. Some feel that the connection is very close. This school feels that Paul here takes up a problem of which he has been aware for some time as is evidenced by the first part of the book, viz., ch. 1:16; 2:9-10; 2:17. In fact in 3:1 he almost begins to discuss the problem directly, only to postpone it until he has finished his main argument. Hence we find men such as Lenski writing:

¹Anders Nygren, Commentary on Romans (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1949), p. 354.

This section of Romans has been regarded as an appendix to the doctrinal discussion that precedes, and again it has been considered the main portion of the epistle to which all of the preceding is preliminary. Another view wonders why Paul inserted these chapters. These three chapters constitute an integral and a natural part of the great theme, God's Righteousness by Faith Alone. They do not present "The Unbelief of the Jewish People," or, "The problem of Jewish Unbelief." There is far more in them; for one thing, also the faith of the Gentiles. Nor are these two placed side by side in a sort of contrast. Paul goes far deeper.²

Nygren too, feels that chapters 9-11 are closely related to what has gone before. He states:

Because of what has been said we can affirm that chapters 9-11 are by no means to be regarded as a digression or a chance appendix which lacks organic connection with the main message of the letter, and fulfill a very definite and necessary function in its total context.³

Over against this school, which goes so far as to feel it unlikely that even a night intervened between the writing of chapters eight and nine,⁴ there is another group of scholars who feel that the section is something of an appendix, tacked on, as it were, having no real connection with the preceding chapter. Dodd, for example looks upon the section as something of a sermon of Paul's when he states:

²R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans (Columbus: Wartburg Press, 1945), p. 579.

³Nygren, op. cit., p. 357.

⁴Lenski, op. cit., p. 581.

Chaps. ix.-xi., on the other hand, have a beginning and a close appropriate to a sermon, and the preaching tone is maintained all through. It is the kind of sermon that Paul must often have had occasion to deliver, in defining his attitude to what we may call the Jewish question. It is quite possible that he kept by him a MS. of such a sermon, for use as occasion demanded, and inserted it here. As we have seen, the epistle could be read without any sense of a gap if these chapters were omitted.⁵

It is true that Paul faced this "Jewish question" often in his ministry and had to deal with it on countless occasions, but the earnest tone of vv. 1-5 of chapter nine seems to indicate a fresh writing on the question rather than the inclusion of something he had written earlier. As to the point of Dodd's last sentence, namely, that these chapters could be omitted without leaving a gap in the Epistle, it will become clearer what is meant as we consider their content.

There have been three chief interpretations of these chapters as Nygren mentions in his work:

Beside the difficulty of seeing the place of this part in the total message of the letter has been the difficulty in deciding what these chapters are. What does Paul intend to do in them? Let it suffice to recall here three familiar answers to this question. (1) It is said that Paul sets forth his doctrine of predestination in these chapters. Some have simply called this part of the epistle the locus classicus de praedestinatione. (2) These chapters have been said to present Paul's theodicy.

⁵C. H. Dodd, "The Epistle of Paul to the Romans," Moffat New Testament Commentary (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1932), p. 149.

(3) And they have been said to contain his philosophy of history.⁶

Certainly there are elements in these chapters which deal with the matter of predestination, but the section as a whole can hardly be called the locus classicus, which is rather 8:28-30. Brunner, for example, shows us that even chapter nine can hardly be claimed as dealing mainly with predestination.

Es ist nun aber von entscheidender Bedeutung, sich den Zusammenhang dieses Kapitels mit den zwei folgenden klar zu machen. Sie handeln nicht von Heil und Unheil, von Seligkeit und Verdammnis des Einzelnen, sondern vom Schicksal Israels. Schon der Gesichtspunkt ist also ein ganz anderer als der der Prädestinationslehre. Das probandum ist nicht ein doppelter Ratschluss, sondern einerseits der göttlichen Verheissungen an Israel trotz der Verstockung des empirischen jetzigen Judentums; andererseits der Grund der Fehlentwicklung in Israel, nämlich, von Menschen aus gesehen die Selbstgerechtigkeit Israels statt der Anerkennung der Christus gnade, von Gott aus: der übergreifende Erlösungsplan Gottes, dem auch die vorläufige Verwerfung Israels dienen muss. Das sieht alles nach etwas ganz anderem aus als nach einer Lehre von einem doppelten Dekret, durch das einem numberus electorum ein numberus reprobatorum von Ewigkeit gegenübersteht.⁷

Others have felt these chapters to be a theodicy; so

Godet:

The domain upon which the apostle here enters in one of the most difficult and profound which can be presented to the mind of man. It is that of theodicy, or the justification of the divine government in the course of human affairs. But he does not enter on it

⁶Nygren, op. cit., p. 354

⁷Emil Brunner, Die Christliche Lehre Von Gott (Zürich: Zwingli-Verlag, 1946), pp. 355-356.

as a philosopher, and in its totality; he treats it in relation to a special point, the problem of the lot of Israel, and he does so as a part of his apostolic task.⁸

To call these chapters only a theodicy would be to limit them and their message. In explaining the problem before him Paul does sense the need of a few words which sound like a theodicy, and yet this is not his main purpose as Nygren says:

Paul knows nothing of a theodicy. To defend the action of God before the bar of human reason is utterly alien to him. That would be little better than to dispute with God. The idea of a theodicy belongs in a world of thought wholly different from Paul's. It can never occur to him to call God to account: nor more would he seek to defend God's actions, as if they needed to be defended before men.⁹

Nor is the section only a statement of Paul's philosophy of history as Dodd seems to take it.¹⁰ As Nygren rightly points out, the problem of the rejection of the Jews is of much more concern to Paul than such a view implies. It is certainly more than a "point of departure for a speculation about the philosophy of history."¹¹

What then does this section mean? First of all, it is an integral part of Paul's great purpose in writing the

⁸F. Godet, St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, translated by Rev. A. Cusin (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1883), p. 336.

⁹Nygren, op. cit., pp. 354-355.

¹⁰Dodd, op. cit., pp. 148-150.

¹¹Nygren, op. cit., p. 355.

book of Romans, namely, to demonstrate that righteousness comes by faith alone. To divorce the section from this great background would be to rob it of much of its significance. For as Paul has been writing his epistle, the problem of chapters nine to eleven has been in the back of his mind continually, waiting only for the proper moment to be expressed. And what was that problem? It was the problem of his own people, Israel. As Stoeckhardt writes:

In den ersten Sätzen des neuen Abschnitts tritt schon das neue Thema, das jetzt ausgeführt werden soll, deutlich hervor. Der apostel will jetzt von Israel sagen und dem schweren Geschick, das Israel betroffen hat. Nachdem er seine eigentliche Lehrdarlegung abgeschlossen hat, lässt er eine Ausführung geschichtlichen Inhalts folgen.¹²

In the various chapters Paul had described all that Christ had done for and in the Christian and what that meant. He had shown what a blessing this was. Yet now, even while these joyful thoughts are still in his mind, a deep sadness comes over him, because one people seems to be excluded from all these blessings, and not some distant, unknown people, but his very own brothers of Israel. Israel, from whom Christ Himself had come, seems to have been rejected by God. And that is what Paul wants to discuss in chapter nine to eleven. He wants to show that Israel was not cast aside by the Lord. The necessity of doing this

¹²George Stoeckhardt, Brief Pauli an die Römer (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1907), p. 418.

is clear, for if this problem is not answered, all that he has written previously will stand in a dubious light.

We find Paul discusses this problem along three major lines of argument.

1. (9:6-29) God has not rejected the true Israel, which is quite a different thing from the outward Israel. Moreover, God cannot be pushed into the molds of finite human thought, of a certain nature. God's election depends on His free choice which is altogether just.

2. (9:30-10:21) Israel has only herself to blame for her rejection. God's promises are not forced on a nation. Instead of depending on the righteousness of Christ, the Israelites have chosen rather to depend on their own insufficient righteousness of works.

3. (11:1-36) Since God really has not rejected the true, spiritual Israel, it shall be saved. And even in the rejection of the physical Israel, God has His own purposes. For one, this has resulted in the salvation of the Gentiles. And this conversion of the Gentiles, in turn, will react favorably on the Jews. Hence these verses are something of a consolation concluding finally with a doxology to God.

CHAPTER II

PAUL'S INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM

9:1-5 The Great Sorrow in the Heart of Paul as He
Considers the Unbelief of His Brothers,
the Jews.

The apostle begins his new discourse with the earnest words *Ἀλήθειαν λέγω ἐν Χριστῷ*. He makes this statement in order to assure his readers that he takes up this subject from a very personal point of view. Some may have thought that since he declared himself to be the bearer of the Gospel to the Gentiles that he no longer was interested in the Jews, or was writing about them now from a prejudiced position. But Paul does not want anything which even resembles this line of thinking to be in the minds of his readers and so he affirms that what he is about to say is as true as if Christ Himself would say it. And in order to make this point even clearer in the minds of his readers he intensifies it by saying that his conscience, guided by the Holy Spirit, will testify to the truth of his words. As Lenski writes:

Why so strong an assurance that Paul is speaking the truth when he tells about his sorrow and his pain? Because this is a matter of Paul's inner personal life with which the Romans had no contact. Again, because,

when one forsakes a connection he usually turns severely against it, and Paul wants to exclude such an impression when he now tells the Romans, as he is compelled to do, that the Jews as a nation are rejected by God.¹

Paul states that he has a great sorrow and an unceasing anguish, the most intense sorrow that a man could possibly experience. In fact Paul tells us in verse three that if he could be a castaway for the sake of his brothers he would gladly choose that role. The two important words here are *ἠύχουην* and *ἀνάθεμα*. Regarding the former Godet tells us that "The imperfect indicative *ἠύχουην*, literally, I was wishing, has in Greek the force of throwing this wish into the past, and into a past which remains always unfinished, so that this expression takes away from the wish all possibility of realization."²

Kittel has the following to say:

ἠύχουην sagt Paulus von seinem Wunsche, das Beste, was er hat, sein neues Leben ἐν Χριστῷ, für Eingehen seiner Volksgenossen zum Heil dahinzugeben R 9,3. Dieser Wunsch findet seine Schranke darin, dass Gottes Gnade nicht zum Tauschobjekt werden kann. Er ist nichts als ein starker Ausdruck dafür, wie sehr Paulus

¹R. C.H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans (Columbus: Wartburg Press, 1945), p. 581.

²F. Godet, St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, translated by Rev. A. Cusin (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1883), p. 339.

persönlich unter dem Ungehorsam seines Volkes leidet.³

Paul states that the object of his wish would be the possibility of his being ἀνάθεμα for his fellow countrymen. ἀνάθεμα is here the equivalent of the Hebrew $\square \gamma \Pi$ used in Deut. 7:26 and Josh. 7:12, meaning that which is put under the ban and irrevocably devoted to destruction. Some have considered this remark of the apostle to be highly unethical. But such a view misses entirely the real import of the words, namely, the great personal sorrow and pain of Paul.⁴

The wish expressed here by Paul was of the deepest nature, one which came from his inmost heart. It was a similar feeling which urged Moses to say in Ex. 32:32, "Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin --; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written." Paul's statement, however, is even more profound as Denney puts it:

Moses identified himself with his people, and if they cannot be saved would perish with them; Paul

³Heinrich Greeven, "Ἐύχουμαι," Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament, edited by Gerhard Kittel (Stuttgart: Verlag von W. Kohlhammer, c. 1933), II, 776.

⁴For a very interesting and detailed discussion of the word ἀνάθεμα, cf. an article by W. Hersey Davis in The Review and Expositor, XXXI, 205-207.

could find it in his heart, were it possible, to perish for them.⁵

This sorrow and pain is explained to a degree in verse four. Here Paul lists the special privileges of his people, privileges which gave them a unique position among all the nations of the world. He says first that they are

Ἰσραηλιταί, of which Denney writes:

Israelites is not the national but the theocratic name; it expresses the spiritual prerogative of the nation, cf. 2 Cor. 11:22, Gal. 6:16.⁶

Already to Abraham God had promised that to his descendants he would grant special spiritual blessings. That is what Paul is thinking of when he calls them Ἰσραηλιταί .

But to them belongs also ἡ υἰοθεσία, the adoption. This sonship was not the Christian sonship of the New Testament, but that which is referred to in such passages as Exodus 4:22; Hosea 11:1. As Meyer writes:

They are those adopted by God into the place of children which must of course be understood, not in the Christian (chap. viii.) but in the old theocratic sense, of their adoption, in contradistinction to all Gentile peoples, to be the people of God, whose Father is God.⁷

⁵James Denney, "St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans," The Expositor's Greek Testament, edited by W. Robertson Nicoll (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., n. d.), II, 657.

⁶Denney, op. cit., p. 657.

⁷Heinrich A. W. Meyer, "Epistle to the Romans," Meyer's Commentary on the New Testament, edited by Heinrich Meyer and translated by John C. Moore (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1884), V, 359.

Hodge amplifies on this a bit:

As Paul is speaking here of the external or natural Israel, the adoption or sonship which pertained to them, as such, must be external also, and is very different from that which he had spoken of in the preceding chapter. They were the sons of God, i.e. the objects of his peculiar favor, selected from the nations of the earth to be the recipients of peculiar blessings, and to stand in a peculiar relation to God.⁸

However, in addition to the *ἰσθραήλ* Israel was also the possessor of *ἡ δόξα* which as Denney states refers to something definite, like the pillar of cloud and fire, the *אֵלֹהִים אֲנִי יְהוָה* of the Old Testament, or the *אֵלֹהִים אֲנִי יְהוָה* of later Jewish theology.⁹ Some parallel uses of *δόξα* in the New Testament are to be found in Hebrews 9:5 and Acts 7:2. Meyer calls *ἡ δόξα* "the symbolically visible essential communion of God, as it was manifested in the wilderness as a pillar of cloud and fire, and over the ark of the covenant."¹⁰

Israel was the possessor of *αἱ διαθήκαι* too. These were the covenants which God had made with His people on various occasions. These covenants began with Abraham and extended also to the patriarchs. Stoeckhardt writes of them:

⁸Charles Hodge, A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans (New York: Hodder & Stoughton, George H. Doran Company, 1886), pp. 469-470.

⁹Denney, op. cit., p. 657.

¹⁰Meyer, op. cit., p. 359.

Gott hatte schon mit den Patriarchen, und zwar wiederholt, einen förmlichen Bund abgeschlossen und ihnen und ihren Nachkommen fest zugesagt, dass er ihr Gott sein werde. Israel hatte die Gesetzgebung, das vom Sinai herab feierlich offenbarte Gesetz und in dem offenbarten Gesetz die rechte Gestalt des Willens Gottes, während die Heiden in den Ueberbleibseln des Naturgesetzes nur eine unvollkommene Erkenntniss des göttlichen Willens besaßen.¹¹

These covenants are referred to in several books of the Apocrypha, namely Wisd. 18:22; Ecclus. 44:11; and 2 Macc. 8:15.

Israel had the *νομοθεσία* also, as referred to in the quotation of Stoeckhardt just given. They alone had been given the special revelation of God's Law at Mt. Sinai, and from this followed yet another peculiar privilege of theirs, *ἡ λατρεία*, the cultus of the tabernacle and the temple, the only true and legitimate cultus in the world.

In addition to these, *αἱ ἐπαγγελίαι* belonged to the Israelites. These were the many Messianic prophecies around which the major portion of Jewish thought revolved at the time of Christ. To Israel belonged also the great patriarchs, those giants of faith, to whom the promises of God were first given. But the greatest prerogative of the Jewish people was the fact that from them Christ came according to His human nature, "as concerning the flesh." This verse has generally been interpreted two ways. Briefly, one group of scholars feel that the latter part

¹¹George Stoeckhardt, Brief Pauli an die Römer (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1907), p. 418.

of the verse is a relative clause referring back to Christ and the other group considers it to be a doxology to God in general. The first view given has been the traditional one, as Stoeckhardt tells us:

Diese Fassung findet sich bei allen Kirchenvätern, bei den älteren katholischen und protestantischen Theologen und fast sämtlichen neueren Exegeten, z. b. Michaelis, Koppe, Tholuck, Flatt, Usteri, Olshausen, Maier, Beck, Gass, Bisping, Krummacher, Jathe, Jahn, Hodge, Philippi, Thomasius, Hofmann, Delitsch, Ebrard, Selbst Ritschl, Frank, Godet, Schmidt, Weiss, Luthardt, Schulz.¹²

Of the modern school we have Althaus agreeing with this view, more or less:

Der Satz ist eine Aussage über Christus. Gewiss behandelt Paulus das Geheimnis der "Gottheit Christi" immer mit grosser Zurückhaltung. Aber dass er, trotz aller sonstigen Unterscheidung, den Gottesnamen auf Christus so zu übertragen vermag, ist von seinem Christus-Glauben her nicht überraschend: Christus ist für Paulus ja der "Herr", d.h. er tut Gottes Werk. Christus richtet, Christus übt vorerst das göttliche Weltregiment aus (1 Kor. 15:25). Christus eignet für Paulus die ganze Herrlichkeit und Majestät des ewigen Gottes. Paulus betet zu Christus.¹³

Grammatically this view is also well-founded, since naturally applies to what precedes. It is also a very natural antithesis suggested by *κατὰ σάρκα*.

Over against this view is the one which considers these words to be a doxology to God. The basis for this

¹²Stoeckhardt, op. cit., p. 419.

¹³Paul Althaus, "Der Brief an die Römer", Das Neue Testament Deutsch, edited by Paul Althaus and Johannes Behn (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1949), VI, 85.

opinion is that the first interpretation does not fit in with Paul's Christology. For example Meyer states:

Yet Paul has never used the express $\Theta\epsilon\omicron\varsigma$ of Christ, since he has not adopted, like John, the Alexandrian form of conceiving and setting forth the divine essence of Christ, but has adhered to the popular concrete, strictly monotheistic terminology, not modified by philosophical speculation even for the designation of Christ; and he always accurately distinguishes God and Christ.¹⁴

Or again:

Besides the insuperable difficulty would be introduced, that there Christ would be called not merely and simply $\Theta\epsilon\omicron\varsigma$, but even God over all, and consequently would be designated as $\Theta\epsilon\omicron\varsigma \Pi\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\kappa\rho\acute{\alpha}\tau\omicron\rho$, which is absolutely incompatible with the entire view of the N. T. as to the dependence of the Son on the Father.¹⁵

Dodd concurs with Meyer in this view. However a number of things have to be said about this interpretation. First there are a number of passages in the New Testament in which Paul does equate Christ with God, namely, 2 Thess. 1:12, Eph. 5:5, and especially Phil. 2:9-11. The Pastoral Epistles also refer to Christ as God, but Meyer again thinks this "would be one of the signs of a post-apostolic epoch" and so calls such passages as Titus 2:13 "specious."

¹⁴Meyer, op. cit., pp. 361-362.

¹⁵Ibid.

However there are several other objections to this view. As has been stated it is a rather free use of grammar to separate the $\bar{\omega} \bar{\nu}$ from what precedes. In addition if this were a doxology the position of $\epsilon\acute{\upsilon}\lambda\omicron\gamma\eta\tau\acute{o}\varsigma$ would be unparalleled in a doxology. $\epsilon\acute{\upsilon}\lambda\omicron\gamma\eta\tau\acute{o}\varsigma$ begins all doxologies to God except where $\gamma\acute{\epsilon}\nu\omicron\iota\tau\omicron \epsilon\acute{\iota}\eta$ or $\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\tau\omega$ precedes. In only one instance does the LXX fail to observe this, namely in Ps. 68, 19, and here it is a mistranslation, as pointed out by Lenski. $\sigma\tau \dot{\iota} \sigma\tau \dot{?}$
 $\dot{\iota} \dot{\iota} \dot{\iota} \dot{\iota}$ is used more than thirty times in the Old Testament.

Whether the first interpretation is accepted or not in no way influences the doctrine of the deity of Christ. That is certainly brought out in any number of other references in the New Testament. Lenski states the net result correctly when he says:

The two sides are not balanced or on a par as far as dogmatics are concerned, so that the orthodox find their orthodoxy in this passage, and the unorthodox their unorthodoxy. In the case of the latter very much is at stake; in the case of the former nothing whatever is at stake. If this is a doxology to the Father, we are happy to accept it; but if this proves to be a description of Christ's deity, then every denial of that deity is once more branded as false.¹⁶

¹⁶Lenski, op. cit., p. 586.

CHAPTER III

9:6-29 THE TRUE ISRAEL VERSUS THE OUTWARD ISRAEL.
GOD'S ELECTION DEPENDS ON HIS FREE CHOICE
WHICH IS NOT UNJUST.

A. 9:6-13 God's Word Has Not Fallen Because the
True Israel is Not the Nation of Israel.
Mere Physical Descent does not make a
Person a True Israelite.

With verse six Paul once more returns to the specific problem of the Jews and their rejection of God. He answers a question which he sees raised in the minds of many of his listeners and readers, namely, "Does not this fact prove that God's Word has fallen from its position of authority?" "Here God has given all these promises in His Word, as in Jeremiah 23:6, to the effect that Israel would be blessed through the Messiah, and now they have rejected Him." "Certainly this proves those promises to have been empty." Paul answers these remarks with a definite "No, it is not that the Word of God has fallen from its high position." "First of all we must establish the true Israel. Just because a man happens to be a member of the nation of Israel does not mean that he is part of the true Israel to whom God made these promises." This is nothing more than an application of the words of Christ, "That which is born of

flesh is flesh." But these words are important in that they form part of the context for the later study of chapter eleven, verse twenty-six. Paul very carefully distinguishes between the genuine, true, spiritual Israelites and those who externally happen to be the descendants of Abraham.

This concept that all Israelites per se belonged to that group which received the promises of God was one of the leading errors in the Jewish thinking of Paul's and Christ's day. Hence the Apostle amplifies his line of thought with further proof. As Nygren says, "Since they were the children of Abraham, they held that the promises were theirs as a matter of course."¹ However, they should not have made such a mistake. From the very beginning, even in the life of Abraham himself, God had made this point clear when he told Abraham, ἐν Ἰσαὰκ

κληθήσεται σοι σπέρμα. Denney states:

God from the very first made a distinction here, and definitely announced that the seed of Abraham to which the promise belonged should come in the line of Isaac -- not of Ishmael, though he also could call Abraham father.²

Hence the promises of God did not rest on all the natural

¹Anders Nygren, Commentary on Romans (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1949), p. 362.

²James Denney, "St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans," The Expositor's Greek Testament, edited by W. Robertson Nicoll (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., n. d.), II, 659.

descendants of Abraham, but only on those whom God chose. Paul then goes on to tell us who the true children of Abraham really are. Not those who are Abraham's children according to the flesh are to be reckoned as children of God, but only those are to be considered such who are the children of promise, who have been elected by God and who believe in Him. Such thinking was entirely foreign to the Jews, even as it is to men generally. Nygren writes:

Only to the spiritual Israel were the promises given. But now Israel according to the flesh seeks to appropriate the promises and use them as the basis of claims on God. They hold defiantly that they belong to the peculiar people, because they are children of Abraham. But Paul does not admit that. Against men's claims he sets God's sovereignty. Men think that they can use God's promises as basis for claims on God; they think they can thus obligate God. But instead, God's sovereignty is manifest in the very promises; they show that He is above all human claims.³

Paul goes on to show that this did not only happen in the first generation with Isaac and Ishmael, but even in the next generation, thus indicating the real nature of the case. In the case of Jacob and Esau the example is most striking. Both of them had the same father and mother, were in fact twins born at the same time, and yet, even before they had been delivered only one was elected by God to be the child of promise. Some may have thought that the fact that Ishmael was not the son of a free woman influ-

³Nygren, op. cit., p. 362.

enced God's decision in that case. But here we have a case in which the two people involved were exactly alike in every respect regarding their status. Yet God chooses one, not the other. As Nygren puts it:

Though they were so alike, the outcome for each was so different that Scripture says "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated" (cf. Mal. 1:2f).⁴

The import of this line of thought is given us by Dodd when he comments:

Thus, if descent from Abraham gives a title to the "inheritance," Jew and Edomite are on the same footing. No Jew could admit this.⁵

Or as Godet writes:

But could Isaac and his race, though proceeding from Abraham and that through the intervention of a divine factor, be regarded without any other condition as real children of God? Evidently not; for if the faith of Abraham himself ceased to belong to them, they became again a purely carnal seed. It must then be foreseen that the same law of exclusion which had been applied to Ishmael, in favor of Isaac, would anew assert its right even within the posterity of the latter. This is what came about immediately, as is seen in the second example quoted by the apostle, that of Esau and Jacob.⁶

One of the keywords in this entire section, as has been noted is ἐπαγγελία, "promise." It was because

⁴Nygren, op. cit., p. 363. ἐμίσησα can also be translated correctly as "loved less." cf. Matthew 6:24; Luke 14:26.

⁵C. H. Dodd, "The Epistle of Paul to the Romans," Moffat New Testament Commentary (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1932), p. 156.

⁶F. Godet, St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, translated by Rev. A. Cusin (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1883), p. 348.

the Jews did not understand the true nature of the promises of God that they rejected Christ. First of all they did not understand who were exactly children of promise, that is not everybody, but only those whom God had elected to this position. And even as God chose to differentiate between the children of Abraham and Isaac, even so he differentiates yet today. Hence all claims to any "rights" are not valid. Denney declares:

Claims as of right, therefore, made against God, are futile, whether they are based on descent or on works. There is no way in which they can be established; and as we have just seen, God acts in entire disregard of them.....No Jewish birth, no legal works, can give a man a claim which God is bound to honor; and no man urging such claims can say that God's word has become of no effect though his claims are disallowed, and he gets no part in the inheritance of God's people.

The point to be noted here then is that the promises of God are in no way dependent upon man, as far as their validity is concerned. They are given by the sovereign God when and where He pleases and upon whom He pleases. Man has nothing to do with this bestowal. However, it must not be overlooked that the central thought of this paragraph is: mere physical descent does not make a person a true Israelite.

But the Jews misunderstood the promises of God in yet another way, in that they failed to realize that these promises of God were grasped only by faith, and not by an auto-

⁷Denney, op. cit., p. 660.

matic operation such as mere heredity. Paul has emphasized this point many times before, for example, in Romans 4:16 where we are told that the promise belongs to those who possess faith, and especially also in Galations 3. The promises of God can only be received through faith. This is the factor which determines whether any person is a true child of God, as Paul writes in verse eight. Lenski puts it aptly when he writes, "We are children of the promise when this promise leads us to believe what it promises."⁸

We must be careful not to equate the Israelites mentioned by Paul in verse four with the true Israelites. Nor can we restrict the prerogatives mentioned there to only the true children of promise. Those prerogatives belonged to the entire theocratic Israel. As Stoeckhardt aptly writes:

Es ist verkehrt, wenn man die V. 1-5 genannten Prerogativen Israels auf die gläubigen, frommen Israeliten restringiert. Diese sind vielmehr characteristica eben dieses Volks, Gesamt-Israels. Von dem Israel nach dem Fleisch, welches all leiblichen Nachkommen Abrahams, Isaaks, Jacobs umfasst, ist nun aber das Israel nach dem Geist wohl zu unterscheiden.⁹

⁸R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans (Columbus: Wartburg Press, 1945), p. 579.

⁹George Stoeckhardt, Brief Pauli an die Römer (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1907), p. 426.

Consequently we see that Paul in these verses makes a very clear distinction between the true Israel (the children of promise) and the physical Israel (all the rest). The danger of misinterpreting these verses arises when these distinctions are blurred or ignored. Again Stoeckhardt states the problem concisely when he writes:

Die Verheissung galt allen Israeliten, sofern der verheissene Christus aus Israel Fleisch und Blut annehmen sollte und angenommen hat, und sofern in der Verheissung und später in der Predigt des Evangeliums allen Israeliten das Heil angeboten wurde. Die eigentlichen Kinder der Verheissung sind aber nur diejenigen Israeliten, in deren Herzen auch die Verheissung haftet, welche die Verheissung und damit auch das Heil in Christo im Glauben sich Zugesignet haben.¹⁰

¹⁰Stoeckhardt, op. cit., pp. 426-27.

B. 9:14-18 God Certainly is Not Unjust in His Actions. Rather He is the Essence of Mercy, Rejecting Only Those Who have Hardened Themselves to His Mercy.

These verses begin a different line of thought for Paul in which he discusses the sovereignty of God and the divine will in the plan of salvation. He begins by asking the logical question which must arise from his thoughts in the preceding verses, namely, "Doesn't this make God's actions unjust? Men judge each other by their deeds, but now we are told God does not depend upon deeds, but performs his will independently." Or as Sanday and Headlam put it:

If what you say is true that God rejects one and accepts another apart from either privilege of birth or human merit, is not His conduct arbitrary and unjust?¹¹

Paul will have none of this. *μή γένοιτο* he says emphatically.¹² There are two implications in his answer. First of all he absolutely casts out any thought of unrighteousness in connection with God. Such a thought would

¹¹William Sanday and Arthur Headlam, "The Epistle to the Romans," International Critical Commentary, edited by Samuel Driver, Alfred Plummer and Charles Briggs (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1896), p. 251.

¹²This strong answer of Paul's rules out the interesting view of Origen regarding verses 14-18. The early church fathers placed these verses into the mouth of a possible objector. Hence not Paul, but his opponents would speak them. However, the *μή γένοιτο* makes this interpretation rather untenable.

fill him with shuddering. At various places in the epistle, viz. 3:26, he has spoken of God's justice, and now to speak of ἀδικία in God would be impossible. The second implication is more far-reaching, for it takes in the validity of the question itself, whether any man can presume to know by what standards he can call God righteous or unrighteous. Nygren writes:

We get the impression that the problem of theodicy does not even exist for him (Paul) -- and that for good reasons. For there is a basic fault in all that concerns theodicy: it measures God by human standards.¹³

When God has done something or decreed something, man cannot judge the right or wrong of those acts or words. Hence, Paul, more or less, disallows the question and takes up the problem from the only objective position, namely, that of God. He shows that God alone is sovereign in all that he does. Already hundreds of years ago in his dealings with Moses this fact is borne out. The mention of Moses is significant. For certainly, he, if anyone, would be worthy of earning God's mercy, yet even to him God said, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." Lenski writes:

This is not an attempt to tone down, to excuse, to make apology; this is the very opposite, a statement that is intended to be extreme to the very point of apparent injustice.¹⁴

¹³Nygren, op. cit., p. 365.

¹⁴Lenski, op. cit., p. 607.

One value of the reference by Paul is that it demonstrates how God makes His decisions. None of them in any way are influenced by human factors. Denney bears this out: "The point is that in showing mercy God is determined by nothing outside of His mercy itself."¹⁵ And Lenski also says:

The true sovereignty in connection with God's mercy and pity is that he extends it to whomever he will, unhampered, unrestricted by limits that men may set up, undisturbed by charges of injustice that men's foolish reasoning may prefer. In this blessed sovereignty he shapes what he will do so that the sweet purpose of mercy and of pity will be attained to the utmost among men.¹⁶

Thus God must be thought first of all and above all as sovereign in everything He does. This sovereignty means that even if He would act arbitrarily, according to human thinking, man still could not complain, since God is sovereign. But, of course, God cannot even rightly be accused of injustice by our own frail standards, for His mercy is seen at every turn. "Surely then there has been no injustice but only mercy," Sanday concludes.¹⁷

Paul himself continues with this conclusion in reference to the portion of Scripture which he quoted. The question is then not what man wills or how he operates, but

¹⁵Denney, op. cit., p. 662.

¹⁶Lenski, op. cit., p. 609.

¹⁷Sanday and Headlam, op. cit., p. 252.

solely the mercy of God. Stoeckhardt sums it up thus:

Das Subject, das der Apostel im Sinn hat, ist offenbar die göttliche Begnadigung. Dieselbe ist in keiner Weise von des Menschen Streben und angelegentlichem Bemühen, sondern lediglich von Gott, Gottes Erbarmen abhängig.¹⁸

However in the next two verses, 17-18, Paul brings in an example of how this principal works which causes many to stumble. In these verses Paul brings up the subject of Pharaoh, thinking of him probably in connection with his reference to Moses. He states that God "raised up" Pharaoh to manifest His power and glorify His name in and through the hardening of Pharaoh's heart. There are several considerations which must be kept in mind as we deal with these verses. One of the most important is determining the true nature of what is meant by σκληρύνει. When God says in verse eighteen that He will harden the hearts of those whom He will, it does not mean that He is the author of unbelief as well as belief, of damnation as well as salvation. The "hardening" mentioned here cannot be equated with sin in general as many men have treated it who say that all unbelieving sinners have been "hardened" in that condition. The hardening referred to here is the special sin which knowingly rejects the grace of God and the Holy Spirit repeatedly and without reason. When God hardened Pharaoh's heart, it was only after Pharaoh had done this

¹⁸Stoeckhardt, op. cit., p. 434.

already. This is vital, as Godet shows, "But what must not be forgotten, and what appears distinctly from the whole narrative, is, that Pharaoh's hardening was at first his own act."¹⁹ In the account given us in Exodus it is stated that Pharaoh went completely against his own better knowledge, that of his wise men as well as that of Moses and Aaron, and hardened his heart some five times before God eventually set the concrete which Pharaoh himself had mixed. It is true that God uses this hardening for his own purposes, but that is an entirely different matter. Paul quotes Exodus 9:16 where God Himself states this fact. Stoeckhardt writes, "Diese Bosheit, dieser Ungehorsam war nicht von Gott. Das Böse kommt nicht von Gott. Wohl aber macht Gott das Böse, das er hasst, seinen Zwecken dienstbar und braucht es zu seines Namens Ehre."²⁰ Godet gives a similar interpretation:

He (Pharaoh) has rejected salvation for himself, he was free to do so; but he cannot prevent God from now making use of him and of his ruin to advance the salvation of others. From being the end, he is degraded to the rank of means.²¹

Unfortunately this distinction between hardening and sin in general has often been overlooked, and these verses

¹⁹Godet, op. cit., p. 355.

²⁰Stoeckhardt, op. cit., p. 436.

²¹Godet, op. cit., p. 355.

have been acclaimed as teaching a double predestination. Some writers state it more baldly than others, but nevertheless, somehow God is made responsible for the rejection of sinners, and not their sin. For example we find such statements as the following by Denney:

The two modes in which God acts upon man are showing mercy and hardening, and it depends upon God's will in which of these two modes He actually does act.²²

Or as Meyer states:

The clear and simple sense of the apostle is, that it depends on the free determination of God's will whether to bless with His saving mercy, or, on the other hand, to put into that spiritual condition, in which a man can be no object of His saving mercy.²³

This seems to be the logical conclusion, no doubt, but as stated before, man's mind cannot operate on the same level as God's. And why He chooses some and not others no one can determine. It is and must remain one of the mysteries of God. What we do know is that God is merciful and wants all sinners to be saved, offering them His grace and mercy, not only once but repeatedly as Lenski tells us:

The door of mercy is not shut at once on the self-hardened so that they crash into the locked door with a bang. We might rush to close it thus. God's mercy closes it gradually and is ready to open it wide again at the least show of repentance in answer

²²Denney, op. cit., p. 662.

²³Heinrich A. W. Meyer, "Epistle to the Romans," Meyer's Commentary on the New Testament, edited by Heinrich Meyer and translated by John C. Moore (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1884), V, 376-377.

To his mercy; and not until all the workings of the
 gradually closing door are utterly in vain does the
 door sink regretfully into its lock.²⁴

²⁴Lenski, op. cit., p. 617.

If it is His will that we should not like Pharaoh, He cannot condemn them for doing so. In other words, a mechanical determinism annihilates morality. And, of course, the objector is right. Paul has driven himself into a position in which he has to deny that God's freedom of action is limited (not now by physical or historical necessity, but) by moral considerations.²⁵

God's analysis of the background for the question is correct, but it can hardly be said that Paul has driven himself

²⁵God's, op. cit., p. 158.

- C. 9:19-21 God Can No More be Made Responsible For the Sinful Condition of Some Men Over Others than a Potter Can be Blamed for Making Pots for Dishonor. The Whole Question is Simply not Valid.

Paul has barely written *οὐ δὲ θέλει σκληρύνει* when he visualizes an opponent coming up with an objection, and he forestalls this objection by answering it at once. It is a question which involves deep things. The line of thought it contains is this: If it is the sovereign God who determines who shall have mercy and who shall be hardened in their sin, how can He find fault with those whom He hardens and complain about them? And if we carry this thought out farther, we would arrive at a logical extreme, namely, the annihilation of all free will in man's life and consequently all morality. Man is reduced to a robot. Some writers have pursued this line of thinking as, for example, Dodd:

If it is His will that men should act like Pharaoh, He cannot condemn them for doing so. In other words, a mechanical determinism annihilates morality. And, of course, the objector is right. Paul has driven himself into a position in which he has to deny that God's freedom of action is limited (not now by physical or historical necessity, but) by moral considerations.²⁵

Dodd's analysis of the background for the question is correct, but it can hardly be said that Paul has driven himself

²⁵Dodd, op. cit., p. 158.

to the extreme position of denying that God operates or must operate by moral considerations. Denney more reservedly writes, that if Moses and Pharaoh both are to be explained the same way then:

The moral interpretation of the world is annulled by the religious one. If God is equally behind the most opposite moral phenomena, then it is open to any one to say, what Paul here anticipates will be said, *τί ἐστὶ μέμφεται*; why does he still find fault? For who withstands his resolve?²⁶

Lenski recognizes the greater implications of this question also as over against those answered in verse thirteen. He states:

These questions involve far more than the one asked in v. 13. For in v. 13 the interrogative particle *μή* implies that, in whatever way the difficulty is solved, such a thing as injustice on the part of God is out of the question; but here the implication is that the victim of God's counsel cannot possibly be blamed by the God who resolved that counsel, the whole blame rests on God who determined that counsel.²⁷

Thus Paul is faced with the most crucial question which will come up in his entire discussion of the sovereignty of God. How does he deal with it? First of all, Paul definitely rejects the implication involved, namely, that man can fathom the depths of God's mind. He uses intensive language such as *μενοῦν γε* and the vocative *ὦ* to indicate the strongness of his feeling. He simply will not allow the question to stand. Denney writes:

²⁶Denney, op. cit., p. 662.

²⁷Lenski, op. cit., p. 618.

Paul, as has been observed above, does not refute, but repels the objection. It is inconsistent, he urges, with the relation of the creature to the Creator.²⁸

Paul takes this stand based on his view of the unlimited divine omnipotence as brought out in the preceding verses and repudiates the question as unwarranted. As Melachthon puts it, "abruptit quaestionem." He then illustrates his attitude by bringing in the relation of the clay to its potter. His answer is essentially the same he gave in verses fourteen to eighteen, but with this figure he wishes to show both the ridiculousness and the presumption evidenced in the objection.

The story was a familiar one to the ears of anyone acquainted with the Old Testament, where both Isaiah and Jeremiah use the picture. Does clay in the hands of a potter rise up and direct the potter as to the shape he shall give the clay? More than that even, does the clay rise up and censure or blame the potter if the potter has chosen to make part of the clay a vessel of honor and another part of the clay a vessel of dishonor? The difficulty of this example introduced by Paul lies in determining exactly where the tertium comparationis is to be found. All those commentators who have either a Reformed background or interpret verses fourteen to eighteen as speaking of a double

²⁸Denney, op. cit., p. 663.

predestination tend to interpret these verses in the same light. The gist of the arguments is as follows then: Man is an influence in the life and actions of God as little as clay is in the hands of the potter. As absolutely as a potter determines what he will do with the clay on his wheel, so also God determines in His will what He will do with men. In other words, it strengthens their view that the sovereignty of God implies not only election to salvation but also election to damnation. Lenski explains:

Calvinism finds its peculiar sovereignty of God in this verse: supralapsarian Calvinism the sovereignty which created some men to fall and to be damned and other men to be saved despite the fall, both according to an absolute decree; infralapsarian Calvinism the sovereignty which from the same fallen lump of humanity decreed and shaped some to salvation and decreed and shaped some to damnation. Such a sovereignty which is contrary to God's very nature as ἀγάπη does not exist.²⁹

Another such example, rather extreme, is given us by

Dodd:

It is a well-worn illustration. But the trouble is that a man is not a pot; he will ask, "Why did you make me like this?" and he will not be bludgeoned into silence. It is the weakest point in the whole epistle....When Paul, normally a clear thinker, becomes obscure, it usually means that he is embarrassed by the position he has taken up. It is surely so here.³⁰

It is evident then, that the interpretation given these

²⁹Lenski, op. cit., p. 620.

³⁰Dodd, op. cit., p. 159.

verses will depend largely upon the view taken earlier regarding verses fourteen to eighteen. Lenski would solve the whole problem by saying that the tertium is only one of blame, namely, that the potter cannot be blamed for turning out one vessel for honor and another for dishonor.³¹ But this is an over-simplification. Stoeckhardt brings out the tertium ably when he says, "Die Meinung ist offenbar die, dass Gott, der Schöpfer, freies Verfügungsrecht über seine Creaturen hat."³²

He emphasizes too, however, that this must not be understood to go beyond that said about verse fourteen.

Godet makes a clarifying statement showing that the point of emphasis is not on the clay but rather on the potter and how he operates with it.

For the potter does not commit the absurdity of holding the clay responsible for its superior or inferior quality. But the question is not in the least about the production of the clay, and consequently about its qualities, but solely about the use which is made of it as he finds it, and adapts it as best he can to the different uses he proposes to himself.³³

Sanday and Headlam hold a view in exact opposition to that expressed by Godet, stating that the idea of creation is definitely implied, and not just merely the adaptation

³¹Lenski, op. cit., p. 620.

³²Stoeckhardt, op. cit., p. 454.

³³Godet, op. cit., p. 357.

made by the potter.³⁴ Yet again here the whole matter will rest on the view taken of verses fourteen to eighteen. For this is merely a carry-through of the attitudes which govern those verses.

A few words should be directed specifically to the "lump" of clay, the *φύραμα*. Some have felt that this was the Jewish nation from whom God elects or rejects people. This view breaks down, however, when we consider later verses twenty-three and twenty-four, where we are told that the vessels of honor are elected from among the Gentiles as well as from among the Jews. Godet defines

φύραμα aptly thus:

The lump therefore represents the whole of humanity, not humanity as God creates it, but in the state in which He finds it every moment when He puts it to the service of His kingdom. This state includes for each individual the whole series of free determinations which have gone to make him what he is.³⁵

Hence we cannot arrive at a clear, completely logical, and all-inclusive answer to the question raised in these verses on the basis of human understanding. Paul says that to do so we should have to be the potter or God Himself. We can only look at the many vessels of honor which he did shape through his mercy, when all by their own actions were destined only to dishonor. To attempt to solve and categor-

³⁴Sanday & Headlam, op. cit., p. 260.

³⁵Godet, op. cit., p. 358.

ize all of God's mysteries can lead us farther away from God rather than to God as Stoeckhardt bears out:

Das ist auch eine Warnung für die aus den Schranken getretene Theologie, welche mit ihr kleinen, düstern Vernunftlicht alle Geheimnisse im Himmel und auf Erden lichten und klären will und Alles, was nicht in ihren engen Rahmen passt, keck und frech hinwegleugnet.³⁶

And we are in good company when we keep this warning in mind. For Luther himself was honest and humble enough to see these dangers, as Stoeckhardt writes:

Es ist genug, wie Luther...bemerkt, dass wir nur das wissen, dass in Gott ein gewisser unerforschlicher Wille ist, so weit geht dir Offenbarung; aber warum und wie weit er wolle, gebührt uns nicht zu fragen und wissen zu wollen, denn das hat Gott uns verborgen.³⁷

³⁶Stoeckhardt, op. cit., p. 455.

³⁷Ibid.

- D. 9:22-29 God Cannot be Called Unjust. His Mercy is Evidenced Not Only by the Fact that He Has Elected Some to Grace, but Also by the Great Patience and Long-suffering He Shows to Those Who Reject Him. And His Mercy has Fallen not Only on Those Elected From the Jews, but Also Upon Certain Ones Elected From the Gentiles.

Beginning with verse twenty-two Paul takes a new turn in his thinking and brings in references from history to show that God certainly cannot be called unjust. The first verses are somewhat difficult to handle grammatically because we have a conditional sentence without the apodosis, and the reader seems to be left in mid-air. One of the important clues, however, is the use we make of *δεῖν*. This participle must be understood as concessive to bring out the full meaning. Then the translation will be as follows:

But if God, although he desired to manifest his wrath and to make known his power, with much patience bore vessels of wrath, ready for destruction, and if he, in order to make known the riches of his glory toward vessels of mercy, whom he has prepared beforehand for glory (us, whom he called, not only from Jews, but also from Gentiles) has done everything required to lead these vessels to the glory designed for them, what shall we say?³⁸

*It further
convinces that
follow this
analysis*

³⁸Fredrich A. Philippi, Commentar über den Brief Pauli an die Römer (Frankfurt a. M.: Verlag von Heyder & Zimmer, 1866), pp. 447-455. This translation of Philippi is introduced here to provide Paul's entire line of thought for the following discussion. The English rendering is by Dr. Arndt.

The German, obgleich, is a parallel as Stoeckhardt notes:

Paulus weist hier nachdrücklich auf das Factum hin, dass God grosse Geduld und Langmuth geübt hat, und zwar obgleich er seinen Zorn erzeigen und seine Macht kundthun wollte. So lösen wir das Participium auf: "obgleich" und nicht "weil er Zorn erzeigen wollte." Denn die Langmuth Gottes scheint mit seinem Zorn nicht zu harmoniren.³⁹

We would note here also the term given by Paul to those upon whom God has exercised this long-suffering. They are called. *σκεύη ὀργῆς*, a term which fits in with the explanation given in the previous pages. For some commentators feel that Paul in verses twenty-two to twenty-nine starts out on an altogether new tack having become completely tied up in his thinking in the previous verses. Denney, for example, states that Paul has plainly reached the point of impasse.⁴⁰ Rather we see also in these verses the same general line of thinking in the mind of Paul as in the previous ones. And that is brought out by *σκεύη ὀργῆς*, "vessels of wrath, who were ripe for destruction." Notice that Paul is very careful and does not say what made them vessels of wrath. He says rather that God had great longsuffering and unusual patience in dealing with these people. That leaves us only one conclusion, namely that they themselves had made themselves such "vessels of wrath." And they had been such for a long time.

³⁹Stoeckhardt, op. cit., p. 457.

⁴⁰Denney, op. cit., p. 664.

The perfect participle bears this out. The thought is given us by Lenski:

Which means that for a long time they have already been ripe for their doom. God should have destroyed them long ago but delayed and delayed. Although they were intolerable to him, he tolerated them, and this required "great longsuffering" indeed.⁴¹

The point, we wish to make, is that here as previously, Paul never thinks of God as hardening the hearts of anyone before they themselves have hardened their hearts. Rather, according to Paul, God shows the greatest amount of patience to these people, who really long ago should have been destroyed. Later, in verse twenty-three when Paul speaks of "vessels of mercy," σκεύη ἐλέους, he adds a very significant phrase, namely, ἃ προητοίμασεν εἰς δόξαν. Here, in describing the elect, "Paul does not shrink from introducing God as subject."⁴² He does not hesitate for a moment to say that in the case of the "vessels of mercy" they were prepared, elected by God from eternity for glory. Hence we have here another instance of how careful Paul is to avoid saying that God has elected some to damnation. God hardens in sin, yes, but only after a previous self-made hardening has taken place.

The relation and meaning of verses twenty-two and twenty-three have been variously explained. Some writers,

⁴¹Lenski, op. cit., p. 623.

⁴²Denney, op. cit., p. 664.

as, for example Godet, believe the two verses to be essentially parallel.⁴³ Such a view does not do justice to the $\epsilon\iota\sigma\eta$ clause however, which depends on $\eta\upsilon\epsilon\chi\kappa\epsilon\upsilon$.

Stoeckhardt gives us a correct analysis when he writes:

Die Construction verlauft ganz ebenmassig, das $\epsilon\iota\sigma\eta$ hangt von $\eta\upsilon\epsilon\chi\kappa\epsilon\upsilon$ ab und die Meinung ist, das Gott die Gefasse des Zorns nicht nur um ihrer selbst willen, sondern auch zu dem Zweck in grosser Geduld getragen hat, damit er den Reichthum seiner Herrlichkeit kundthate an den Gefassen des Erbarmens, $\kappa\alpha\iota \epsilon\iota\sigma\eta \chi\upsilon\omega\rho\iota\sigma\eta \tau\omicron\nu\sigma\ \pi\lambda\omicron\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$
 $\tau\eta\varsigma \delta\omicron\delta\omicron\chi\eta\varsigma \alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon \epsilon\pi\iota \sigma\kappa\epsilon\upsilon\eta \epsilon\lambda\epsilon\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$.⁴⁴

Thus Paul means to say that God has not only shown great mercy to those who were ready for destruction, but that He has done so in order to be able to show mercy to those whom He has called. Sanday & Headlam write:

St. Paul is no longer confining himself to the special case of Pharaoh, although he still remembers it, as his language shows, but he is considering the whole of God's dealing with the unbelieving Jews, and is laying down the principles which will afterwards be worked out in full -- that the Jews had deserved God's wrath, but that He had borne with them with great longsuffering both for their own sakes and for the ultimate good of His Church.⁴⁵

Paul is hinting here at a matter which he will develop at greater length later in Chapter Eleven.

Nygren similarly views verses twenty-two and twenty-three as a parallel to verse seventeen and enlarges on this

⁴³Godet, op. cit., p. 362.

⁴⁴Stoeckhardt, op. cit., p. 458.

⁴⁵Sanday & Headlam, op. cit., p. 262.

thought. In the latter verse we are given the twofold purpose of God in hardening Pharaoh's heart: (1) It gave God opportunity to show His power, and (2) God's name was thereby proclaimed in all the earth. According to Nygren this same twofold or dual purpose can be seen in verses twenty-two and twenty-three, where he gives the following reasons for God rejecting Israel as a "vessel of wrath." (1) Thereby He intends to show His wrath and make known His power. Israel has refused to believe that God could reject His people. But now he is to experience the manifestation of God's wrath and power upon himself and his people. (2) But God also has another purpose; and for Paul that is the chief matter in this connection: He will make known the riches of His glory for the "vessels of mercy." Precisely through Israel's hardening, through the fact that Israel rejected her Messiah and was herself rejected, the gospel has gone forth into all the world, and there it has made "vessels of mercy" both of Jews and, even more, of Gentiles.⁴⁶

In verse twenty-four Paul defines the $\sigmaκεύη \epsilonλείους$. They are the elect of God, to be sure, but more than that, Paul says, "We are counted among them, both Jew and Gentile." Paul introduces the Gentiles here, because as Sanday states,

⁴⁶Nygren, op. cit., p. 371. passim.

"the calling of the Gentiles had come through the rejection of the Jews."⁴⁷ Here again Paul is thinking of that all-important point that mere physical descent does not make one a true Israelite. Denney makes this clear:

The fact that both Jews and Gentiles are called shows that this preparation is not limited to any one nation; the fact that the called are from among both Jews and Gentiles shows that no one can claim God's mercy as a right, in virtue of his birth in some particular race.⁴⁸

Finally Paul shows that this result of his discussion, namely, that God calls both Jews and Gentiles into his true Israel, is in full accordance with Scripture. He uses a number of quotations in verses twenty-five to twenty-nine which the Revised Standard Version translates as follows:

As indeed he says in Hosea, "Those who were not my people I will call 'my people,' and her who was not beloved I will call 'my beloved.'" "And in the very place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people,' they will be called 'sons of the living God.'" And Isaiah cries out concerning Israel: "Though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them will be saved; for the Lord will execute his sentence upon the earth with rigor and dispatch." And as Isaiah predicted, "If the Lord of hosts had not left us children, we would have fared like Sodom and been made like Gomorrah."⁴⁹

His first quotation agrees roughly with Hosea 2:23 of the LXX. In the original text the words refer to the ten tribes.

⁴⁷Sanday & Headlam, op. cit., p. 263.

⁴⁸Denney, op. cit., p. 665.

⁴⁹The New Testament, Revised Standard Version (New York: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1946), pp. 339-340.

The "Not my people" and the "Not beloved" were the names of a son and daughter of Hosea who symbolized the kingdom of Israel. They had been rejected of God, but were destined to be restored once more to the favor of God. Paul applies the principle which underlies these words to the calling of the Gentiles. The verse shows to Paul that God can include in his family those who were previously excluded from it. The use of Hosea 1:10 in verse twenty-six is to demonstrate the same principle. The application is identical with the addition of one point. Paul adds $\overset{\text{J}}{\text{Σ}}\overset{\text{A}}{\text{Κ}}\overset{\text{A}}{\text{Ε}}\overset{\text{A}}{\text{Ι}}$ to the LXX version of the text to emphasize that in the very place where these deported people were at one time called "Not my people" they will at last be called "sons of the living God."⁵⁰ Consequently the usual interpretation has been to apply $\overset{\text{J}}{\text{Σ}}\overset{\text{A}}{\text{Κ}}\overset{\text{A}}{\text{Ε}}\overset{\text{A}}{\text{Ι}}$ to the Gentile lands, although some, as Denney, feel that it seems "hardly equal to the stress laid on $\overset{\text{J}}{\text{Σ}}\overset{\text{A}}{\text{Κ}}\overset{\text{A}}{\text{Ε}}\overset{\text{A}}{\text{Ι}}$."⁵¹

The $\overset{\text{A}}{\text{Υ}}\overset{\text{I}}{\text{Ο}}\overset{\text{I}}{\text{Σ}}\overset{\text{A}}{\text{Ι}}\overset{\text{A}}{\text{Σ}}\overset{\text{A}}{\text{Ι}}\overset{\text{A}}{\text{Σ}}\overset{\text{A}}{\text{Ι}}\overset{\text{A}}{\text{Σ}}\overset{\text{A}}{\text{Ι}}\overset{\text{A}}{\text{Σ}}\overset{\text{A}}{\text{Ι}}$ in verse twenty-six refer to the gathering of the New Testament Church from all nations as Stoeckhardt bears out:

Diese Worte können nicht anders verstanden werden, als von der Sammlung der neutestamentlichen Kirche aus allen Völkern, von der Einen Heerde unter dem Einen Hirten, Joh. 10:10, die hier even mit alt-

⁵⁰Lenski, op. cit., p. 629.

⁵¹Denney, op. cit., p. 665.

testamentlichen Ausdrücken, unter dem Bild der Heimkehr aus der Gefangenschaft beschrieben wird.⁵²

The second group of passages quoted in verses twenty-seven and twenty-nine bring out the second point of Paul's views; namely, that a remnant of the Jews should be saved, even as verse twenty-six brings out the fact that the Gentiles should be called. The Old Testament passage referred to in these verses is Isaiah 10:22, quoted from the LXX but considerably shortened. The LXX in this instance is different from the Hebrew, which the translators evidently did not fully understand, but the meaning is not affected. Only a remnant would be saved. In the light of this statement "the Jews cannot quarrel with the situation in which they find themselves when it answers so exactly to the Word of God."⁵³ However, these passages also bring out the fact that the remnant will be saved, in addition to saying that most of the Jews will be rejected. The Scriptures plainly indicate that from Israel, too, people will be saved, even though the number will be small. Thus the situation, Paul makes clear, is one predicted long ago in God's Word.

The last quotation from Isaiah 1:9 has the same purpose. There σπέρμα is the equivalent of ὑπόλειμμα. This quotation is quoted exactly from the LXX and is clear beyond

⁵²Stoekhardt, op. cit., p. 464.

⁵³Denney, op. cit., p. 666.

doubt. In His mercy God has spared a "seed" of Israel which shall remain. It is well not to press this figure beyond the meaning Paul intended it to have. The σπέρμα or remnant is not the germ of a whole new people. It is simply that small group which God elected to be saved, although really all should have been destroyed as completely as Sodom and Gomorrah.]

Thus Paul concludes the first major portion of his discussion on the rejection of the chosen people of God, the Jewish nation. In these verses, 6-29, he has tried to show first of all who is the true Israel, that is, not the physical Israel, but the spiritual Israel. And in this light God's promises remain true as well as his justice and mercy. There remains then only the problem of the Jews themselves and their lack of faith which Paul will turn to in the next section, 9:30-10:21. As Lenski concludes:

The story of Judaism, viewed from the double angle of promise and mercy, has been concluded save for the final point which is faith. For all promise intends to kindle faith, to be received and retained by faith. All mercy is of the same nature, it is received only by the faith it awakens, and that faith trusts nothing else. So now the Jewish refusal of faith in the tragedy of its rejection is presented.⁵⁴

⁵⁴Lenski, op. cit., p. 633.

CHAPTER IV

9:30 - 10:21 ISRAEL CAN BLAME ONLY HERSELF FOR HER REJECTION

- A. 9:30 - 10:13 Israel is Rejected Because They Sought After Their Own Righteousness Instead of the Righteousness of God Which is in Christ Through Faith. Instead They Clung to the Law for Righteousness, Something Which was Impossible to Attain. They Should Rather Have Turned to the New Way of Salvation in Christ Which was Easy and Within the Reach of All, and Hence Universal in Its Scope.

With his familiar $\tau\acute{\iota}\ \circ\upsilon\delta\epsilon\ \epsilon\pi\omicron\upsilon\mu\epsilon\nu$ Paul begins the second major portion of his discussion on the status of Israel. However, for the first time, Paul answers this question directly without adding another. He states that the Gentiles who did not pursue after righteousness have obtained righteousness, a righteousness, however, which is $\epsilon\kappa\ \pi\acute{\iota}\sigma\tau\epsilon\omega\varsigma$, by faith. The Jews on the other hand, although they strove for righteousness also, attempted to achieve it by the impossible road of their own works, and hence could not reach true righteousness. By these words Paul bridges over to the next important point in his discussion. In the previous verses of Chapter nine he has been speaking of the divine aspects involved in the rejection of Israel. Now he turns to the human elements involved -- the

guilt of the Jews. As Denney summarizes:

Paul now proceeds to show more definitely that it was owing to their own guilt that they were rejected. They followed, and persisted in following, a path on which salvation was not to be found; and they were inexcusable in doing so, inasmuch as God had made His way of salvation plain and accessible to all.¹

We would note first the predominance of *δικαιοσύνη*. Paul here returns to familiar ground, the one fundamental conception on which his gospel is based. He states an amazing fact about *δικαιοσύνη*. The Gentiles, who did not look for it, have it and the Jews who pursued after it with great zeal did not lay hold of it. And already in verses thirty-one and thirty-two he gives us the reasons which explain these amazing contradictory facts. He mentions *πίστεως* and *δι' ἑκείνου νόμου δικαιοσύνης*. In verse thirty-two he himself asks the natural question following from these statements, *διὰ τί*, "Why?" "How has this come about?" "Because of one vital error in their lives," Paul answers. The Jews made the fatal mistake of substituting *ἔργα*, their own works, for *πίστις*, as the basis and source of their righteousness. The particle *ὡς* demands some explanation. This indicates that the Jews actually thought that they could be justified by works. By inserting it Paul "dissociates himself from this concep-

¹James Denney, "St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans," The Expositor's Greek Testament, edited by W. Robertson Nicoll (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., n. d.), II, 667.

tion, and leaves it to Israel; he does not believe (having learned the contrary by bitter experience) that there is any outlet along this road."²

Because of their attempt to obtain righteousness through works, they fell into a condition which the prophet Isaiah had foretold many years previous. Paul refers to Isaiah 8:14 and 28:16, which are combined and quoted from the LXX. This is a passage referred to frequently in the New Testament, e.g., I Peter 2:6-8. The stumbling-stone placed in Zion is Christ, because of whom many are offended and fall away. Lenski rather vividly describes this:

This is not a stone over which one may merely stumble and recover oneself but one against which one runs with his entire body and smashes it entirely; it is like knocking one's brains out. The stone itself is of such a size, and its very character produces such a dire result. The fact that Paul has Christ in mind is beyond question, Christ in his effect on unbelieving workers of law.³

Paul's purpose in quoting this passage from the Old Testament is to show that what has happened to the Jews was something of which they had been warned long ago. To reject Christ is deadly. The I Peter reference speaks of Christ in another aspect, namely, as being a corner-stone. This one makes use of only the destructive elements in these

²Denney, op. cit., p. 667-668.

³R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans (Columbus: Wartburg Press, 1945), p. 638.

figurative terms. Thus Paul by the use also of *σκάνδαλου* brings out the idea of deadliness. *σκάνδαλου* was the crooked stick in a trap to which the bait was attached and by which the trap was sprung which killed the victim. Yet Paul does not end the chapter on the disturbing deadliness of unbelief, but on the gracious result of faith. He points to the other side of the picture. Whoever avoids stumbling and believes in this rock, Christ, will not be disappointed. His hopes of salvation will not be dashed to pieces.⁴

The division beginning a new chapter at this point in the epistle is unfortunate, since the thoughts beginning with 9:30 are carried right through into Chapter ten. The first verses again show us with what deep sorrow and emotion Paul approached this problem of Israel. Looking at the sad picture which he has just drawn in verses thirty to thirty-three, Paul cannot go on without once more expressing the deep grief which lies within him. He wants to assure his readers again of his intentions in writing as he does. Stoeckhardt tells us:

Er versichert seinen "Brüdern," den christlichen Lesern, dass er, der als der Heidenapostel ihr Seelenheil auf betendem Herzen trägt, auch seinem

⁴ The Hebrew text apparently was mistranslated here by the LXX, assuming that our present Hebrew text was the same as that used by the translators of the LXX. The Hebrew text used today has the form וְיָנִיחַ , meaning "he will flee." The LXX evidently translated וְיָנִיחַ according to the critical apparatus in Kittel's text.

Volk Israel von Herzen das Heil gönnt. Sie sollen ja nicht wähnen, als hätte er seine Lust und Freude daran, Israel zu richten und zu verdammen.⁵

Paul's continual prayer and heart's desire is that the Jews, his brothers, might somehow be saved. And to show his sympathetic feeling towards them he mentions one of their good qualities, namely, their "zeal for God," Ἡλίου Θεοῦ . Paul would not for a moment deny that the Jews were very earnest about their religion; nor would he by any means say they were insincere or hypocrites. But the tragic feature of all this is that this zeal does not help them for it is not κατ' ἐπίγνωσιν . Nygren analyzes their situation correctly when he states:

Zeal for God that is not enlightened can carry man very far from God. And that is just what happened to the Jews. When God revealed His righteousness, through Christ, they could not accept it just because they had such a zeal for righteousness, the righteousness of the law, $\text{δικαιοσύνη ἐκ νόμου}$. That which was their advantage became their downfall. In their zeal they were so preoccupied with thoughts of all the works of righteousness which they themselves would offer that they could not see that God now offered them a wholly new righteousness.⁶

Paul does not use the word γνώσις . This the Jews certainly had, perhaps more than any other nation. Rather they lacked ἐπίγνωσις , discernment. Godet defines

⁵George Stoeckhardt, Brief Pauli an die Römer (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1907), p. 475.

⁶Anders Nygren, Commentary on Romans (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1949), pp. 378-379.

ἑπίγνωσις as:

That understanding which puts its finger on the true nature of the thing. They have failed to discern the true meaning and the true scope of the legal dispensation; they are ardently attached to all its particular rites, but they have not grasped their moral end.

In verse three Paul goes to the root of the matter and gives us the real cause for the failure of the Jews to attain to righteousness. Paul uses the term ἀγνοοῦντες. This must not be translated simply "misunderstanding." Rather the Jews actually did not know what the righteousness of God was. The result of this ignorance was that they tried to pile up righteousness of their own, τὴν ἰδίαν δικαιοσύνην. As Denney writes:

All men need and crave righteousness, and the Jews, in their ignorance of God's, sought to establish a righteousness of their own. Their own is the key to the situation. Their idea was that they could be good men without becoming God's debtors, or owing anything at all to Him. Such an idea, of course, shows complete ignorance of the essential relations of God and man, and when acted on fatally perverts life.⁸

Thus Paul is back on his old theme, the contrast between a righteousness based on law, and one based on faith, between δικαιοσύνη ἐκ νόμου and δικαιοσύνη ἐκ πίστεως. There can be no righteousness from below, from man, as the Jews mistakenly thought. All true righteous-

⁷F. Godet, St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, translated by Rev. A. Cusin (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1883), p. 375.

⁸Denney, op. cit., p. 669.

ness must originate above, in God, and is apprehended without the law and without any co-operation from man. This new righteousness is something which is grasped only through faith. This is exactly the same kind of thinking Paul had shown before in chapter 3:21. Nygren describes this parallelism:

That passage and the one we now examine are at one in emphasizing two things: (1) that this righteousness is revealed "apart from law" (χωρίς νόμου in 3:21 equals τέλος νόμου χριστός in 10:4); and (2) that it is given to each and every one who believes (εις πάντας τοὺς πιστεύοντας in 3:22 equals παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι in 10:4).⁹

Further proof of the error in trusting in one's own righteousness is given us in verse four. Paul states that Christ is the end or termination of the law. In Christ the dominion of the law was done away with. The law could not confer righteousness on anyone. Now Christ confers this righteousness of God on anyone and everyone who will believe it. Again Nygren aptly states what this means:

At a certain point in history God sent Christ. That was the beginning of something new. But it also marked the end of the old; the day of the law is past. Christ is the end of the law, the terminus of the law, the law's τέλος. And yet this must not be construed as an ordinary historical judgment, to the effect that the law ceased to function, at a given point in time. The statement about the τέλος of the law applies only to those who have through Christ been made sharers in the

⁹Nygren, op. cit., p. 379.

righteousness of the law. Otherwise, outside of the realm of faith, the law still rules.¹⁰

As usual Paul goes back to Scripture to find that this contrast between righteousness by law and righteousness by faith is not something new. He begins by quoting Moses who would be an unimpeachable authority on this point. His first quotation is from Leviticus 18:5 and demonstrates the righteousness by law. "The man who does that righteousness which is of the law shall live by it." Or as Stoeckhardt paraphrases it, "Welcher Mensch die Satzungen und Rechte Gottes thut, der wird durch dieselbigen, indem er sie hält, das leben, das wahre, ewige Leben erlangen."¹¹ The only catch to this is, of course, that no one has ever been able to keep the law perfectly, which would be necessary since even one small breaking of it makes one guilty of all. This does not imply that when Moses first spoke these words he was mocking his people. He was merely stating the commands and conditions of the law. Some have misinterpreted these words of Moses to mean that God had a different way of salvation in the Old Testament than in the New Testament. As Stoeckhardt tells us:

Manche Ausleger, z.b. auch Meyer und Godet, stellen die Sache so dar, als wäre das Gesetz oder gar die Gerechtigkeit aus dem Gesetz in der Zeit des Alten Testaments der von Gott geordnete Heilsweg, "die

¹⁰Nygren, op. cit., p. 380.

¹¹Stoeckhardt, op. cit., p. 482.

Glaubengerechtigkeit erst seit Christo, in der Zeit des Neuen Testaments der ordo salutis geworden. Damit wird die ganze Lehre Pauli über den Haufen geworfen.¹²

The point Paul wishes to make by this quotation is that the righteousness by law depends on man's works, a hopeless basis, since man's works can never be counted for the saving righteousness of God. "The righteousness of faith does not speak thus, however," Paul continues. And as evidence he quotes from Deuteronomy 30:11-14, where God tells the people of Israel not to despair about keeping His commandments. The literal meaning of this passage no doubt refers to the commandment of God. For Paul it probably was a cardinal passage during his time as a Pharisee. He uses it here not in its Old Testament sense; he employs the words in a new way because, taken by themselves, they express well what he has in mind. In other words he uses them only as a form, a vehicle. Therefore, he is not professing to support his view here necessarily by these Old Testament passages. This is brought out by the omission of anything like the usual *γέγραπται*. His sole purpose in using these words was to tell his readers the following:

Die nicht an Jesus gläubigen, aber auf einen zukünftigen Messias Hoffenden Juden sollen nicht, als ob der Messias noch nicht erschienen wäre, jene Fragen tun in dem Sinn, als ob der Messias erst noch aus der himmlischen Welt herab oder aus der Totenwelt heraufgeholt werden müsste. Das wäre eine unverantwortliche Verkennung der

¹²Stoekhardt, op. cit., pp. 482-483.

tatsächlich erfolgten und ihnen zunächst zu teil gewordenen Offenbarung Gottes, ebenso wie die ähnlichen Fragen Israels nach Empfang der Gesetzesoffenbarung.¹³

Paul quotes these words as being spoken by the righteousness of faith. Christ is not something afar off, difficult to apprehend. The righteousness of faith need not say, "Who will ascend into heaven?" (that is, to bring Christ down), or "Who will descend into the abyss?" (that is, to bring Christ up). The point is that just as Moses had said that there was no need for anyone to go up into heaven to bring down the law, so it is true, actually far more true, to say that there is no need to go into heaven to bring Christ down, the object of faith and the source of righteousness. There is no need because both of these things have been done. Christ incarnate has already been here and has risen from the grave in the Resurrection for us. Both His Incarnation and His Resurrection are God's gift to faith. And through Christ's Incarnation and Resurrection He is brought near to the Christian. In fact if we understand the next quotation from Deuteronomy 30:14 as referring also to Christ, which it does; He is $\bar{\epsilon}\nu\ \tau\acute{\omega}\ \sigma\tau\acute{o}\mu\alpha\tau\iota$ $\kappa\alpha\iota\ \bar{\epsilon}\nu\ \tau\hat{\eta}\ \kappa\alpha\rho\delta\acute{\iota}\alpha$, in our mouths and in our hearts. Paul further identifies this word by saying it is

¹³Theodore Zahn, "Der Brief des Paulus an die Römer", Kommentar zum Neuen Testament, edited by Theodore Zahn (Leipzig: A. Deichert'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung Nachf., 1910), VI, 479.

the word of faith which Christians preach. Stoeckhardt comments:

Paulus setzt aber dafür, indem er sich an die alttestamentliche Stelle anschlieszt, das andere Subject ein, das Wort, und fügt zugleich hinzu, welches Wort er im Sinn hat, nicht das Wort, von dem Moses schreibt, das Gesetz, sondern "das Wort, welches wir verkündigen", also das Wort der apostolischen Verkündigung, das Evangelium und nennt dieses Wort zugleich "das Wort des Glaubens", das ist ein Wort, welches einfach geglaubt sein will, ein Wort, das man nicht erst zu thun, sondern mit seinem Inhalt nur im Glauben hinzuhehmen braucht.¹⁴

In verse nine Paul seizes the references to heart and mouth in the reference from Deuteronomy and utilizes them to make a statement about the significance which the mouth's confession and the heart's faith have for salvation. He says, "If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is the Lord, and believe in your heart that God has raised him from the dead, you shall be saved." He gives a summary of the conditions necessary for salvation, namely an inward belief in Christ and an outward confession of Him before men. The object of both the belief and the confession is the same, Jesus Christ. Paul is here speaking of the two great apostolic themes, namely, that Jesus is the Lord, and that God raised Him from the dead. Commenting on the criticism that this is reducing Christianity to externals Nygren writes:

Against this it must be said that for Paul the con-

¹⁴Stoeckhardt, op. cit., p. 486.

profession of the mouth and the faith of the Heart are by no means external; on the contrary, they express what is inmost and deepest in Christianity. (1) A Christian is one who confesses that Jesus is Lord. God has exalted Jesus and given Him a name that is above every name, that all may "confess that Jesus Christ is Lord" (Phil. 2:9-11). (2) A Christian is one who believes that God raised Christ from the dead. To Paul the resurrection is the center of Christianity.. If Christ had not risen from the dead, we should still be in death's realm. To be a Christian is to have a risen Lord,¹⁵ and through Him to share in the resurrection life.

Verse ten brings out the role of faith even more clearly. The explanatory *ἡ* shows that it is faith which grasps the righteousness of God; and such faith must confess itself. The parallelism of the preceding verses is continued. With and by the faith in his heart a man arrives at true righteousness. But this faith will show itself also by the kind of life it inspires. One of the best indications of this kind of life will be the confession of the mouth of the Christian. In other words the first part of the verse describes how one gets to be a Christian, and the second part why one must live as a Christian.¹⁶

In verse eleven Paul returns to a quotation which he has used earlier, Isaiah 28:16, to verify his conclusion that the way of faith is the only way of salvation. The

¹⁵Nygren, op. cit., pp. 382-383.

¹⁶For this last statement I am indebted to the notes used by Dr. Arndt in teaching his course on Romans.

quotation is the same as the LXX except that he adds $\pi\acute{\alpha}\varsigma$. This emphasizes that fact that this way of faith is open to all. And that is the only way open for all. It is not the case that the Jews can be saved through the law and the Gentiles through faith. No, Paul continues, there is no difference between Greek and Jew. Verse twelve explains the $\pi\acute{\alpha}\varsigma$ of verse eleven. It shows the universal character of the Gospel which is meant for all, regardless of race, condition, or color. And this Gospel is universal because its author is $\kappa\acute{\upsilon}\rho\iota\omicron\varsigma \pi\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\omega\nu$, Lord over all. This undoubtedly refers to Christ in view of verses nine and eleven. Christ is Lord of all believers who have faith in Him. He is also $\pi\lambda\omicron\upsilon\tau\acute{\omega}\nu \epsilon\iota\varsigma \pi\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\alpha\varsigma \tau\omicron\upsilon\varsigma \acute{\epsilon}\pi\iota\kappa\alpha\lambda\omicron\upsilon\mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu\omicron\upsilon\alpha\upsilon\tau\acute{\omicron}\nu$. This means He is rich enough to bring to salvation all those who call upon Him. Christ can impart to all men the righteousness of God.

Paul finally turns once more to Scripture for support and quotes Joel 3:5. "For whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." In these words Paul sums up and clinches his argument. They state the end result of the discussion contained in the preceding verses, 9:30-10:13.

Stoekhardt concludes with the following words:

Jedermann, der da glaubt und den Namen des Herrn anruft, wird selig, er sei Grieche oder Jude. Jedermann, auch den Juden hat Gott das Heil so nahegebracht. Wenn die Juden nur den Namen des Herrn anrufen würden, so würden sie selig werden.

Wie schwer wiegt also die Schuld ihres Unglaubens.¹⁷

¹⁷Stoeckhardt, op. cit., p. 491.

In the preceding section Paul has set forth directly the cause for the failure of the Jews to attain true righteousness. In these verses he now goes on to show that, as related to this cause, they were without excuse. He points out that they cannot plead ignorance to the fact of this cause. As Sander & Headlam explain:

The Jews, it has been shown, have neglected God's method of obtaining righteousness; but in order, as he (Paul) desires, to convict them of guilt in this neglect, St. Paul must show that they have had the opportunity of knowing about it, that their ignorance is culpable.¹⁸

Paul begins by listing the steps or conditions by which one comes to faith. Faith does not come immediately; it requires certain conditions before it can be realized. There are two chief interpretations on the purpose in the mind of Paul in stating these conditions. One group feels that they are listed with the thought in mind that the Jews may claim that such conditions are impossible to fulfill. Paul will then show that such a plea is not valid. However, Paul does not really use this clincher for his

¹⁸William Sander and Arthur Headlam, "The Epistle to the Romans," International Critical Commentary, edited by Samuel Driver, Alfred Plummer and Charles Briggs (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1896), p. 235.

- B. 10:14-21 Belief Depends Upon Hearing the Word of God. And Israel had Ample Opportunity to do This. For "Their Voice has Gone Forth into all the Earth." Israel Must Have Understood God's Word also, because Their Own Prophets State that Disobedience Would be the Reason for Their Rejecting God's Message.

In the preceding section Paul has set forth directly the cause for the failure of the Jews to attain true righteousness. In these verses he now goes on to show that, as related to this cause, they were without excuse. He points out that they cannot plead ignorance to the fact of this cause. As Sanday & Headlam explain:

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¹⁸William Sanday and Arthur Headlam, "The Epistle to the Romans," International Critical Commentary, edited by Samuel Driver, Alfred Plummer and Charles Briggs (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1896), p. 295.

argument until verse eighteen. The other view is that Paul for a moment is more or less carried away by the thought of the universality of the Gospel and thinks of the need of spreading this Gospel. As Donney writes:

It is as if Paul were expanding the $\pi\omega\delta$ ¹ of ver. 13 and justifying that universal preaching of the Gospel which was itself a stumbling block to the Jews. Everyone who invokes the name of the Lord shall be saved, and therefore the conditions of such invocation must be put within reach of everyone.¹⁹

The second view seems to be the simpler, since it indirectly includes the first. If the Gospel is preached to all men, the Jews will hear it also, and will be responsible for this gift. The conditions listed then apply to all. What are they? 1. No one can call (the link with verse thirteen) upon Christ unless he believes in Him. 2. No one can believe in Him unless he has heard Him. 3. No one can hear Him unless some one else preaches about Him. 4. No one can preach about Him unless God sends Him. Some of the verbs after the repeated $\pi\omega\delta$ are deliberative subjunctives. A variant, $\epsilon\pi\iota\kappa\alpha\lambda\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\sigma\upsilon\tau\alpha\iota$, is found in the Textus Receptus and a few other manuscripts, namely K, L, and P, but in any case the import of the passage is essentially the same as Stoeckhardt makes clear, "Die Meinung ist in beiden Fällen, dass das Eine ohne das Andere nicht geschehen kann."²⁰

¹⁹Denney, op. cit., p. 672.

²⁰Stoeckhardt, op. cit., p. 492.

Various opinions have arisen in regard to the way οὗ is to be taken in the phrase $\text{πῶς δὲ πιστεύουσιν οὗ οὐκ ἤκουσαν}$. Some feel that the sense of the Vulgate is the correct one which reads, "Quomodo credent ei, quem non audierunt." Others translate it as "of whom", substituting οὗ for ὅν . A third view feels that οὗ is an adverb of place. This view, however seems to destroy the symmetry of the discourse and introduces the incongruous idea of place where, when the rest of Paul's line of thought deals with persons. The first view would have the added support that verbs of sensation and hence verbs of hearing often use the genitive, as in Mark 9:7. Meyer, Denney, Lenski, and Sanday & Headlam all feel that this is the simplest translation.

The question arises here whether Paul speaks of a special commission when he says $\text{ἕαν μὴ ἀποσταλώσιν}$. Some, as Denney, feel that to find anything like a distinctive, peculiar commission to preach the Gospel in this passage is abusing the text rather severely. We find statements such as this:

To find here the idea of an official ministry, as something belonging essentially to the constitution of the Church, is grotesque.²¹

He is correct if he means by "essentially" that an official ministry must exist before there can be Church, but, on the

²¹Denney, op. cit., p. 673.

other hand, Paul at least implies here more than the universal commission to all believers. He was always aware of this special call as is evidenced by I Corinthians 1:17.

Stoeckhardt comments:

Doch gilt das Axiom "Ohne Sendung keine Predigt" überhaupt von der amtlichen Heilsverkündigung aller Prediger des Neuen Testaments. Kein Prediger kann das Amt des Neuen Testaments recht verwalten, wenn er nicht vom Herrn dazu entsandt, berufen und mit Geist und Gaben ausgerüstet ist. Nemo recte Praedicat, nisi mittatur.²²

That Paul is here thinking of the special sending of all ministers, teachers and missionaries is brought out by verse fifteen when he quotes from Isaiah. Already in the Old Testament we find that God really does send preachers, special messengers of His Word. Meyer calls the passage a "prophetic confirmation."²³ In using this passage from Isaiah 52:7, Paul does not concern himself with the details and abbreviates the prophet's words considerably. He becomes entirely caught up with the prophetic import of the passage. Meyer again states:

This "dulcissimum dictum" (Melanchthon), because it speaks of the message of blissful liberation from exile, therein possesses the Messianic character, as concerning the restoration of the theocracy; and therefore islegitimately understood by Paul -- in

²²Stoeckhardt, op. cit., p. 493

²³Heinrich A. W. Meyer, "Epistle to the Romans," Meyer's Commentary on the New Testament, edited by Heinrich Meyer and translated by John C. Moore (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1884), v, 414.

connection with the Messianic idea on its historical fulfilment, ²⁴ - as a prophecy of the evangelical preachers.

In verse sixteen Paul sadly notes that this beautiful message has been rejected by the Jews. "But all did not obey the Gospel." Οὐ πάντες refers to the bulk of the Jewish people of whom Paul was thinking as the context indicates. The Jews were disobedient, Οὐ... ὑπήκουσαν. Disobedience is essentially unbelief as Stoeckhardt notes, "Ungehorsam gegen das Evangelium ist Nichts Anderes, als Unglaube, wie denn der Glaube wesentlich Gehorsam gegen das Evangelium ist, welches eben im Glauben angenommen sein will."²⁵ This rejection of the Gospel by the Jews was not a new phenomenon, however. Paul quotes Isaiah once more to show that it was always thus. The quotation is from the LXX of Isaiah 53:1. The Hebrew, however, does not have the κύριος. Here Isaiah makes the same complaint as Paul. His message, like Paul's, was generally ignored and rejected. Only a small few believed their ἀκοή. ἀκοή is defined by Stoeckhardt as, "Kunde, Predigt, die prophetische Predigt und zwar gerade solche Predigt, wie sie im 53. Capitel des Iesaias enthalten ist, die Predigt von der Erniedrigung und Erhöhung des Knechts Gottes."²⁶

²⁴Meyer, op. cit., p. 414.

²⁵Stoeckhardt, op. cit., p. 494

²⁶Stoeckhardt, op. cit., p. 495.

It has this same meaning in verse seventeen, in which Paul seizes the opportunity to repeat his thought of verse fourteen regarding the necessity of a message (not just simply an act of hearing) for faith. Before there can be faith there must be "hearing", that is, there must be a message, a true, divine message. As Lenski explains, "This saving faith which brings righteousness and salvation (verse six) does not arise out of the mere act of hearing but out of what is heard, namely the gospel itself, which men are always made to hear."²⁷ This message must be a true one, a divine one; it cannot be something human. Hence Paul adds *διὰ ῥήματος Χριστοῦ*. Various commentators feel that *ῥῆμα* means here exactly what it means in verse eight, namely, "Word."²⁸ However, the command of Christ seems to be really thought of here, as in Matthew 4:4 and Luke 3:2. Stoeckhardt bears this out, "Der Ausdruck..... bedeutet also hier, wie die meisten neueren Exegeten annehmen, so viel wie 'Befehls Gottes'."²⁹ In other words, the ἀκοή, the message, and the preaching of it depends upon the command of Christ. Thus Paul here returns to the same line of thought evidenced in verse fourteen.

²⁷Lenski, op. cit., p. 667.

²⁸Denney, op. cit., pp. 673-674.

²⁹Stoeckhardt, op. cit., p. 496.

With verse eighteen Paul himself suggests a possible excuse that Israel may have to offer for its rejection of Christ. Could it be that Israel was unaware of this message, that they had not heard it? Here Paul begins to summarize his conviction of the Jews. In a dramatic way he asks, "They did not fail to hear it, did they?" The question implies a negative answer so strongly that there is almost a touch of irony in the word with which Paul introduces the proof of it. *μενοῦν γε*, he says. We have here the equivalent of the Latin imo vero. No, the Gospel has been preached in all the world as the Old Testament itself witnesses in Psalm 19:4. By the use of this passage, quoted word for word from the LXX, Paul does not want to prove specifically that the Word had been preached in all the physical world to the four corners of the earth, but that as far as the Jews were concerned, it had been preached so generally that they could not have escaped it. Since these words originally describe how universally the works of nature glorify God, Nygren feels an added implication. He writes, "As the witness of the heavens that declare His glory is not a voice of a language that is not heard, so the messengers of the gospel have not come with a word which is not heard."³⁰

³⁰Nygren, op. cit., p. 383.

The last possible objection is demolished in verse nineteen where Paul himself again poses the question. Can it be that although Israel heard the Gospel, nevertheless did not know and understand what that meant for them? Perhaps Israel can be excused because of ignorance in understanding what they heard. The question itself implies that only a negative answer can be given as Lenski notes:

As was the case in v. 18, the question asked in this verse, which question implies a negative answer, intends only to emphasize the truth that, as the Jews heard the gospel-word, so they also fully realized its meaning and what its rejection implied. Theirs was not a sin of mere pitiful ignorance.³¹

²Ἰσραὴλ is in a place of emphasis, for Paul wants to make clear that the Jews of all people should have understood what the gospel was. As Denney writes:

At first sight there seems an unnatural emphasis here on Israel, but this is not the case. The generality of the argument must be abandoned now, for the passages next to be quoted, which are already present to Paul's mind, contrast Israel with the Gentiles, and so bring it into prominence; and it is in the case of Israel, of all nations, that the plea of not understanding is most out of place. Above all nations Israel ought to have understood a message from God: Israel, and inability to understand God's Word, ought to be incompatible ideas.³²

The difficulty in the entire passage and the relation of the passages quoted later centers in determining what is meant by ²ἐξ ὧν . To begin with its object must be the

³¹Lenski, op. cit., p. 671.

³²Denney, op. cit., p. 674.

the Gospel of Jesus Christ. All other interpretations such as "calling of the Gentiles" or "the universal preaching of the Gospel" are outside the line of argument as Sanday & Headlam as well as Stoeckhardt note. However, it is at this point that the commentators begin to disagree.

Stoeckhardt feels that Paul here wishes to register something akin to surprise. The words would then mean, "in view that Israel heard of the Gospel of Christ (verse eighteen), it cannot possibly be that Israel failed to acknowledge it? Certainly it cannot be that Israel rejected this message, can it?" The question then comes as referring to something absolutely unthinkable and unbelievable. He writes:

Doch er schreibt nun nicht einfach Ἰσραὴλ οὐκ ἔγνω sonder ruft verwundert aus: ἀλλὰ λέγω, μὴ Ἰσραὴλ οὐκ ἔγνω; das heisst, genau genommen: Aber ich sage: Es verhält sich doch nicht etwa so, dass Israel es nicht erkannt hat? Das ist kaum denkbar, kaum glaubhaft, das ist der Sinn der Frage, dass Israel, das auserwählte Volk, dem Gott von Alters her sein Wort, seine Verheissungen anvertraut hat, die frohe Botschaft von der Erfüllung der Verheissung nicht erkannt, dieselbe ignorirt, unbeachtet gelassen oder, was dasselbe ist, verachtet und verworfen haben sollte.³³

The other view is that Paul here asks the same kind of question as in verse eighteen. Then we have the following sense. The excuse that Israel did not hear has been proven invalid. But cannot they now perhaps offer as an excuse the full import of the Gospel? No, Israel cannot even say this

³³Stoeckhardt, op. cit., p. 500.

since Scripture shows that even senseless people will some-day understand. Nor can they plead that the message of the Gospel was too difficult to find and understand, since Isaiah already stated that men, who were not even looking for it, would find it. And the real reason for all of this, finally is that Israel, in spite of all these opportunities and facts, has chosen to remain unbelieving and disobedient.³⁴

The criticism that this view is inconsistent with ἄγνοοῦντες of verse three is answered by these same writers:

The contradiction is rather formal than real. It is true Israel's zeal was not guided by deep religious insight, and that they clung blindly and ignorantly to a method which had been condemned; but this ignorance was culpable: if they did not know, they might have known. From the very beginning of their history their whole line of Prophets had warned them of the Divine plan.³⁵

To this writer the view of Sanday & Headlam, which seems to be the most widely held, has many points in its favor. It appears first of all to follow more naturally in Paul's entire line of thought. Paul has been answering possible objections, one by one, and now answers the final and perhaps most serious one. Secondly, Stoeckhardt lays much stress on the words ἀλλὰ λέγω, μή. Yet these same words are to be found in exactly the same order in verse eighteen, where obviously, no thought of surprise is intended.

³⁴Sanday & Headlam, op. cit., pp. 299-300.

³⁵Sanday & Headlam, op. cit., p. 299.

Thirdly the passages quoted from the Old Testament fit in very well with this view.

The first passage is taken from Deuteronomy 32:21.

The *πρῶτος Μωϋσῆς* suggests that even Moses, who stands at the very beginning of their history, says things which make their ignorance and lack of understanding inexcusable. Following the LXX almost exactly the passage bears out the fact that Israel should and could have known. To say that Israel could not have understood the message she heard is untenable in the light of these words of Moses.

Nygren comments:

In "the law"--in the Song of Moses, Deuteronomy 32:31--Paul had read how, by her apostasy, Israel had aroused God to jealousy and anger, and how God would therefore move Israel to jealousy and anger "with those who are not a people, with a foolish nation." That word has now been fulfilled. The Gentiles, who were not God's people, have now been accepted as God's people (cf. 9:25-26). The "foolish" Gentiles had both heard and understood the gospel, and thereby had come to faith. Under such circumstances it cannot be said that Israel could not have understood the message she heard.³⁶

In addition to the testimony of Moses Paul turns next to the bold statement of Isaiah 65:1, quoted from the LXX except that the clauses are inverted. The passage repeats essentially what Moses said regarding the Gentiles. Those who were not looking for God and Christ have found Him, and certainly if God was found "and recognized in His character and purposes, where all the conditions seemed so much

³⁶Nygren, op. cit., p. 387.

against it, surely Israel must be inexcusable if it has missed the meaning of the Gospel. The very calling of the Gentiles, predicted and interpreted as it is in the passages quoted, should itself have been a message to the Jews, which they could not misunderstand; it should have opened their eyes as with a lightning flash to the position in which they stood -- that of men who had forfeited their place among the people of God -- and provoked them, out of jealousy, to vie with these outsiders in welcoming the righteousness of faith."³⁷

The last quotation taken from Isaiah 65:2, both contrasts Israel with the Gentiles and also summarizes Paul's entire section on Israel. In response to the poignant plea of God, a plea made with the outstretched arms of love, the Jews have replied with disobedience and opposition. There is no lack of knowledge here then, but only a wilful and stubborn determination to be disobedient. Israel has heard the gospel of the salvation in Christ, but has refused to believe in it. Rather Israel has turned away deliberately to her own righteousness. The inevitable result, that which had to follow as surely as day follows night, is summarized by Nygren:

Israel does not believe, therefore rejection is inescapable. Israel has both heard and understood the message -- but rejected it in disobedience and

³⁷Denney, op. cit., pp. 674-675.

unbelief. Therefore she has now been rejected herself. That has taken place in entire harmony with Scripture and prophecy. So the rejection of the Jews is not a point against Paul's gospel; it rather bears witness for it.³⁸

In summary, the apostle Paul has in Chapters nine and ten pursued the following line of argument. After his lament over Israel's opposition to the Gospel and apparent rejection in spite of its grand advantages, the Apostle has shown that one must not think that Israel has really been rejected; there is a distinction to be made between the true Israel and the merely external Israel; the former has not been rejected.

Of course, says Paul, concerning the true Israel, the spiritual Israel, one must not forget that its favorable status is due entirely to God's grace. The doctrine of divine grace must be held against the scoffer who thinks that this view of divine grace demolishes human responsibility. Nobody has a right to criticize God.

This is all the more clear when one considers that God shows great mercy even toward those that are lost through their own fault. Again, His mercy shows itself in all brightness when one beholds what He does for those that are saved both from Jews and Gentiles. Yes, some are saved, even from the Jews. This is a remnant, evidently another term for the spiritual Israel. That the number is small is due

³⁸Nygren, op. cit., p. 388.

to the unwillingness of the majority to accept salvation by faith. Israel, generally speaking, shows zeal without knowledge. Salvation has come in Christ and whoever accepts Him is rescued. The trouble with the great mass of Israel is that while it heard the Gospel, which went out into all the world, it did not believe it. It should have accepted it; even Gentiles did, but Israel manifested stubborn antagonism, exactly as its attitude had been pictured in the Old Testament.

Has Israel then been rejected by God? With this question Paul returns directly to the vital issue of Chapter nine. The question is natural after what has preceded. The *CU* intimates that the question is based on the conclusion reached in Chapter ten. Paul had to ask it to finish out his discussion, for the concluding thought of Chapter ten is that Israel has been rejected. But Paul now goes on to show that the true Israel has not been rejected. This is necessary as *Wright* points out:

What would the situation be if Paul added nothing more? It would then mean that Israel's rejection is final; that God intended it that way, and Israel deserved it. But that is not what Paul means to say.

Paul justifies his negative answer to the question by demonstrating (1) that the true Israel has not been rejected (11:1-10), (2) that through the fall of the physical Israel

CHAPTER V

11:1-36 THE TRUE ISRAEL SHALL BE SAVED, BUT THE MAJORITY OF THE PHYSICAL ISRAEL SHALL BE LOST. THIS IS TO BE A WARNING TO THE GENTILES, WHO HAVE BEEN SAVED BY GOD'S MERCY.

A. 11:1-10 A Remnant of the Jews Will be Saved as Scripture Itself Testifies.

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¹Anders Nygren, Commentary on Romans (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1949), p. 390.

the Gentiles have received salvation (11:11-24), and (3) that finally the true Israel shall be saved through the mercy of God, to whom be glory forever (11:25-36).

That Paul intends to receive a negative answer is brought out by the $\mu\eta$ and strengthened by the familiar $\mu\eta \gamma\acute{\epsilon}\nu\omicron\iota\tau\omicron$. That God would reject His people is a thought which is impossible for Paul to entertain. And as proof of this fact Paul immediately mentions himself. He himself was an Israelite of the tribe of Benjamin and if God had rejected all of Israel Paul also would have been rejected. This, however, is not the case. As Godet writes:

The apostle takes a first answer, by way of preface from his own case. Is not he, a Jew of well-approved Israelitish descent, by the call which he has received from above, a living proof that God has not cast away en masse and without distinction the totality of His ancient people?²

Another view, however, takes these words to be an explanation of the $\mu\eta \gamma\acute{\epsilon}\nu\omicron\iota\tau\omicron$. Paul would then mean, "I, too, am an Israelite, to whom the very idea of God's rejection of His people is an impious and incredible idea, to be repelled with horror." Thus Denney states:

But this (the former explanation) is hardly conciliatory, to say the least; and it is better to take the words as explaining why Paul puts the question with

²F. Godet, St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, translated by Rev. A. Cusin (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1883), p. 391.

μή (suggesting the negative answer), and why he then gives the denial with such vehemence.³

The first view seems to be the most natural line of thought for Paul. The attributes of Paul ἔκ σπέρματος Ἰβραάμ and φυλῆς Βενιαμίν add weight to this view as much as to the other also. Paul was as pure blooded an Israelite as could be found anywhere and God had certainly not rejected him.

No, God has not rejected his people, Paul continues in verse two. λαόν is evidently the true Israel as is brought out by the words which qualify that people, ὃν προέγνω. The relative clause takes on a causal meaning. Israel is God's people because God foreknew them. Here, immediately, Paul speaks of the true Israel and not the entire nation of Israel. As he has definitely stated in 9:6, this distinction must be borne in mind continually, especially in this last chapter. Hence commentators such as Sanday & Headlam begin with an erroneous opinion which colors their entire interpretation. They write:

The reference in this chapter is throughout to the election of the nation as a whole, and therefore the words cannot have a limiting sense (orig. Chrys. Aug.), "that people whom He foreknew," i. e. those of His people whom He foreknew; nor again can they possibly refer to the spiritual Israel, as that would oblige

³James Denney, "St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans," The Expositor's Greek Testament, edited by W. Robertson Nicoll (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., n. d.), II, 675.

a meaning to be given to λαός different from that in verse one.⁴

προέγνω here has the same meaning as in Chapter eight. It must mean more than mere intellectual foreknowledge. Rather a definite operation of the will is involved. Paul is thinking here of προέγνω in the Hebraistic sense, which always included the idea of an operation of the will in the word "to know", יָדַע , cf. Genesis 4:1. God, from all eternity, willed that Israel should be His people, and decided what they would get to be, as Hofmann notes. This, of necessity, refers then to the true, believing Israel. Stoeckhardt comments:

Gott hat schon im Voraus, schon von Ewigkeit her sein Volk sich ansehen, sich zuerkannt, in seinem ewigen Rath und Beschluss es zu seinem Eigenthum gemacht. Und darum ist die spätere Verstossung dieses seines Volks ein Ding der Unmöglichkeit. Denn Gott ist nicht ein Mensch, dass er die, welche er im Voraus sich ansehen, welche er erwählt und angenommen hat, dann wieder von sich stossen sollte, dass er das, was er beschlossen und vorherbestimmt, dann wieder fallen lassen sollte.⁵

That God has not rejected the true Israel is shown us by Scripture and the case of Elijah. ἢ οὐκ οἶδατε means "if you don't admit this, you must be ignorant of,

⁴William Sanday and Arthur Headlam, "The Epistle to the Romans," International Critical Commentary, edited by Samuel Driver, Alfred Plummer and Charles Briggs (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1896), p. 310.

⁵George Stoeckhardt, Brief Pauli an die Romer. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1907), p. 508.

etc." It expresses an alternative. The expression $\xi\upsilon$
 Ἡλίας means simply that Paul is quoting from that por-
tion of the Old Testament which contained the story of
Elijah. ἐντορχάνειν means to accuse someone. Elijah
was bringing an accusation against his people. From his
viewpoint it seemed as though all love for Jehovah had
disappeared. They had killed the prophets and demolished
God's altars. Elijah seemed to be the last servant of God,
and even his life was in danger. The reference is from
I Kings 19:10,14. Denney remarks:

In Elijah's mood, Paul might have said something
similar of his own time, for their circumstances
were not alike. "alike" is evidently a misprint
for "unlike. The Apostle, like the prophet, was
lonely and persecuted, and Israel as a whole seemed
to have abandoned God or been abandoned by Him.
But he understands God's way (and His faithfulness)
better.⁶

In verse four Paul gives God's reply to Elijah's cry.

χρηματισμός means "the oracle", the divine answer,
only used here in the New Testament. What was this divinum
testamentum? Despite the facts which Elijah gives God
assures him there are some seven thousand men who have not
bowed down to the false gods which Jezebel and Ahab intro-
duced into Israel. Lenski gives the following details:

Paul cites the Hebrew, "I left back for myself," and
not the LXX, "Thou shalt leave back" because it
matches "his" (God's) people" (v. 1,2). He also has
the feminine for "Baal" and not the LXX masculine.

⁶Denney, op. cit., p. 676.

Baal is masculine, but the Jews called this abominable idol boseeth, "shame" (a word of feminine gender), and in the Greek αἰσχρῶν (again feminine); in I Kings 18:25, the LXX translate, "the prophets of the Shame."⁷

The inference of this passage is stated by Paul in verse five, namely, "even so, at the present time, there is a remnant left, chosen by God's grace." As at the time of Elijah there was a remnant left, who were the true Israel, and whom God did not reject, even so now there is a remnant, who are the true Israel, and whom God does not reject. Nygren describes this remnant quite accurately thus:

"Remnant" and "election," λείμμα and ἐκλογή are thus interchangeable concepts. A "remnant" is not just a group of separate individuals, taken out of a people doomed to overthrow; it is itself the chosen people, it is Israel in nuce. It is the seed which, after the winter, will bear the harvest. In the "remnant" Israel lives on as the people of God, but in such a way that all human pretensions are excluded, and all is left absolutely in God's hand. God's free and sovereign grace decides who shall belong to the "remnant"; for it is implicit in this concept that not all of Israel, but only that part thereof, which God in His grace has determined, shall be bearer of the promise to Israel.⁸

However, it should be noted that Nygren, if he were entirely consistent in believing that λείμμα and ἐκλογή are interchangeable terms, would not only call the λείμμα the kernel out of which the tree and fruit would grow, but

⁷R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans (Columbus: Wartburg Press, 1945), p. 682.

⁸Nygren, op. cit., p. 393.

the tree itself. Certainly ἔκλογή does not imply some future development into something different, but is the end of God's purpose in election itself. Hence, λείμμα must be the true Israel at the time of Elijah, and not primarily something out of which the true Israel would grow at a later date.

The remnant is such because of God's grace. Even as in 9:6-13 where the election of some is due entirely to God's mercy, so here. Denney writes, "The existence of the remnant is due to an election of grace, a choice on the part of God the motive of which is to be sought in His unmerited love alone."⁹ This excludes any idea of synergism, as Paul himself notes in verse six. He says, "If the remnant is such because of grace, then it is in no way dependent upon works, for otherwise grace would no longer be grace." Sanday & Headlam explain these words as:

A further explanation of the principles of election. If the election had been on the basis of works, then the Jews might have demanded that God's promise could only be fulfilled if all who had earned it had received it; St. Paul, by reminding them of the principles of election already laid down, implies that the promise is fulfilled if the remnant is saved. God's people are those whom He has chosen; it is not that the Jews are chosen because they are His people.¹⁰

And Nygren adds that the "remnant" "comes before God with no claims; it knows it is wholly dependent on God's

⁹Denney, op. cit., pp. 676-677.

¹⁰Sanday & Headlam, op. cit., p. 313.

grace. Therefore, as the spiritual Israel, it now receives the fulfillment of the promise."¹¹ Ἐπεὶ is translated "for otherwise." Grace must stand absolutely or not at all.¹²

The summary of the discussion of verses two to six is stated in verse seven. τί οὖν; What then is the results? Israel has not found that which it sought after so zealously by their own works, namely, δικαιοσύνη as known from 9:30 ff. On the other hand the ἐκλογή (the abstract for the concrete), has obtained this righteousness. And for their persistent unbelief the rest of Israel were hardened. Sanday & Headlam correctly note, "They have not failed because they have been hardened, but they have been hardened because they have failed; cf. 1:24 ff., where sin is represented as God's punishment inflicted on man for their rebellion."¹³ To be noted here once more, is the careful manner in which Paul speaks of election and hardening, even as in Chapter nine. The majority of Israel refused to believe, and because of this God exercised his righteous judgment and hardened them in their sin. Dr. Arndt writes:

¹¹Nygren, op. cit., pp. 393-394.

¹²various MSS, notably B, L, and several Syriac texts, add εἰ δὲ ἐξ ἔργων οὐκ ἔστι χάρις, ἐπεὶ τὸ ἔργον οὐκ ἔστι ἐργον with some variations. The addition is undoubtedly a gloss in view of the mass of evidence against it. Most MSS omit these words.

¹³Sanday & Headlam, op. cit., p. 313.

They did not want to believe, and finally God said, You shall not believe. That was His righteous punishment. If there were an election to damnation, Paul would have a good opportunity of mentioning it here. But there is not one word about it.¹⁴

Scripture itself can be applied since it prophesied such a penalty many years before. The present hardening of Israel agrees with God's action toward Israel in the past. Drawing a thought common to at least three Old Testament passages, namely Deuteronomy 29:4; Isaiah 29:10, Paul shows that what has happened to the New Testament Jews is something that happened to their fathers long before. In view of their unbelief God has given Israel over to a state of dull insensibility to everything spiritual. It is a condition in which every appeal to them is in vain. Nygren comments:

God lets His promises come to fulfillment in Christ, but Israel lies deep in sleep, so that they do not see it. The Messiah is at hand, but Israel's eyes are darkened, so that they cannot see Him and recognize Him as their Messiah. The gospel is preached over all the earth; Israel hears it (10:18), and yet does not hear it, for hearing has not brought obedience; from ἀκηΐ no ὑπακοΐ has come.¹⁵

And Denney throws a correct light on this quotation when he adds, "It is God Who sends this spirit of stupor, but He does not send it arbitrarily nor at random: it is always a

¹⁴William Arndt, Romans, (St. Louis: Concordia Seminary Mimeograph Co., n.d.), p. 82.

¹⁵Nygren, op. cit., p. 394.

judgment."¹⁶

A Psalm of David bears this out also. Quoting Psalm 69:23,24, Paul uses it as another proof of ἔπιωρώ - θησαν. The psalm is of a suffering theocrat, who is, as such, a type of Messiah and His enemies a type of the unbelieving Jews. The prayer is that these enemies may be punished. ἡ τράπεζα αὐτῶν means the following according to Sanday & Headlam:

The image is that of men feasting in careless security, and overtaken by their enemies, owing to the very prosperity which ought to be their strength. So to the Jews that Law and those Scriptures wherein they trusted are to become the very cause of their fall and the snare or hunting-net in which they are caught.¹⁷

What the Jews delighted in most, the Law, was to become both a stumbling block and a punishment for them. Commenting on καὶ εἰς ἀνταπόδομα αὐτοῖς Denney writes:

This does not exactly reproduce either the Hebrew or the LXX, but it involves the idea that the fate of the Jews is the recompense of their sin -- not a result to be simply referred to a decree of God. Their perverse attitude to the law is avenged in their incapacity to understand and receive the Gospel.¹⁸

Verse ten again speaks of the spiritual blindness which would descend upon the Jews, keeping them from discerning the truth of salvation, cf. v. 8. Finally the same thought is expressed in another figure. τὸν νῶτον αὐτῶν

¹⁶Denney, op. cit., p. 677.

¹⁷Sanday & Headlam, op. cit., p. 315.

¹⁸Denney, op. cit., p. 678.

διὰ παντὸς σύγκομψον, Israel will continually be kept in spiritual bondage; it will not have the strength or ability to understand spiritual things. Meyer explains:

"And bend their back always," denoting the keeping them in bondage of the unfree condition of the inner life produced by the *πώρωσις*.¹⁹

Hence, here too, Paul is speaking of the hardening of the heart. It is final, complete hardening as *διὰ παντός* states. The Jews have been hardened forever because of their unbelief. Certainly no future general conversion of Israel can be considered in the light of these words.

Thus Paul shows that God has not really rejected the true Israel, His people. A portion of them, in fact most of them, have been hardened, it is true. Yet the true Israel, the remnant who believe, shall be saved, proving that Israel has not been rejected by God.

¹⁹Heinrich A. W. Meyer, "Epistle to the Romans," Meyer's Commentary on the New Testament, edited by Heinrich Meyer and translated by John C. Moore (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1884), V, 432.

B. 11:11-24 Israel's Fall has Meant Salvation for the Gentiles. The Illustration of the Olive Tree.

In verse eleven Paul returns to the great mass of Israel in general. It has been noted how Paul can, at the same time, say that God has rejected Israel and that He has not rejected Israel, depending which Israel he is speaking of. The remnant, the true Israel, has not been rejected. But "Israel according to the flesh" has been rejected. Now what? Is that all? By no means, Paul goes on to show in these verses. Nygren writes:

In what has just preceded, Paul has thought mainly of "the remnant" which, by its very existence, testifies that God has not rejected His people. Now he turns his attention to "Israel according to the flesh," which has been rejected; he asks, "Have they stumbled so as to fall?" Are the fall and the rejection God's ultimate purpose for the people of Israel? Paul answers, "By no means! But through their transgression salvation has come to the Gentiles, so as to make Israel jealous."²⁰

Paul asks first, "Was this fall of Israel's an utter disaster? Was the sole result of their stumbling to be an absolutely hopeless universal hardening of Israel?" The subject of ²¹ *ἐπιτροπῆν* must therefore be all those Jews living at the time of Paul who had not yet turned to Christ. The verb meaning "stumbling," is contrasted with the following one, *πέσωσιν*, meaning a falling away into eternal damnation. The *ἴνα* must be translated to express re-

²⁰Nygren, op. cit., p. 395.

sult and not purpose, giving us the meaning, "Was this the sum total result of Israel's stumbling, namely, that they fell forever, and that's that?" *μὴ γένοιτο*, Paul counters. There is more to be said than just this one result. The greater result is that through the transgression of the Jews, salvation has come to the Gentiles, and that still is not all. This very conversion of the Gentiles will in turn make Israel jealous, to the point that perhaps some will turn once more to that which they have rejected. As Godet writes:

But that is not all. Wonderful result! Israel, having been unwilling to concur with God in saving the Gentiles, must end by being themselves saved through their salvation. It is undoubtedly a humiliation for them to be the last to enter where they should have introduced all others; but on God's part it is the height of mercy. Here is the more remote end (for which the conversion of the Gentiles becomes a means), which Paul indicates in the words borrowed from the passage of Moses quoted above, 10:19: "to provoke them to jealousy."²¹

Thus there is a double sequel to the falling of Israel. The Gentiles have gained salvation and through them perhaps some Jews also will turn to Christ.

This thought leads Paul to an even more joyful prospect. He says, "Now if their transgression means riches for the world, and if their failure means riches for the Gentiles, how much more does their full inclusion mean!" The meaning of *τὸ ἥπτημα αὐτῶν* and *πλήρωμα*

²¹Godet, op. cit., p. 399.

involves several difficulties. Some commentators feel that the idea of number must be introduced into them. However this interpretation is often the result of a millennialistic background. Regarding τὸ ἥττημα Stoeckhardt writes:

Der Letztere Ausdruck bedeutet nicht Minderzahl, sondern, wie I Cor. 6:7, dasselbe, wie das classische ἥττημα, nämlich Niederlage, Verlust, Schaden. Der Schaden ist gemeint, den die Juden mit ihrem Unglauben sich zugezogen haben.²²

The meaning of πλήρωμα becomes clearer if we look at its use in 11:25. There the totality of all believing Gentiles is unmistakably meant and so here it must mean the totality of all believing Jews, both those who have been elected^{call} and those who will be elected^{call}. Again we refer to Stoeckhardt:

Wie der Ausdruck τὸ πλήρωμα τῶν ἐθνῶν, 11:25, auf diejenigen Heiden geht, die wirklich ins Reich Gottes eingehen, wie der Begriff κόσμος, Heidenwelt in unserm Vers alle die Heiden umfasst, welche factisch den Reichtum Christi erlangen, so umspannt der Begriff Pleroma der Juden alle die Juden, welche factisch des Heils in Christo theilhaftig werden, während wir bei dem παράπτωμα αὐτῶν und dem ἥττημα αὐτῶν an die Juden zu denken haben, welche nicht glauben und verloren gehen.²³

The sense is not that, if the Jewish loss made the world rich, then the Jewish gain will make it even richer.

Rather, as Lenski points out it is this:

²²Stoeckhardt, op. cit., p. 516.

²³Ibid.

If the Jewish loss makes the world rich (which it surely does), this fact stands out as such still more when many of these very Jews themselves now embrace this fulness, these riches. First, contrast makes the riches stand out; compare with those who throw away wealth and beggar themselves those who gather it in appear rich indeed; secondly, likeness does the same, the more so when it follows the contrast: those foolish beggars, repenting of their folly and again getting the fulness of that wealth, by this more than ever show that this is wealth indeed.²⁴

The manner in which this verse is interpreted is important because the decision reached here will largely color the later interpretation of 11:26. And those who later interpret that verse to mean a general conversion of Israel here also feel that such a future conversion is meant. This view, however, seems difficult to hold in view of the fact that Paul has just finished saying that only the true Israel, the remnant can be considered as Israel, verses five to seven. To make *πλήρωμα* more than this remnant flies in the face of all that Paul has said on this point.

In verse thirteen Paul addresses the Roman Christians for the first time as such and explains something to them. He says that as long as he is the special apostle of the Gentiles he will magnify and honor his ministry, not only for the single thought of saving as many Gentiles as possible, but also in the hope that some of his brothers may be pro-

²⁴Lenski, op. cit., p. 694.

voked to jealousy by this turn of events and be saved.

Denney writes:

His (Paul's) mission to the Gentiles has an indirect bearing on his own countrymen; the more successful he can make it, the greater is the prospect that some of the Jews also may be provoked to jealousy and saved.²⁵

The *τινός* in verse fourteen is worthy of mention. Paul says "some." Paul has no hope of the conversion of all the Jews. He is thinking only in terms of the "remnant."

Verse fifteen offers the explanation pointed to earlier in verse twelve, and tells why Paul might well glorify his ministry. "For if the casting away of them means the reconciliation of the world, what is the receiving of them but life from the dead?" Prof. Bartling enlarges:

That "receiving" went on in part through Paul's ministry; it goes on today; it goes on wherever and whenever "some" Jews are saved. The casting away of the hardened Jewish nation brought the reconciliation of God to the Gentile world through the coming of the Gospel to the Gentiles. That's the one side; the other is that whenever now a Jew, one of the elect remnant, is received into the Kingdom it is like "life from the dead." Conversion of Gentiles is that also (Eph. 2:5,6), but it is eminently so in the case of conversions in a nation so conspicuously hardened and dead as the Jewish nation.²⁶

Many commentators interpret verse fifteen eschatologically. This can be done only at the expense of the Greek

²⁵Denney, *op. cit.*, p. 679.

²⁶Victor Bartling, "All Israel Shall be Saved, Rom. 11:26," *Concordia Theological Monthly* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1941), XII, 643.

text, for it necessitates the insertion of verbs where Paul has none, and verbs of the future tense at that. Generally this forces them to view *πρόσλημθίς* either as "a glorious boom era of the Church of Christ Jesus, or the final resurrection of the dead, which is supposed to follow after that future conversion, even though the final resurrection is always called *ἀνάστασις ἐκ νεκρῶν*, never *ζωὴ ἐκ νεκρῶν*."²⁷ This would therefore be another instance of Paul's use of the verbless "presentative sentence." Lenski demonstrates that this is a construction parallel to verse twelve where the verbs are also omitted, and also points out that to add the future tense leads to misapplications of Paul's predicate.²⁸ An example of this is unfortunately given us by Dodd:

But Paul's use of all this eschatological mythology is fluctuating and somewhat uncertain. The general sense probably is that he cannot conceive of the process of history reaching its consummation until, as it were, the loose ends of the divine purpose have been gathered together, so that the universe must wait for its final destiny of blessedness until Israel has been brought to God.²⁹

Continuing that part of his message meant particularly for the Gentiles Paul warns them in verses sixteen to twenty-

²⁷Bartling, *op. cit.*, p. 643.

²⁸Lenski, *op. cit.*, p. 700.

²⁹C. H. Dodd, "The Epistle of Paul to the Romans," *Moffat New Testament Commentary* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1932), p. 178.

four against becoming falsely proud over their position of mercy. He begins with two axiomatic statements. "If the dough offered as first-fruits is holy, so is the whole lump; and if the root is holy, so are the branches." Regarding the first figure, that of a lump of dough, the meaning of the apostle is simply that as the part is, so is the whole. Paul had in mind the Old Testament scene of the offering of first-fruits (the firstborn, the first sheaf of grain harvested, the first portion of dough removed from the whole kneaded lump of dough). The same meaning is brought out by the second illustration, pertaining to root and branches. The branches of a tree can be in no better or worse condition than the roots. What and who are meant by these figures? Undoubtedly the first portion and the root are either Abraham or Abraham, Isaac and Jacob taken together. The lump of dough and the branches are then all of their spiritual descendents or the believing Israelites as Paul has been so careful to make clear, 9:7. Thus the *πρόσληψις* of verse fifteen corresponds with the character of holiness of the true Israel from its origin until Paul's time.

Paul next takes up the figure of the olive tree and branches and enlarges on it. He introduces the unusual figure of wild olive branches grafted on to the domesticated trunk, just the reverse of what is usually done. Various reasons have been suggested for Paul's doing this, some saying, for example that Paul was a city-bred person and did

not know the intricacies of this type of work. However Lenski seems to have caught the spirit of Paul in using them when he writes:

The reason is the fact that in the whole world of nature and of men nothing exists that is comparable to what God's love and grace have done and still do. It is for this reason that illustrations have to be invented of acts that never happen among men but, nevertheless, picture the astounding acts of God.³⁰

Proceeding with the illustration itself we find the following picture in the mind of Paul. He addresses a Gentile Christian, one who represents all Gentiles. $\Sigma \acute{\iota}$ is the representative singular. And by speaking in the same connection of "some" we see that Paul does not necessarily have large numbers in mind. It is not of importance for what Paul wants to say to the Gentiles whether few or many Jews were removed or few or many Gentiles substituted. The branches which are broken off are, of course, those Jews who have rejected Christ and His Gospel. On the other hand the Gentile Christians were by nature, originally separate from God. They were part of a wild olive tree completely disconnected from God. But by God's mercy the Gentiles became believers and were grafted onto the fine domestic tree, the people of God. They became branches as truly as those former branches. They were branches on the same basis and enjoyed the same richness as the natural branches.

³⁰Lenski, op. cit., p. 704.

This interpretation, again, is based, on Paul's careful distinction between the true Israel and the physical Israel. In this case the question revolves around the meaning given to the olive tree, whether it is the entire Jewish nation or the remnant, the spiritual Israel. The tertium of the illustration, "the fatness," indicates the latter. Paul has shown that the bulk of the Jewish nation is dead spiritually. Hence there could be no fatness there. Also since those branches which were cut off were treated thus because of their unbelief, v. 20, those remaining must be those who believe and hence part of the spiritual trunk, or spiritual Israel. The thought is the following: even as a fruitful and beneficial sap goes up into a tree and all its branches from the roots, thus bringing life to them all, so the spiritual gifts given to Abraham remain through the tree grown from these roots and are even given to the wild branches grafted in.

In verse eighteen Paul warns the Gentiles who have been saved not to boast over the branches that were cut off, as if they were better. If they should boast, they should not forget that they are not bearing the root, but that rather the root is nourishing them. The thought is that they have reason to be thankful to Israel, through which blessings have come to them. Stoeckhardt explains:

Die Meinung ist also die: Was deinem Christenstand, du Heidenchrist, Kraft und Halt gibt, das ist deine Verbindung mit der Wurzel, mit der Verheissung, die

den Vätern Israels geworden ist, und die jetzt die Form des Evangelium angenommen hat. Nur so lange ein Christ aus Gottes Wort Saft, Kraft, Leben saugt und einzieht, bleibt er auch ein lebendiges Glied der Gemeinde Gottes.³¹

Paul continues his discussion with the presumptuous Gentile in verse nineteen. "You will say, 'Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in.'" $\kappa\alpha\lambda\omega\varsigma$ answers Paul with a touch of irony. But he denies at once the implication of superiority. He says, "Those branches were broken off because of their unbelief, but you stand fast only through faith. So do not become proud and high-minded, but stand in awe and fear." Here Paul points out the former branches were not broken off because the branches of the wild tree were better. That is not the case at all. Rather they should reconsider the true facts of the case, namely that everything is dependent upon faith. Nygren summarizes Paul's thought thus:

But what was it that caused Israel's fall? It was their unbelief; or, in other words, Israel fell because they trusted in their advantage, and were not disposed to accept all by the free grace of God. "They were broken off because of their unbelief, but you stand fast only through faith. So do not become proud, but stand in awe." Paul knows that the same temptation that caused Israel's fall also confronts the Christian and constitutes a grave peril for him. The Jew says, "I belong to God's own people." He puts his confidence in circumcision and the promises of the fathers. In his complacency he refuses faith. But in exactly similar manner, the Christian is tempted to say, "I belong to the spiritual Israel." He is

³¹Stoeckhardt, op. cit., p. 526.

tempted to put his confidence in his own faith, his Christianity.³²

And as Denney adds:

The security of the Gentiles depended on faith, and it is the most elementary principle of a religion of faith (3:27) that it excludes boasting.³³

Paul's admonition which follows is well put since everything must be focused on faith. "Be not high-minded but fear. For if God did not spare the natural branches neither will he spare you." Humanly speaking the Jews can be said to have had a slight edge over the Gentiles in that they were the natural branches. Yet even this fact did not help them. Surely then it will be of no help to the Gentiles to glory falsely in their position. If they do not have true faith God will cut them off even more quickly than the Jews were broken off.

The main points to be considered by the Gentile are rather the kindness and sternness of God as revealed by this story of the olive tree. On the one hand the severity of God is to be noted in the condition of the unbelieving Jews. They were broken off from the tree because of their unbelief. On the other hand the kindness of God can be seen in the fact that God has given his salvation to those who were once pagan. The meaning is given by Lenski:

The implication is that this beneficence on the part

³²Nygren, op. cit., p. 401.

³³Denney, op. cit., p. 681.

of God should fill the Gentile beneficiary with profoundest gratitude toward God. Such gratitude keeps out all false pride and glorying, all presumption and false feeling of security.³⁴

A condition must be met too. The Gentiles will share this kindness of God only as long as they believe in it and remain in it through faith. In order to have it they would have to continue to trust in it. Only as long as they keep themselves aware of their indebtedness to God for what they have, will they be able to remain in that favorable condition. $\epsilon\tau\epsilon\iota$ as in verse six means "for otherwise." The Gentile Christians, above all must remain humble, otherwise their fate will be the same as that of the Jews. Nygren notes:

Pride and self-exaltation are unbelief; that is to put one's confidence in oneself, as if one's own superiority were the reason for acceptance by God. That is to reverse the relation between the tree and the branches, between the root and the branches, as if the branches bore the root, rather than the opposite. In that way one does not build on the cornerstone, Christ, but on himself; and then Christ becomes the stone that makes men stumble.³⁵

The other alternative is also possible as Paul states in verse twenty-three. If the unbelieving Jews do not persist in their unbelief they too can be grafted into the tree once more, for God certainly has this power to graft them in again. The Gentile Christian is to remember what Paul has

³⁴Lenski, op. cit., p. 709.

³⁵Nygren, op. cit., p. 402.

already said repeatedly (in vv. 1-11), that Israel is not cut off in toto. The same grace which the Gentile believer has is open to the Jews under the same condition of faith. There is a chance for the unbelieving Jews to be grafted back into the tree. If he repents, a sinner can once more return to God's grace. And again, humanly speaking, this would be easier for God to do than it was for Him to make a Gentile a believer since the Jews are the natural branches in the first place. Lenski gives us the gist of Paul's argument:

The argument is this: if God is able to perform two acts in saving the Gentile, how much more will he be able to perform the one act which is alone required to save a Jew? Looked at from this angle, we must, indeed, say that it is a tremendous deed to pry a pagan loose from his paganism, to which is then added the task of uniting him with the very covenant (Abraham) from which the Jews fell away. Now a Jew does not need the former operation, for he is already free from paganism; he needs only to be restored to "his own olive tree." The point, however, is not that it is much easier to save a Jew than a pagan. The same great power of grace is required to save either. The point is that, if God has done a thing that one must consider "contrary to nature," he certainly demonstrates that he is able also to do a thing which we must consider as "in accord with nature."³⁶

With this statement regarding the possibility of Israel's being saved if they turn to Christ, Paul prepares the way for his final statements in regard to the "remnant according to an election of grace" (v. 5) which is also

³⁶Lenski, op. cit., pp. 712-713.

called "the election" (v. 7), of whose being grafted into their own olive tree he has just spoken. And once more he turns from the Gentiles to his own brothers, the true Israel.

English texts of these two much-disputed verses. They are as follows, the English being the Revised Standard Version and the Greek that of Nestle's text:

1. "Lest you be wise in your own conceits, I want you to understand this mystery, brethren: a hardening has come upon part of Israel, until the full number of the Gentiles come in, and so all Israel will be saved."³⁷

2. ὅτι γὰρ θέλω ὑμᾶς ἀγαθῶν ἀδελφοί, τὸ μυστήριον τοῦτο, ἵνα οὐκ ἔτε ἐν ἑαυτοῖς φρονῆτε, ὅτι πῶρος ἀπὸ μέρους τῆς Ἰσραὴλ γέγονεν ἄρα ὅς τὸ πλήρωμα τῶν ἐθνῶν εἰσαλεῖται, καὶ οὕτως πᾶς Ἰσραὴλ σωθήσεται."³⁸

The sentence begins with the explanatory conjunction γὰρ, which links it to the preceding argument regarding the remnant (vv. 5, 7, 14), and to the receipt of the Gentiles running through the whole argument. The ἀδελφοί addressed are the Gentiles as is shown by the contrast with

³⁷The New Testament, Revised Standard Version (New York: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1946), p. 343.

³⁸Novum Testamentum Graece, edited by Eberhard Nestle and Erwin Nestle (Stuttgart: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1948), p. 345.

C. 11:25-36 Israel is Hardened Only in Part, and the True Israel will be Saved by the Mercy of God, to Whom be Glory and Praise Forever.

It will be well to state both the Greek and the English texts of these two much-disputed verses. They are as follows, the English being the Revised Standard Version and the Greek that of Nestle's text:

1. Lest you be wise in your own conceits, I want you to understand this mystery, brethren: a hardening has come upon part of Israel, until the full number of the Gentiles come in, and so all Israel will be saved.³⁷

2. Οὐ γὰρ θέλω ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν,
ἀδελφοί, τὸ μυστήριον τοῦτο, ἵνα μὴ ᾔτε
ἐν ἑαυτοῖς φρόνιμοι, ὅτι πῶρως ἀπὸ
μέρους τῷ Ἰσραὴλ γέγονεν ἄχρι οὗ
τὸ πλήρωμα τῶν ἐθνῶν εἰσέλθῃ, καὶ
οὕτως πᾶς Ἰσραὴλ σωθήσεται.³⁸

The sentence begins with the explanatory conjunction γὰρ, which links it to the preceding argument concerning the remnant (vv. 5, 7, 14), and to the warning of the Gentiles running through the whole argument. The ἀδελφοί addressed are the Gentiles as is shown by the contrast with

³⁷The New Testament, Revised Standard Version (New York: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1946), p. 343.

³⁸Novum Testamentum Graece, edited by Eberhard Nestle and Erwin Nestle (Stuttgart: Privilegierte Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1948), p. 415.

the Jews and also by verses twenty-eight and twenty-nine. Paul tells these "brethren" that he would not have them ignorant of a *μυστήριον*. What this word itself means is ably stated by Bartling:

A "mystery" is not necessarily something abstruse and difficult to understand. In pagan religion "mystery" was a technical term to denote a "secret" or "secret doctrine" known only to the initiated, which they were not at liberty to disclose. In New Testament usage, however, a mystery is "not a thing which must be secret. On the contrary, it is a secret which God wills to make known, and has charged His apostles to declare, to those who have ears to hear it."³⁹

The reason Paul tells his readers this mystery is that they may not be "wise in their own conceits." He does not want them to jump to conclusions based on their own limited observation of the Jew over against the Gospel.

The contents of the mystery are three-fold:

1. Hardening of the heart has come upon Israel in part. With this phrase Paul looks back to and condenses verse eight, "The rest were hardened, the election obtained." Once more he is thinking of the remnant, the election, the "some" that can and will be saved (11:1-5, 7, 14; cf. 1:16; 10:11-16). This *πύρωσις* is the same judicial, punitive, final petrification, the result of self-hardening, which we find in verse eight. Petrification, hardening, Verstockung, has come upon part of Israel. *ἀπὸ μέρους*.

³⁹Bartling, op. cit., p. 644.

says Paul. In other words this condition does not apply to all of Israel. One cannot say that there is no hope for all of Israel. Not all the unbelievers are hardened in their unbelief. Certainly these two words cannot be taken in a temporal sense, in the light of verse seventeen, ΤΙΝΕΣ τῶν κλάδων ; 28b, κατὰ δὲ τὴν ἐκλογὴν ἀγαπητοί ; or 14, ΤΙΝΑΣ ἔξ αὐτῶν .

2. "Till the fulness of the Gentiles have entered." Having stated positively that only a part of Israel has been hardened and that for the rest a special period of grace has been granted by God, Paul now gives us the temporal extension of that period of grace, as is brought out by the subjunctive εἰσέλθῃ , the time being indefinite. "Come in" has no expressed terminus. But as the usage of the word in the gospels makes clear, the understood terminus is the final consummation of the kingdom of God.⁴⁰ This is the force of the temporal conjunction ἄχρι οὗ also. There has been very much written by the various commentators regarding its meaning. Here it marks nothing more than the end of this period of grace. The partial hardening will last until the "fulness of the Gentiles" has come in; Paul is in no way implying that then it will cease or that anything else will follow that terminus beside what Scripture tells us, viz. Matt. 24:14, that the end will come. However

⁴⁰cf. Matt. 5:20 with 23:13 and 7:13.

this conjunction has been interpreted to mean that the petrification will go on until the "fulness of the Gentiles have come in" and then it will be converted into softness and a period of special grace for the entire Jewish nation. Such a view is untenable as Lenski notes, "When judicial hardening sets in, it is final. It could not be judicial if it were not final. See 9:18. The $\pi\acute{\omega}\rho\omega\sigma\iota\varsigma$ is doom."⁴¹ Thus what Paul means to say is that this period of grace for the Jews coexists with that of the Gentiles "until the fulness of the Gentiles have come in." As Bartling observes:

There are three coextensive lines: (1) Gentiles coming into the Kingdom; (2) a part of Israel hardened; (3) a part of Israel which is not hardened and which, as the whole chapter shows, is the elect remnant whose "reception" is like "life from the dead."⁴²

Hence $\acute{\alpha}\chi\rho\iota\ \circ\acute{\upsilon}$ signifies that these three conditions will go on simultaneously until some future terminus. But it signifies nothing regarding what happens after that terminus. That will depend upon the nature of the situation, and what that will be has been given us by Jesus: $\kappa\alpha\iota\ \tau\acute{o}\tau\epsilon\ \tau\acute{o}\ \tau\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\omicron\varsigma$. Bartling writes:

What, then, about the Jewish petrification? Is it to be replaced by the opposite, the living heart of faith? No. Is it to continue? No, again. The end has come;

⁴¹Lenski, op. cit., p. 721.

⁴²Bartling, op. cit., p. 647.

"no more Gospel against which to set hearts of stone, no more salvation to reject with adamant opposition." Walther says: "after the entering of the Gentiles, that is, after Judgment Day, we can as little speak of a continued partial hardening of Israel as of a showing forth of the Lord's death after He has come, I Cor. 11:26."⁴³

τὸ πλήρωμα is here the total number of the elect Gentiles. Only absolute restitutionists have dared to suggest that it could mean all Gentiles without exception, and to do this is to cast aside completely Paul's frequent statements, to the contrary to say nothing of the rest of the Bible. To quote Lenski once more:

"The fulness of the Gentiles" is their full number. On this expression, too, debate has needlessly centered. Only an exegete would surmise that the totality of Gentile nations is referred to, and then think that the Jewish nation would come in as the last and final nation. Nor does "fulness" mean all the Gentiles in the world. The fulness of the Gentiles equals the number of Gentile believers, all the sheep "not of this fold," which Jesus will also bring (John 10:16). Here the word refers to number.⁴⁴

3. "And thus all Israel will be saved." For most commentators these words have been the basis for the bulk of their discussion. They have been interpreted in many and varied ways. Augustine was one of the first to give them his own particular meaning when he voiced the opinion that Elijah and Enoch would return and convert the entire Jewish nation. In the Middle Ages the Venerable Bede spread the

⁴³Bartling, op. cit., p. 647.

⁴⁴Lenski, op. cit., p. 720.

idea of this general conversion and it became fixed in the Catholic Church. The interpreters of the Reformation period returned to a more Biblical view, but Reformed theologians have once more tended to the teaching of a general Jewish conversion. In our times the sentence has been seized upon eagerly by all chiliastic groups who find in it a pseudo-support for their extreme views. Generally the various interpretations fall into two groups, which will be discussed individually.

A. The first group are those generally who feel that $\pi\acute{\alpha}\varsigma \text{ } \text{I}\sigma\text{ρα}\eta\lambda$ means the physical Israel which shall be restored. Their view depends heavily upon making $\kappa\alpha\iota \text{ } \text{O}\acute{\upsilon}\tau\omega\varsigma$ mean "and then." This is questionable Greek and the many passages said to parallel this usage are only too often cited without justification as Lenski shows.⁴⁵ Hence $\kappa\alpha\iota \text{ } \text{O}\acute{\upsilon}\tau\omega\varsigma$ can only signify manner or modality.

It is to be noted that these restitutionists themselves take the term $\pi\acute{\alpha}\varsigma$ with varying degrees of literalness. At one extreme there is the dispensational school which holds that Paul speaks here of every Jew that has lived, is living, or will live. It must be said that if Israel here is the physical Israel, then only these absolute restitutionists are right, who see all the dead hardened Jews

⁴⁵Lenski, op. cit., p. 725. cf. also Stoeckhardt, pp. 542-543.

raised also to join the generation that is saved after the Gentiles have entered in. Bartling comments:

That indeed does justice to the "all," but at the price of casting the rest of the Bible overboard. These restitutionists, we must grant, at least see the point that the Israel which Paul speaks of includes all generations. Indeed, the progressive saving of Israel is the theme of our chapter. This, however, is generally disregarded, and all attention is centered on the physical Israel of the assumed millennial age.⁴⁶

Most of these interpreters, however, are not willing to make this purely logical and necessary deduction, and whittle it down to mean Israel as a whole, or Israel as a nation.

So Denney:

It means Israel as a whole. Paul is thinking of the historical people, as the contrast with Gentiles shows, but he is not thinking of them one by one. Israel a Christian nation, Israel as a nation a part of the Messianic kingdom, is the content of his thought.⁴⁷

Such a view involves the interpreter in a rather fearful dilemma as Bartling again shows:

But if the petrification in part is to fall away, as they insist, then the "all Israel" must be 100 per cent., and the balancing "fulness of the Gentiles" must be 100 per cent. of the Gentiles -- absolute universalism in both directions! What becomes then, pray, of the Pauline doctrine of the ἐκλογή, the election of grace? (Cf. Rom. 9:6-18, 23, 24, 27; 10:20, 21; 11:4, 5, 28.)⁴⁸

⁴⁶Bartling, op. cit., p. 651.

⁴⁷Denney, op. cit., p. 683. cf. also Sanday & Headlam, p. 335.

⁴⁸Bartling, op. cit., p. 651.

In addition to this difficulty of correctly interpreting *Ἰσραήλ*, the view of Israel as the physical Israel comes to grief at several other points. For one it rides roughshod over everything Paul has said about the distinction between the physical and spiritual Israel. Throughout these three chapters he has been careful to distinguish between the elect in Israel and the nation of Israel.

Bartling reveals the ridiculous nature of this attempt:

Furthermore the opposing view virtually makes Paul say in this verse: "Brethren, I have written three chapters to show that 'they are not all Israel that are of Israel' (9:6). I take that all back: all that are of Israel are Israel, and all Israel shall be saved. It is only too bad that you Gentiles haven't Jewish blood in your veins." This is sufficient in itself to show that the second interpretation is clearly wrong. It involves Paul in self-contradiction and makes him give a priority to the Jews which his whole letter opposes.⁴⁹

Finally this view comes to nought in that it involves a line of thought in direct opposition to *πρώτοις ἀπὸ μέρους* of verse twenty-five. *πρώτοις* and salvation are mutually exclusive terms and no amount of arguing can make them otherwise. Once more we quote Bartling:

Paul does not say that the partial hardening is temporal in the sense of its passing over into non-hardening and conversion. The sequel of hardening is final doom. If the view of the opposition is right, there is no point to Scripture's warning (Heb. 3:8): "Today if ye shall hear His voice, harden not your hearts." At least as far as Israel is concerned, these words should be turned into the promise: "If

⁴⁹Bartling, op. cit., p. 650.

today you hear not His voice and harden your hearts, tomorrow you shall nevertheless all be saved." 50

B. The other view is that $\pi\alpha\varsigma \text{ } \overset{\wedge}{\text{I}}\sigma\rho\alpha\eta\lambda$ refers to all spiritual Israel. By this is meant all the elect of Israel. This is in keeping with the contrast which Paul has been making in the whole section from Chapter nine on. Paul has been making this distinction continually, using various terms. In verse twelve they are the fulness; in verse five they are the remnant; in 9:6-8 they are the spiritual Israel; in 10:27 the remaining part; in 11:7 they are the election of the elect. And here finally they are called "all Israel." Another variation of this interpretation is that $\pi\alpha\varsigma \text{ } \overset{\wedge}{\text{I}}\sigma\rho\alpha\eta\lambda$ means all believers, both Jew and Gentile. This view is based partially on the idea that $\pi\alpha\varsigma \text{ } \overset{\wedge}{\text{I}}\sigma\rho\alpha\eta\lambda$ must imply this, or else be rather redundant to say the least. Yet it is most natural for Paul to say $\pi\alpha\varsigma \text{ } \overset{\wedge}{\text{I}}\sigma\rho\alpha\eta\lambda$ in order to balance his previous statement the "fulness" of the Gentiles. Bartling reflects this balance:

Just as the full number of the Gentiles means all elect and saved Gentiles, so all Israel is the full number of elect and saved Israelites from Abraham to the last Jew before the end of the world who confesses: "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord." 51

It does not seem likely that after he has been so careful to state what the true Israel really is, Paul would now suddenly

50 Bartling, op. cit., p. 650.

51 Bartling, op. cit., p. 648.

bring in the confusing thought that Israel is now more than just that, even though he does use the term in this sense upon occasion (Gal. 6:16). Here, however, Paul is thinking of Israel only from the angle of the "remnant" as he makes clear throughout the discussion. In addition the $\xi\chi\theta\rho\acute{o}\iota$ and $\acute{\alpha}\gamma\alpha\theta\eta\tau\acute{o}\iota$ of verse twenty-eight and the $\omicron\upsilon\tau\omicron\iota$ of verse thirty-one would lose their reference if the total congregation of believers were meant. We should expect also that if Paul were thinking of Israel as meaning the total number of the elect of God he would add $\tau\omicron\upsilon\acute{\sigma}\ \delta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$ as in the Galations passage. Hence $\pi\acute{\alpha}\varsigma\ \text{I}\sigma\text{ρα}\eta\lambda$ here can mean only one thing, namely, all the elect of Israel; all those born Jews who have and will receive Christ as their Savior.

In verses twenty-six and twenty-seven Paul tells what the $\sigma\omega\tau\eta\rho\acute{\iota}\alpha$, the salvation for all Israel, means by quoting from Isaiah 59:20,21 and Isaiah 27:9. "And so all Israel shall be saved, even as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer; He shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. And this is My covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins." With this quotation, drawn from a number of prophetic passages of Isaiah, Paul shows that forgiveness of sins and justification by faith are the salvation of Israel, not a return to Palestine or some external Christian veneration.

These passages uphold and clinch the interpretation just given for verses twenty-five and twenty-six. Bartling observes:

The prophetic passages which Paul quotes in substance happen to be passages that treat not of the last times before the end of the world, but of the entire New Testament, beginning with Christ's first advent. Admittedly they treat of the justification of the Jews who turn from unbelief, and do not treat of a future conversion of all physical Israel, as one should expect if Paul really taught that in his words "all Israel shall be saved."⁵²

That Paul refers to the first advent of Christ is brought out by the $\acute{\epsilon}\kappa \Sigma\iota\omega\nu$. This is a change from both the Hebrew and LXX which have other prepositions for $\acute{\epsilon}\kappa$. Paul does this deliberately, not from a faulty memory as some have suggested.⁵³ No, Paul is definitely thinking of Christ's first advent and uses "out of Zion" instead of "out of heaven," thus ruling out any millennialistic interpretation of these verses. Stoeckhardt summarizes:

Wenn Hofmann, Luthardt und andere Ausleger das Ἡξεῖ ὁ πρῶτος auf den zweiten Advent Christi beziehen und von diesem die Bekehrung der Volksgemeinde Israel abhängig machen, so steht dies in grellem Contrast nicht nur mit dem $\acute{\epsilon}\kappa \Sigma\iota\omega\nu$ sondern auch mit dem Gesamtinhalt des Citats, welches nur von dem Rest Jakobs redet, und überhaupt mit alle dem, was die Schrift von der Wiederkunft Christi und dem Ende der Dinge lehrt. Es liegt auf der Hand, dass Paulus das alttestamentliche Citat als einen Schriftbeleg nur für das $\pi\acute{\alpha}\varsigma \text{ Ἰσραὴλ σωθήσεται}$ einführt, nicht auch für

⁵²Bartling, op. cit., p. 651.

⁵³Denney, op. cit., p. 684.

das καὶ οὕτως, für die v. 25 angegebene Art und Weise der Errettung Israels, von welcher das Prophetenwort nichts sagt.⁵⁴

In verses twenty-eight to twenty-nine Paul tells his Gentile readers two important things about "all Israel," the believing Jews throughout the centuries. Considering the Gospel, these Jews are at first unbelieving, "enemies," but not hardened. Paul does not say they have been petrified as with the "rest" in verse seven. When the Gentile Christians look at the Jews in their unbelief and hostility, Paul wants them to distinguish those whose unbelief has not advanced to hardening and then wants these Gentile Christians to remember that Jewish unbelief caused the Gospel to come to the Gentiles so that they, the Gentile Christians, now have its riches. Thus "for your sakes" sums up what Paul has said at greater length in verses eleven and twelve. On the other hand, when the Gentiles view these believing Jews in the light of their election, they must see them as the beloved of God. And in a most striking way Paul adds his second οὖν phrase, "for the fathers' sake." This phrase points to the past even as the first one points to the present and future. The meaning is that many Jews are elected by God as a fulfillment of God's promises that the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob should be a great people. Lenski writes:

⁵⁴Stoekhardt, op. cit., pp. 546-547.

The force of the term (fathers') and of the phrase lies in the fact that these "beloved" Jews are not only natural but at the same time spiritual sons of these spiritual fathers, sons restored to this their blessed spiritual connection.⁵⁵

Verse twenty-nine shows the constancy of God and looks back to *διὰ τοὺς πατέρας* . *τὰ χαρίσματα* point to the many times in the past when God showed special grace to the fathers. And the main one of these *χαρίσματα* is their *κλήσις* . When God called the fathers, he called them with a call as unchangeable as He is. And what He promised He will carry out. Hence He will not let the elect children of these fathers go unsaved.

In verses thirty to thirty-two Paul shows how God's mercy ultimately triumphs. He summarizes the dialectic brought out by the entire chapter, namely, that because of the Jews the Gentiles have received the converting message, and that now the Jews would receive the life-giving Gospel because of the Gentiles. Of course this must be rightly understood in the light of the entire preceding discussion. Paul here is closing his entire presentation. He says, "Even as you Gentile Christians at one time were disobedient to God, but now have received mercy by means of the disobedience of the Jews, so also these have now become disobedient in order that by this same mercy shown to you, they also may be given mercy." Lenski states:

⁵⁵ Lenski, op. cit., p. 733.

These still disobedient Jews, Paul says, are in the position you believing Gentiles once occupied with your disobedience: as their disobedience brought you mercy, the mercy you have is to bring them to the same mercy from their disobedience. The aorist ἐλεηθῶσι implies that it will do so. So God made no mistake, has nothing to regret in regard to the gracious gifts and the call he extended to the patriarchs and to the Jews. All is working out according to his wonderful plans.⁵⁶

All finally is tied together by Paul's statement in verse thirty-two. "For God has consigned all men to disobedience, that he may have mercy upon all." All men here means all the elect, "every individual among those of whom Paul is speaking, those Gentiles and those Jews who in this equal disobedience are brought to faith and salvation by God's equal mercy."⁵⁷ σὺνκλείειν means "to shut up together. Stoeckhardt derives the meaning "abandoned" via the Hebrew.⁵⁸ God shut up both the Jew and Gentile together in the hopeless prison of their disobedience, for one purpose, and that was to show His mercy to all. Lenski enlarges correctly:

God shut them up together to disobedience means that, locked in thus, all hope and all self-help had disappeared. Disobedience, disobedience was all they had, all they could bring forth. Only one door permits one to leave this prison and it is inscribed: "God's Mercy." That is why all else was taken from them: "in order that he (God)

⁵⁶Lenski, op. cit., p. 736.

⁵⁷Lenski, op. cit., p. 737.

⁵⁸Stoeckhardt, op. cit., p. 549.

might mercy them" (aorist, actually, fully),
bestow his mercy on them, turn them from their
ungodliness (in contrition) and take away their
sins (in justification), v. 26, 27.⁵⁹

Thus a contrast is involved here, the unfathomable contrast between the mercy of God and the hopeless state of both Jew and Gentile.

Finally, as Paul contemplates the greatness of God's mercy as brought out by this contrast, he breaks forth in a song of rapturous praise, which also becomes more clearly outlined when it is contrasted with the heartbroken introduction to this section (9:1 ff.). As he looks back at all the great facts that he has pointed to in this section, at all the great manifestations of God's love and mercy, Paul must give out a rapturous cry expressing the unsearchable greatness of God. βάθος is a "universal figure for what is immeasurable or incalculable," according to Denney.⁶⁰ Human reason cannot fully plumb the depths of the marvelous riches of God's wisdom and knowledge. The latter are best taken as dependent upon πλούτου and not coordinate with it. σοφίας points to God's purpose and His ability to use knowledge for the highest good, to overrule everything for good and thence the greater term. γνώσεως points to His knowing all circumstances and the proper means to put

⁵⁹Lenski, op. cit., p. 738.

⁶⁰Denney, op. cit., p. 686.

His designs into action. It is the ability to provide the means wisdom needs. *βάθος* is next explained by Paul with the terms *ἀνεξερεύνητα* and *ἀνεξιχνίαστοι*. Lenski translates these as "unsearchable" and "untraceable." The former then means "that all our efforts at searching are vain, the latter that even where God has gone and has done things we cannot discover the tracks and track his course; they leave us in a labyrinthian maze."⁶¹ The *κρίματα* are God's "decisions." Stoeckhardt defines them as follows:

Die Gerichte Gottes sind vornehmlich seine Verstockungsgerichte, die in den ewigen Zorn auslaufen. Diese zeugen, wie von der Gerechtigkeit, so auch von der Weisheit Gottes. Gott ^{wiss} die Widerstrebenden gleichsam in ihren eigenen Schlingen zu fangen, indem er sie in ihren verkehrten Sinn dahingibt und ihrem selbsterwählten Verderben überlässt. Und Gott weiss die Straferichte an den Gottlosen, Ungläubigen seinem ganzen Weltplan dienstbar zu machen.⁶²

God's ways, *αἱ ὁδοὶ αὐτοῦ*, are His methods or measures. In view of the context here we could point to the measures of God by means of which He gathers His people, both Jew and Gentile, in spite of their sinful antagonism. Here too man must certainly stand in awe, as he contemplates God's ways with the sinner and disobedient son.

In verses thirty-four and thirty-five Paul expresses himself in Old Testament language once more by quoting two

⁶¹Lenski, op. cit., p. 741.

⁶²Stoeckhardt, op. cit., p. 551.

rhetorical questions dealing with God. In the first, almost an adaptation of Isaiah 40:13, Paul shows that it is not something overly surprising that God is so inscrutable in His judgments and ways. "For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been His counselor?" Certainly no one has ever looked into the mind of God to see the why and wherefore of all His actions. Nor has anyone ever been His counsellor and thus in a position to reckon more or less why and how God makes His decisions. No, God is something completely beyond the human forms of comprehension.

That is the import of the following quotation also. Here Paul quotes from Job 41:3 of the Hebrew text, disregarding the wrong translation of the LXX. Dr. Arndt gives us the meaning:

If men did something for God and received a reward for it, then man could calculate to some extent how God is going to act. He would know at least one rule, namely that God pays back what has been given to Him. But this condition does not obtain at all. Not man gives to God, but God gives to man. God is always the first to show favors. Hence we cannot calculate the actions of God on the basis of rewards for good deed, either.⁶³

Finally Paul with a majestic sweep gives us the real reasons why man cannot understand God. He lists three great facts about God. 1. God is the Creator of everything. 2. He is the Administrator of all things; all things are done through Him. 3. Everything serves His great purposes, His

⁶³Arndt, op. cit., p. 88.

glory. Lenski comments:

As the infinite God, who is infinite not only in wisdom and knowledge but in all his attributes, he is at once the origin (ἐκ), the medium of existence (διὰ), and the final goal (εἰς) of the universe, τὰ πάντα, das All, "the sum of things, the All" (R. 773). πάντα would be, "all things in general" and improper here; but τὰ πάντα is specific, "all things that exist."⁶⁴

Paul concludes with a brief doxology. "To Him be glory forever. Amen." Considering both the mercy and majesty of God, he cannot help but join in this psalm of praise. And it is with a similar song in our hearts that we conclude this study of but a small portion of the immeasurable riches of God's Word. To Him be glory forever! Amen.

⁶⁴Lenski, op. cit., p. 742.

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